



# 2019-2020 Student and Parent Handbook

Horse Creek Academy  
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[www.hcacs.net](http://www.hcacs.net)

*Horse Creek Academy Charter School is a public charter school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, or ethnicity in admission nor charge for enrollment.*



Mission:

Our mission is to create a challenging learning environment with high academic and social expectations through developmentally appropriate, flexible, and innovative instruction that allows each student to realize and confidently possess their full potential.

We strive to provide parents and children with a choice in a free public education.

Our endeavor is to promote a safe, supportive environment where self-esteem is fostered, and diversity is celebrated.

We strive to actively involve students' families, teachers, and community members in the educational process, as we believe that enthusiasm for education by everyone in a child's life directly impacts the child's enthusiasm for learning.

# **WE ARE STALLION**



**S**hows respect

**T**hinks before acting

**R**esponsible for themselves

**O**n task

**N**ever gives up

**G**ives back to others

## **GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

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

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

Horse Creek Academy's Board of Directors is responsible for governing, not managing, the school. Board members ensure that Horse Creek Academy's academic programs are consistent with the school's mission and are successful in educating all students, and that school funds are properly managed and accounted for. Board members also develop and evaluate school policies to ensure that they are lawful, fair, and provide appropriate protection and opportunity for everyone involved with the school.

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

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

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

### **Specific Responsibilities:**

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, and mission of Horse Creek Academy Charter School.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board of Directors:
  - Focus on the good of the organization and not on a personal agenda;
  - Support board decisions once they are made;
  - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the Board;
  - Build awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management

- Adhere to all School policies;
- Maintain in the strictest of confidence, all personnel and legal matters.

4. Regularly attend Board meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing and bringing necessary materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the Board President.

5. Be prepared to contribute approximately 8-10 hours per month toward Board service including:

- Attending a monthly Board of Directors meeting (2-3 hours)
- Reading materials and preparing for meetings (1 hour)
- Attending events at the school, assisting with fundraising and other ambassador tasks as needed (1-2 hours)

6. Keep informed about the school and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions and asking strategic questions.

7. Actively participate in three or more event(s) annually.

8. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of Horse Creek Academy.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAMILY**

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between the School and the Family. In an effort to send a consistent message to students regarding the importance of education, and in support of the mission and values of Horse Creek Academy Charter School we ask that families:

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

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

*Show respect for the importance of school by having students:*

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

*Enhance learning by:*

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

- Working with the Director and teachers to plan for absences other than those due to illness.
- Establishing a time, place, and routine for study at home.
- Giving positive reinforcement for appropriate attitudes and behaviors.
- Encouraging your child and praising him/her for doing his/her best.
- Attending Teacher/Parent/Student conferences to obtain detailed information about your child's strengths, weaknesses and progress and fulfilling agreements made at those conferences.
- Ensuring that your child has proper rest, nutrition and recreation to promote well-being and readiness to learn.
- Providing home consequences for inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning or the well-being of all students.
- Spending time with your child so that his/her emotional needs are met and he/she can focus on learning.
- Cooperating with specific requests of the school to ensure appropriate student behavior and/or an appropriate academic program for your child.
- Supporting the overall school program by:
  1. Attending Horse Creek Academy parent meetings and school functions regularly.
  2. Completing 30 parent hours as suggested in the Parent Hours Section of the handbook.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

### **GENERAL ARRIVAL - 7:30 A.M.**

School begins at 8:00 a.m. for all students. Dismissal begins at 2:45 p.m. for all students.

Regular student drop-off begins at 7:30 a.m. For the health, safety and well-being of children, please do not arrive before 7:30 a.m. as personnel are not available to supervise students. Please have all students remain in the car until Horse Creek Academy Faculty and Staff greet students at their car in the Student Loading Zone at 7:30 a.m. The Front Doors of the school are locked until this time. All families are encouraged to "Kiss & Ride". This is the safest and quickest way to drop-off your child(ren) as it limits their need to navigate our busy parking lot. Additionally, visitor parking is limited and should be reserved for parents who are parking to volunteer, chaperone a field trip, attend a school meeting, etc. Lastly, REFRAIN from using your cellphone or speeding while driving on school grounds. Again, the school parking lot is a busy place –safety is our top priority.

### **EARLY Morning Care (7:00 – 7:30 A.M.)**

Students arriving at school prior to 7:30 a.m. may enroll in Morning Care. Morning Care is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., Monday through Friday only on days the school is in session for students.

Student safety is a priority at Horse Creek Academy. Students may not arrive prior to 7:30

a.m. unless enrolled in Morning Care. The following steps will be taken to ensure the proper supervision of students.

- The front entrance will be monitored each day and students arriving prior to 7:30 will be noted.
- The first time a student is noted to be at school prior to 7:30, a written warning will be sent home. Parents will be notified of this warning as well.
- The second time a student arrives on campus early, a notice of a drop-in fee of \$10 will be sent home.
- The third time, a fee of \$25.00 will be assessed, which will enroll the student in the Morning Care program. From this point forward, weekly charges will be assessed when the student arrives prior to 7:30.
- Failure to pay Morning Care fees will result in a conference being held with Administration.

For questions regarding the Morning Care programs please contact Dr. Ann Marie Taylor at 803-226-0160 or email her at [ataylor@hcacs.net](mailto:ataylor@hcacs.net). Registration applications will be available in Student Services.

### **GENERAL DISMISSAL (2:45 P.M.)**

At the end of class each day, students will report to their designated pick-up place for dismissal. See the carline map below for the appropriate carline pick-up places for your child(ren). Cars should stay in a line and children will be loaded into cars in the order in which the cars are lined up. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) are safely restrained once in their car. The carline number provided by the school should be clearly displayed for staff to see. Parents should follow all signals and directions given by HCA Staff members who are directing carline. If you need to enter the building for any reason, please use the parking spaces by the Main Entry.

Car riders who have not been picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be sent to After Care and charged a daily drop-in rate of \$15/day.

### **UPDATED EMERGENCY AND PICKUP INFORMATION**

It is very important that your emergency contact and carpool information is complete and up-to-date. Students can only be released to adults listed on the Student Information form completed during enrollment. If you wish to have another adult listed, please send the request, in writing, to the Front Office. If your request for a particular adult is just for one day, please send a note to the classroom. Children must have a permission note from their parent to go with a person not designated on the enrollment form. All changes to dismissal plans are to be called in to the Front Office by 1:00 p.m.

### **After Care (3:15 – 6:00 P.M.)**

Students who cannot be picked up by 3:15 pm in the carline will need to enroll in After Care. After Care is available from 3:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After Care will NOT be held on break weeks, and other school closings.

#### **Early Care**

**7:00 – 7:30 am**

**Beginning August 12, 2019**

Registration Fee: \$25. per child

You can complete registration at the Meet the Teacher Night on August 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 6:30

Weekly Cost: \$20 per one child. \$25. For two children or more

#### **After Care**

**3:15 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Beginning August 12, 2019**

Registration Fee: \$25. per child

You can complete registration at the Meet the Teacher Night on August 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 6:30

Weekly Fee: \$60 (one child), \$90 (two children), \$140 (three plus children)

## **ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSED ABSENCES**

**Important - By law, all students in Grades K-12 must attend class a minimum of 170 days of the 180-day school year. In accordance with state law, it is the policy of Horse Creek Academy Charter School that the first 10 absences will only be excused absences due to the following reasons: illness or tardiness for an appointment with a physician; a death in family; observance of a recognized religious holiday, or other health services that must be scheduled during school hours.**

Any absences after the first 10 absences will be considered unexcused unless a medical note is provided. Truancy, out-of-school suspension and personal vacations are unexcused absences.

For any absences, a parent note or medical excuse must be turned in to the school within 5 days of the absence. If the excuse is not turned in within 5 days of the absence, the absences will be unexcused. Please make sure that your child turns in the excuse notes. Sometimes students leave them in their book bags and forget to turn them in. Excuses will not be accepted after the 5 days.

Make sure each note has the following information:

- Student's name
- Parent's signature
- Date(s) of absence
- Date note is written
- Daytime phone number
- Reason for absence

Should you have questions or concerns about attendance, please contact Teresa Goff at (803)-226-0160. Family compliance with the attendance policy is crucial to the progress of each student and for the smooth functioning of each classroom. It is extremely important that each student be present every possible day. Missing a whole day or signing in/out disrupts student instructional time. Missed instruction can create gaps in learning which may cause a student to fall behind.

## **IMPORTANT SPECIAL NOTES:**

- Upon written request from the Parent/Guardian, the school Director may approve pre-arranged absences. Approval will be granted when the absence is of significant educational benefit to the student. All schoolwork that happens during the absence must be completed satisfactorily.
- Excessive medical absences may result in the student being retained at the discretion of the school Director. If a student has a chronic or extended medical issue, the parent should speak to an administrator about the possibility of medical homebound services.
- Parent/family illness does NOT count as an excused absence except in emergency cases, or due to special circumstances. These must be approved by the school.



- Please notify the school by 10:00 a.m. when your child is sick. Should you reach a recording, please leave the following information on the recording: Student's name, teacher's name, and date.

Failure to comply with the attendance policy will result in school intervention meetings, referral to the truancy office of Aiken County Public Schools and/or referral to the Department of Social Services for educational neglect. If attendance does not improve, the parent and/or student will be referred to the Family Court system. The Family Court judge may issue a court attendance order against the parent and/or child. Failure to follow the court order may result in contempt of court in which the judge can fine and/or jail a parent for non-compliance with the court order.

### **UNEXCUSED TARDIES & EARLY DISMISSALS**

Attendance is taken in homeroom each morning at 8:00 a.m., and students who arrive after this time are tardy. Any student who arrives after 8:00 a.m. must be accompanied by a Parent to the Student Services Office to sign-in and receive a Tardy Pass before proceeding to class.

Consequences for repeated tardiness and/or unexcused early dismissals include the following:

- Three unexcused tardies and/or unexcused early dismissals will result in an Initial Plan of Action being written with the attendance clerk.
- Violation of the Level Initial Plan of Action will result in the development of a Level 2 Plan of Action with an administrator.
- Violation of the Level 2 Plan of Action will result in a meeting with the Executive Director to discuss continued enrollment in Horse Creek Academy and/or retention.

For a tardy and/or early dismissal to be considered "excused" it must be accompanied by a doctor's note, approved by the school nurse or an administrator.

***SPECIAL NOTE OF CONCERN:*** Maximizing instructional time is a priority at Horse Creek Academy. To protect valuable time, early dismissals will not be allowed after 2:10 pm. Should your child have a need to be dismissed early from school, please make sure that your child is signed out prior to the 2:10 pm deadline. Classes will not be interrupted after 2:10 pm. Medical notes or other documentation will be required for any sign-outs to be excused. Unexcused absences may lead to referral to the truancy office. It is not a valid reason to sign out your child to avoid car-line. Repetitive sign-outs will be referred for administrative action.

## HEALTH/SAFETY GUIDELINES

A child who has been ill should return to school only when well enough to participate fully in all activities.

**It is very important that your child stay home if he/she is ill.**

If your child has had a temperature above 100 degrees F, diarrhea, vomiting, a rash, or a contagious illness including pink eye, strep, etc. within the last 24 hours, please keep your child at home.

Remember, your child must be fever free (without fever reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please notify the Front Office before school starts on the day that your child is ill. Parents must notify the school nurse immediately if the child contracts or comes in contact with a contagious disease so that parents of children who may have been exposed can be alerted. These include but are not limited to: strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, chickenpox and flu. Remember to notify the office for each subsequent day the child will be absent. A message may always be left on voice mail.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be contacted. It is expected that a parent/guardian will pick up the child as soon as possible. If this is not possible, one of the adults listed on your child's emergency form will be contacted to pick up your child.

## NURSING SERVICES

The school has a registered nurse on staff. Parents need to inform the school nurse whenever a child has a chronic medical condition and/or will need prescribed medicines or treatments during the school day.

Students at Horse Creek Academy may not keep medicines in their cubbies/lockers or carry them in school or on school trips unless pre-approved by school nurse and student's physician. Only the school nurse or his/ her trained designee may administer medication or prescribed treatments during the school day. *If a child is prescribed a medication or a prescribed medication is changed, parents **MUST** notify the school nurse in order to ensure the best possible care of your child.* If a child takes a daily medication prior to school but the parent fails to administer the medication from time to time, this may have an adverse effect on the child's learning. In these cases, the parent will be called to either come in to administer the medication at school, or to remove the child from school for the remainder of the day.

Head lice is a common childhood problem. If signs of head lice are spotted (see DHEC link <http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/CR-010752.pdf>), the child will be sent home for treatment. The nurse must re-examine and give clearance to the child before that child may return to class. If your child or a sibling has a case of lice, please inform the school nurse.

The school nurses urge all parents to reinforce simple hygienic practices. Encourage children to use tissue to wipe noses following a sneeze or cough and then wash hands with soap and water after disposing tissues in a wastebasket. Remind them to wash hands thoroughly before lunch and after going to the bathroom and not to share food or drinks.

Medical records and emergency contact forms for new and returning students must be on file in the school office by the first week in August each year. ***It is imperative for the school to have up to date contact information for parents and guardians at all times, in case of a medical emergency.***

## School Exclusion

For all communicable diseases/conditions such as but not limited to, Chickenpox, Fifth Disease, Influenza, Head Lice, Hepatitis A, B, and C, HIV/AIDS, Impetigo, Measles, Meningitis, Mononucleosis, Mumps,

Conjunctivitis, Ringworm, Scabies, Strep throat, Tuberculosis, and Whooping cough, the school staff will follow the recommendations made by South Carolina DHEC (<http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/CR-010752.pdf>) in regard to returning to school after a communicable disease has been diagnosed by a physician.

### Medication Administration

In an effort to establish a safe and effective system for providing medications to students during the school day and at school-sponsored functions, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has outlined General Standards of Medication Administration in a school setting. Below are just a few of the important items regarding the regulation of medications at Horse Creek Academy.

Medications should be brought to the school by a responsible adult and delivered to the school nurse or, in the absence of the nurse, the Front Office personnel.

Parents/guardians must provide medications to the school in original containers with all labeling from the pharmacy and/or manufacturer intact and readable. Each medication must be labeled with the student's name.

Over-the-counter medications that a parent/guardian may provide for short-term (1 to 2 weeks) or episodic use require only the written permission of the parent/guardian if the medication will be given per the manufacturer's guidelines.

The following require a written order from a healthcare practitioner who is recognized by South Carolina's Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation as authorized to prescribe medications and written permission from the parent/guardian:

- prescribed medications,
- herbal/alternative medicinal products,
- experimental medications,
- medications being used off-label (including over-the-counter medications to be given in dosages or for reasons that are not consistent with the medication label or package insert), and
- over-the-counter medications sent by a parent/guardian for frequent, long-term use

At the time of purchase, if requested, pharmacists may assist parents/guardians by preparing separate containers for doses of medications to be given during school hours and field trips.

Medications that have expired or are not currently being used by a student will not be stored at the school. Parents will be notified and given an opportunity to pick up their child's medications. Medications that are not picked up will be disposed of in a manner that respects security as well as environmental concerns.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the administration of medications at Horse Creek Academy please contact Sara Shealy, School Nurse, at 803-226-0160.

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Horse Creek Academy Charter School has comprehensive school safety and crisis management procedures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of its students, faculty, staff, visitors and volunteers. Faculty and staff are briefed on these procedures and are expected to follow and enforce all procedures and guidelines for school safety and security.

The following are basic guidelines:

- All members of the school community are expected to use courtesy, respect and common sense with regard to issues of school safety.
- Visitors and Volunteers must sign-in and out at the Front Office and receive a visitor's tag to be worn at all times while on campus. Only the Main Entrance is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please do not attempt to enter or exit the building through other exterior doors. The school staff is trained NOT to open these doors and admit non-school personnel during school hours.

- Visit or s/ Volu nte e e rs m us t ha ve a se cu rit y an d ba ck gr ou nd check to be able to be alone with students during a visit or activity.
- Persons signing out a student including parents will be required to present a picture ID. Anyone other than a parent signing out a student must be listed on the registration form.
- Students are not permitted in the school building or in outside areas without Faculty supervision.
- A member of administration or his designee will make periodic rounds of all areas occupied by students and staff including outside areas.
- Smoking and alcohol is absolutely prohibited in all school buildings and on school grounds.
- Fire drills and other drills required by law, take place regularly at the school building. These drills are an essential and important exercise to prepare for an emergency situation. Silence must be kept throughout the drill and efficiency in vacating the building is expected. Students, faculty and staff are apprised of drill routines and procedures. Anyone visiting or volunteering in the school must participate in the drills.
- Evacuation Routes are posted in each classroom and office area at Horse Creek Academy.

## **VOLUNTEERING IN THE SCHOOL**

Volunteers in the classroom are cherished and appreciated at Horse Creek Academy Charter School. To sign-up as a volunteer, please complete the Volunteer Interest Form, pay the \$8 fee for the security and background check (required for all volunteers), and sign-up to attend a volunteer orientation meeting. Questions may be referred to Stacy Greene.

## **FEE AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

At HCA, we have a certain procedure which must be followed for receiving and accounting for any incoming money. Please help us by doing your part and acting in accordance with the following fee payment procedure:

All payments must be documented upon receipt on the appropriate form. Parents have been instructed the following:

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

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT HOURS**

When enrolling your family into Horse Creek Academy it was explained that our school relies upon parent(family) involvement. We expect each family to complete 30 hours. These hours can be reached in a number of ways throughout the school year. Of course, we would like them to be completed by the end of March but if you contact our parent coordinator arrangements could be made if more time is needed. Our school relies on this help due to the fact we like to maximize the use of our budget for the enrichment of the children, which of course means we need to be judicious in our spending in some other areas. These hours can be met in three ways:

- Donating \$12 for per parent hour.
- Volunteering at the school 1 hour of time for each parent hour.
- Purchasing needed items---\$12 of receipts for each parent hour

Should you have any questions contact Stacy Green at [sgreene@hcacs.net](mailto:sgreene@hcacs.net)

At the beginning of each month a list of needs will be provided to each family. Administration, teachers and staff will provide input as to the needs for each month. At times during the school year, pressing needs for particular items or volunteer hours are needed. At the discretion of the administration, double parent hours may be offered.

For convenience to our families, HCA is going to utilize services like Amazon wish list so that parents can purchase items and have them sent directly to the school. Information relating to these services will be on the monthly list.

Below is a sample list of things that can be done to complete parent hours:

1. Chaperone for a field trip, a school dance or school activity.
2. Participate in clean up days.
3. Read to the children.
4. Purchase items from the monthly lists.
5. Write a check to HCA for needs on the monthly list.
6. Purchase gift cards as indicated on the monthly list.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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

### **HOMEWORK**

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

Long-term projects have specific written guidelines with the due date indicated for each

portion of the assignment. Teachers will coordinate so that no more than two tests or projects are due on the same day.

### **Make-up Work**

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

### **RETENTION**

Retention is the practice of requiring a student who has been in a given grade level for a full year to remain at that level for a subsequent school year. Horse Creek Academy Charter School is committed to differentiation in instruction and provides support for meeting the instructional needs of each child through strategies including Unit Planning, Student Intervention Team (SIT), counselor services, and Response to Intervention (RTI).

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

The Director has final authority regarding the retention of students.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504**

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

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are required by federal law (IDEA) for all students who meet criteria as a student with a disability. Written by a collaborative team that includes the child's parents, general education teachers, special educators, related service providers, and community agencies as appropriate, an IEP documents the educational and related

services a student requires to reach specified short-term and long-term goals.

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

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

- (1) has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working); (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

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

#### **TUTORING POLICY**

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

#### **STUDENT WITHDRAWAL**

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



The withdrawal form provides us with the name and address of the new school your child will be attending. Student records will be forwarded upon receipt of the request from the new school. All fines must be cleared and all school property must be returned before withdrawal. If a student is absent for ten (10) consecutive days without the school being notified, the student will be withdrawn, and his or her spot will be filled. Additionally, withdrawal can be triggered by a parent/student failure to adhere to school discipline policies and procedures as stipulated in the discipline section.

#### **RE-ENROLLMENT**

During January of each school year, Horse Creek Academy accepts new applications for the next school year. For current students, "re-enrollment" forms must be completed each January in order for the student to return to Horse Creek Academy during the upcoming

school year. **If a parent decides to not complete the re-enrollment form by January, 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, they relinquish their child's seat for the upcoming year.** If, after completing enrollment paperwork, the family decides to withdraw, a written withdrawal form from the Parent/Guardian is required in order to relinquish their seat to another student.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO WEATHER**

Horse Creek Academy is closed whenever other Aiken County School District schools are closed due to severe weather or city-wide emergency. If, for any other reason, there is a change in the school schedule, a notice will be posted immediately on the school website, robocall, and other communication methods. Please listen to local radio and television stations for updates.

## **CONFERENCES & REPORT CARDS**

Teachers are responsible for keeping parents informed about student progress. Therefore, our early childhood and elementary program ensures that students are regularly issued progress reports that must be signed and returned. Check with your child's teacher for when progress reports are issued. Teachers in the middle school maintain an open flow of parent/ teacher contact via use of email, use of the Remind app, teacher websites, phone calls and letters home.

First Quarter: At the end of the quarter, ALL parents will participate a formal conference with the classroom teacher to go over the report card results.

Second and Third Quarter: Report cards will be sent home with your student at the end of each quarter. Teachers or parents may request conferences for students on an as needed basis.

Fourth Quarter: Report cards will be mailed home at the end of the school year. Conferences will be held on an as needed basis.

## **Board-HOME COMMUNICATION:**

### **HCA Board Meetings**

School board meetings are open to the public, and subject to executive sessions permitted by the SC Freedom of Information Act. Regular meeting dates can be found publicly posted in advance on our website. Parents and members of the community can learn valuable information about our school policies and other pertinent information by attending a board meeting. In most cases, board meetings are structured to give you a chance to express your opinions to the board and the school community; however, the meeting must remain on schedule and follow the agenda.

### **How to get on the Board Meeting Agenda:**

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

**Fee/Payment Procedures will be sent home at the start of school in August.**

## **GIFT POLICY**

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

#### **PUBLIC FORUM**

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

#### **FACILITIES USE POLICY**

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

This policy does not apply to school sponsored organizations.

Individuals interested in using Horse Creek Academy's facility for an event should contact the school office for further information.

#### **CHECK RETURN POLICY**

**All returned checks are subject to a \$40.00 fee.** Families/Staff will be sent a written notice of the returned check by the administration, along with a copy of the returned item and a note explaining the returned check fee (\$35). The note will serve as an invoice for the total amount due including the returned check fee. Horse Creek Academy will accept another check to cover the invoice balance.

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

#### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The purpose of Horse Creek Academy Charter School's discipline policy is to ensure a learning environment that respects and protects the health, safety, wellbeing, and learning of all students.

Horse Creek Academy expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. This expectation applies to a student's actions toward other students and teachers, their language, their dress, and their manners. We believe self-discipline is an interpersonal goal of education. Students have a responsibility to know and respect Horse Creek Academy's policies, rules, and regulations. Violations of such policies, rules, and regulations will result in a disciplinary consequence(s). **A discipline policy will be sent home with each student at the start of the school year in August.**

#### **STUDENT CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

Horse Creek Academy Charter School provides a grievance procedure as a formal method for the resolution of any grievances concerning the treatment of students by Horse Creek Academy personnel. These grievances may arise from allegations of violations of student legal rights or school policy. In

addition, the Board recognizes that there may be conditions that Horse Creek Academy could improve, and that students should have some means by which they can effectively express their concerns. Horse Creek Academy will resolve student complaints and grievances through orderly processes and at the lowest possible level.

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

Title IX complaints: Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their gender have the right to appeal to the school Director. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the school Director, he/she may appeal to the Board.

Section 504 complaints: Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their disabling condition have the right to appeal to the school Director. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the school Director, he/she may appeal to the Board. The school Director will schedule appeals to the Board.

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## Uniform Guidelines

HCA is a uniform school, please see the guidelines below to help your student prepare to dress their best! One of our uniform partners is French Toast, an online school uniform company. On Fridays, which are HCA Spirit Days, students may wear an HCA t-shirt and jeans. There will be other “free dress” days planned throughout the year. These days will be announced via Robocall, our school website ([www.hcacs.net](http://www.hcacs.net)), and our Facebook page.

- **Shirts:** Royal Blue, Gold, or White
  - All shirts must be collared
  - Shirts do not have to be tucked in provided they are not of excessive length
- **Pants/Shorts:** Khaki or Black
  - Must not be shorter than fingertip length
  - Any type of legging is not considered appropriate as pants.
- **Skirts/Skortts:** Khaki, Black or French Toast Blue/Yellow Plaid
  - HCA’s special plaid color blend is ONLY available from [www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com) (instructions on how to order are on the back!)
  - Must not be shorter than fingertip length.
- **Dresses/Jumpers:** Khaki, Black or Blue/Yellow Plaid
  - HCA’s special plaid color blend is ONLY available from [www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com) (instructions on how to order are on the back!)
  - Must not be shorter than fingertip length.
- **Sweatshirts/Hoodies:** Only black, royal blue, gold or white.
  - Students must ALWAYS wear a uniform collared shirt underneath.
  - We sell HCA hoodies each year; this is a great way to adhere to the uniform code and support the school!
- **Jackets/Cardigan/Sweaters:** Black, Royal Blue, Gold or White
  - Students must ALWAYS wear a uniform collared shirt underneath
- **Shoes:** Athletic, casual, or dress shoes (with a low heel) of any color are permitted. Boots are permitted, as well as sandals (sandals must have a back strap, so no flip flops/slides).
  - Slippers or shoes with wheels are not permitted.
- **Socks/Tights/Leggings:** Any color may be permitted. No fishnet type tights may be worn. Tights and leggings should not be worn as pants and should only be worn under dresses/skirts/shorts.

### Additional Uniform Guidelines:

- Any logos on shirts, sweatshirts, etc. must be smaller than a deck of playing cards.
- Clothing should be free of any rips or tears (ripped jeans, for example, are not allowed)
- Any shorts, dresses, and skirts/skortts must be at least fingertip length.
- Outerwear (large coats, rain jackets, scarves, etc.) may be of any color, however, these items are only allowed to be worn outside of the school building (recess, car line, etc.)

### How to order form French Toast:

- 1) Go to [www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com)
- 2) At the top of the page, click “Shop by School”
- 3) To select HCA as your school, either enter in our school code, QS5PFRU, or just type Horse Creek Academy into the “School Name” box.

- 4) You are now shopping HCA's dress code! Near the top of the page, where it is titled "Additional Dress Codes" you can select to shop for either girls or boys.
- 5) Need some help? Feel free to call or stop by!



**FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**\*\*ONE PER FAMILY\*\***

I have received and reviewed the Family Handbook 2019-2020 and my family will comply with Horse Creek Academy Charter School's rules, procedures and policies.

**Student's Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Printed Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Signatures(s):** \_\_\_\_\_



