HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Updated for the 2026-2027 School Year

This handbook outlines expectations, procedures, and family partnership commitments for Hope Leadership Academy. It includes an added section addressing disrespect, discrimination, threats, and restricted campus access for parents/guardians or visitors when necessary to maintain safety and order.

6409 Agnes Ave | Kansas City, MO | 816-921-1213 | www.hlakc.org

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Parent/School Compact

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to work together to ensure that your child has the best possible educational experience. To help ensure their success, this compact establishes clear expectations for both families and the school.

Your Role

- Provide a safe and supportive home environment and regularly communicate with your child's school.
- Encourage and support your child to do their best in school and at home.
- Discuss concerns or questions with your child's teacher(s) and follow the school communication process.
- Establish, monitor, and support a consistent homework routine.
- Celebrate your child's successes.

The School's Role

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians.
- Provide feedback on student progress and behavior.
- Follow up on concerns or questions raised by parents/guardians.
- Support students in developing academic, social, and emotional skills.
- Celebrate student successes.

We look forward to working together to ensure your child's success. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the main office at 816-921-1213.

Sincerely,
Dr. Tiffaney Whitt, Superintendent
Mr. James Hogue, Principal

Mission and Vision Statement

Mission

Hope Leadership Academy intentionally impacts scholars through academic growth and leadership development to achieve their highest potential.

Vision

We purposefully develop leaders through innovative educational strategies and student-centered environments. Hope Leadership Academy will be the model of academic excellence.

Hope Leadership Academy Values

- All students can learn.
- Education must prepare students for a rapidly changing world.
- Each person is a unique individual whose needs must be addressed in the educational process.
- Learning is a life-long process.
- Community involvement is essential for HLA.
- Families, the community, the school, and students are partners in the educational process.
- A safe, caring, and orderly environment is required for teaching and learning.

- An environment that fosters respect and self-worth must exist for every person.
- Our employees are essential to our success.
- We believe in data-driven decision making.

School Hours

School Day	9:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
Marked Tardy	9:30 a.m.
Main Office	816-921-1213
Website	www.hlakc.org

Families should follow all arrival and dismissal procedures communicated by the school. Students arriving after the tardy time must be signed in according to office procedures.

Admissions Information

The admission of all students shall be under the direction of the Principal, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. All persons seeking admission to Hope Leadership Academy must satisfactorily meet residency, academic, age, immunization, health, and other eligibility prerequisites established by Board policies, rules and regulations, and state law.

Admissions Documents

1. Birth Certificate
2. Current Shot Record
3. Proof of Residency, such as a copy of a mortgage or lease or a utility bill dated within the last 30 days

Parent Involvement

HLA values partnership with parents and welcomes volunteers in the school. Opportunities may include field trips, classroom projects, special events, parent meetings, and schoolwide activities. Classroom teachers and members of the leadership team will provide information about opportunities throughout the year.

Please schedule an appointment with the classroom teacher at least 24 hours in advance to visit or discuss a student's academic progress. Due to liability issues, siblings or other children may not accompany volunteer parents. We appreciate all families respecting school rules and procedures.

School Policies and Procedures

Hope Leadership Academy establishes and continually refines operational policies, procedures, and expectations to support the mission, vision, and goals of the school. The policies, procedures, and expectations in this handbook are guidelines by which all community members are expected to abide. As the school year progresses, they may be refined, revised, added to, or deleted as the Board of Directors and school administrators deem necessary.

Parent Drop-Off / Pick-Up

HLA will communicate designated arrival and dismissal locations to families before and during the school year. Families must follow posted and communicated traffic patterns, staff directions, and dismissal procedures to keep students safe.

HLA uses FalconFly as the parent pick-up procedure for all students. Parents/guardians should register in FalconFly, add their student using the assigned student code, and follow the app procedures for creating a pickup request. Families needing assistance or a student code should contact the main office at 816-921-1213.

Afternoon transportation changes will not be permitted after 2:00 p.m. unless there is an emergency.

School Closure Due to Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, families will receive notification by automated call, text message, and/or email directly from the school. Families must keep current phone numbers and email addresses on file with the main office at all times.

Contact and Student Information

Parents/guardians must inform the school of current home and business addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, and authorized pickup information. Accurate contact information is essential for emergencies and school communication.

Student Breakfast and Lunch Programs

Nutritious breakfasts and lunches are available to students. Students are not allowed to bring candy, snacks high in sugar, or carbonated beverages to school unless authorized for a special event.

Classroom Visits and Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special to students and families. Parents/guardians should coordinate any birthday celebration with the classroom teacher and follow school procedures. Treats must be prepackaged and store bought to protect student health and safety and to minimize interruptions to instructional time.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hope Leadership Academy does not discriminate based on sex, race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other factor prohibited by law in its programs and activities. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination or harassment, or if you have inquiries regarding the school's non-discrimination policies, please call 816-921-1213.

Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the rights and confidentiality of students. HLA prohibits sharing student names, addresses, telephone numbers, or specific academic or behavior information with anyone other than a parent/legal guardian, an authorized individual, or staff members with legitimate educational interests.

Complaint Process

When a parent, staff member, or community member has a concern that cannot be adequately resolved with an individual, the following process should be followed in chronological order. Time must be allotted to allow for interventions and/or adjustments to be implemented.

4. Discussion with the student's teacher.

5. Discussion with the student's teacher and a member of the Executive Leadership Team.
6. Discussion with a member of the Executive Leadership Team and Principal.
7. File a formal written complaint with the Board of Directors after the concern has been addressed and unsuccessfully resolved with the school administrator.

Parent Conduct, Respectful Communication, and Campus Restrictions

Purpose

Hope Leadership Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and orderly environment for students, families, staff, and visitors. This section outlines how HLA will respond when a parent/guardian or visitor engages in disrespectful, discriminatory, disruptive, threatening, or unsafe conduct.

Expected Conduct for Parents, Guardians, and Visitors

Parents, guardians, and visitors are expected to communicate respectfully with school staff, follow school procedures, comply with staff directions during arrival, dismissal, and school events, and help maintain a safe environment for all students and adults.

Prohibited Conduct

- Profanity, yelling, insults, name-calling, or abusive language directed toward staff, students, families, or visitors.
- Racially discriminatory, discriminatory, harassing, or biased statements or behavior.
- Threats, intimidation, physical aggression, or statements that imply violence, weapons, or harm.
- Repeated disruptive phone calls, emails, or in-person confrontations that interfere with school operations.
- Refusal to follow arrival, dismissal, visitor, safety, or campus procedures.
- Entering restricted areas, refusing to leave when directed, or coming onto campus after access has been restricted.

Response Process

Step	School Response	Purpose
1	Redirect and remind the individual of HLA expectations for respectful communication and conduct.	Correct behavior in the moment and preserve a respectful environment.
2	Schedule an administrative meeting or phone conference, document concerns, and identify expectations moving forward.	Address concerns, restore communication, and prevent escalation.
3	Issue a written warning or communication plan requiring concerns to be submitted through designated channels.	Protect staff time and maintain orderly school operations.

4	Restrict building access, require appointments, limit contact to designated staff, or require drop-off/pick-up from the vehicle only.	Maintain safety while preserving the student's access to education.
5	Issue a campus restriction/trespass notice and contact law enforcement if the individual does not comply or if safety is at risk.	Protect students, staff, families, and visitors from unsafe or threatening conduct.

Immediate Safety Response

HLA may bypass the progressive steps above and move directly to restricted access, a trespass notice, or law enforcement contact when behavior includes threats, physical aggression, discriminatory harassment, refusal to leave campus, implied or direct reference to weapons, or any conduct that creates a safety concern.

Restricted Access or Trespass Notice

When access is restricted, the individual may be prohibited from entering the building, attending events, approaching staff, or coming onto campus except under written administrative approval. HLA may require the parent/guardian to remain in the vehicle during drop-off and pick-up, use a designated contact person, or communicate only through approved channels.

A campus restriction does not remove a student's right to attend HLA. The school will provide a reasonable process for communication, drop-off, pick-up, meetings, and student-related matters while maintaining safety and order.

Law Enforcement

Local law enforcement may be contacted when a person refuses to comply with a campus restriction, enters the building or campus without permission, threatens staff or others, disrupts school operations, or creates a safety concern.

Appeal or Review

A parent/guardian who receives a written campus restriction may request a review in writing. The request should be submitted to the Superintendent/Executive Director or designee. HLA will review the matter and provide a response consistent with school safety, student needs, and Board policy.

Student Dress Code

Students at Hope Leadership Academy are expected to dress appropriately for school each day by wearing approved apparel. Throughout the year, there may be opportunities for dress down days or special attire; however, general dress code expectations remain in effect unless otherwise communicated.

Monday - Thursday Dress Code Days

- Khaki or navy pants/shorts/skirts; no jeans unless specifically permitted.
- Shorts and skirts must be appropriate length.
- Hunter green, navy, gray, or white polo.

- Closed-toe shoes only; no sandals.

Students who arrive dressed inappropriately may receive a warning and the family may be contacted. A family member may be required to bring appropriate attire to school. HLA is a school of choice, and the required uniform is part of the commitment families make when selecting the school.

Friday Dress Down Days

Friday dress down days may be permitted according to school communication. No sandals are permitted.

Academics

Curriculum

A viable and rigorous curriculum is the foundation of a successful academic program. HLA's curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards and is designed to challenge students at their current academic level while helping them grow toward mastery of grade-level standards.

MOCAP

The Missouri Course Access Program offers instruction in a virtual setting using technology and internet-based methods of communication. More information is available at https://mocap.mo.gov/.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards will be issued at the end of each quarter. Parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain open communication with their child's teacher to stay informed about academic progress. Parents may access grades and attendance through the student information system.

Promotion Standards

In grades Pre-K through 5th grade, each grade level has expectations for promotion to the next grade level. Students must complete necessary assignments and demonstrate academic progress in core and specials classes. Kindergarten and 5th grade students may participate in promotion ceremonies at the end of the year. Dates are subject to change.

Student Attendance

Students are expected to be at school all day, every day. The primary responsibility for attendance rests with the parent/caretaker. Regular attendance is essential for academic success and readiness for the next grade level.

Excessive Absences

Excessive absences negatively affect learning and may result in a conference with the building principal. Students who miss 10 days or more in a school year may be considered for retention based on academic progress and other relevant factors.

Absence Process

- Three tardies and/or early dismissals equal one day of absence.
- Three unexcused absences: family will receive an email/text alert about the absence count.
- Five unexcused absences: family will receive a phone call and a Fifth Absence Letter by certified mail explaining the attendance process and truancy law.

- Seven unexcused absences: conference with HLA staff and possible hotline to Children's Division for educational neglect.
- Ten consecutive unexcused absences: student may be withdrawn and parent must re-enroll based on available slots.

Truancy and Educational Neglect

The Board of Directors believes regular attendance is important to academic success. When a pattern of truancy becomes evident, the principal will investigate and take action as appropriate. Missouri law requires reporting when there is reasonable cause to suspect nonattendance is due to educational neglect.

Tardies

Students arriving at or after the marked tardy time must be signed in. Excessive tardiness may result in a conference with the building principal and/or a member of the leadership team.

When to Stay Home

- If a student has a fever of 99 degrees or more, the student should stay home until fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
- If a student has vomited or had diarrhea, the student should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode.
- If a student has a rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown, the family should check with a physician before returning and provide medical clearance.
- If a student has red eyes with watery or pus drainage, the family should check with a physician to rule out pink eye before returning and provide medical clearance.

Families must call the school daily when a child is sick or the absence may be unexcused.

Emergencies and/or Illness

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, the family will be notified and first aid will be provided. If school personnel determine that emergency care is needed, expenses related to transportation or treatment are the responsibility of the parent/caretaker.

Student Health and Safety

Medication

- Students who take medication must provide current medical documentation from the treating physician.
- Prescriptions must be clearly labeled from the pharmacy in the original container and have a signed medication form on file.
- All medications will be kept secure and administered by a designated school staff member.
- The school will not administer over-the-counter medication to students unless otherwise authorized by policy and documentation.
- Empty prescription containers will be sent home unless other arrangements are made.

Supervision of Students

All personnel responsible for the care and supervision of students are authorized to hold students accountable for disorderly conduct on school property, on any school bus, or in any vehicle used for school activities. School employees may use reasonable and prudent physical force to restrain a student whose actions are reasonably believed to result in physical injury to any person, including the student.

Student Responsibilities

Student Accountability

All students will be held accountable for their actions on school property. Failure of a student, parent, or guardian to read the Code of Student Conduct and sign the acknowledgment does not prevent students from being held accountable for behavior and receiving disciplinary consequences.

Responsibility for Items in Possession

Students are responsible for contraband found in their possession. Contraband includes drugs, weapons, alcohol, and/or materials deemed illegal or unauthorized under Missouri and federal law, Board policy, or the Code of Student Conduct. A student may be required to surrender items prohibited at school.

Electronics Policies

HLA is committed to using technology to support learning. Students are expected to treat school technology with care and respect. Students who intentionally damage equipment may be subject to discipline and parents/guardians may be billed for expenses.

Outside Electronics

Electronic devices such as handheld games, iPods, MP3 players, toys, and similar items are prohibited unless specifically authorized. Confiscated items will remain secured until a parent/caretaker retrieves them.

Cell Phones

Students may need access to phones before or after school; however, phones may not be freely used during the learning environment. HLA is not liable for damage, loss, or theft of a student cell phone voluntarily brought to school. Students are expected to turn in phones each morning to be stored during the day and returned before dismissal. If a student is caught with a phone, it will be confiscated and a parent/guardian must retrieve it.

Federal Program Compliance

Hope Leadership Academy is a free public charter school sponsored by Saint Louis University and considered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a Local Education Agency. HLA is committed to maintaining compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Title I Programs Compliance

As a school that receives Title I funds, HLA staff and parents will review Title I programming, instructional programming, expenditures, professional development, student achievement results, and other aspects of Title I programming.

Highly Qualified Teachers

Parents of students attending a school that receives Title I funds may request the professional qualifications of their child's teachers or other staff members who work with the child. Upon request, HLA will provide information regarding certification/licensure and applicable paraprofessional qualifications.

Student Achievement Results

The school will report academic progress, including regular reports of classwork, local assessments, and state assessment results, to families.

Homeless Student Policy

A student qualifies for services under the McKinney-Vento Act if the student is an unaccompanied minor and/or lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence. Families who may qualify should contact the school for assistance.

Migrant Education

HLA will make reasonable attempts to identify students who may qualify for migrant education services based on the occupation of their parents or legal guardians and will provide additional supports consistent with regulations when students qualify.

Parental Involvement - Board Policy

The Board recognizes the positive effects of parent/family involvement in education and is committed to strong parent/family involvement as knowledgeable partners in student learning. HLA will involve parents in Title I planning, implementation, review, and evaluation activities.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides guidance regarding ESSA complaint procedures. Families may contact the school office for information about filing a complaint or accessing the applicable DESE guidance.

Reporting Child Abuse and Emergency Procedures

Reporting Child Abuse

State law requires that any school employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, must immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Missouri Division of Family Services.

Emergency Procedures

HLA will participate in practice drills to establish efficient and effective emergency routines. Drills may include tornado, fire, and lockdown drills. Providing a safe environment is the school's top priority, and students must listen and follow directions during drills and emergencies.

Student Code of Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct is designed to encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions, respect the rights of others, facilitate learning, and promote the orderly operation of HLA. Students who commit misconduct not specifically listed but prejudicial to good order, discipline, morale, or safety may be subject to the authority of the classroom teacher and/or principal.

Imposition of Disciplinary Consequences

School personnel will use professional judgment in determining appropriate consequences, considering the student's age and maturity level, the nature and seriousness of the infraction, previous disciplinary record, attitude, and other relevant factors. Disciplinary consequences apply to all students, although special procedures must be followed for students with disabilities.

The provisions of the Code of Student Conduct apply to school property, school transportation, off-site school-sponsored activities, travel to and from school when conduct disrupts school grounds, and off-campus behavior that poses a threat to student or staff safety or disrupts the learning environment.

Level I Infractions

- Possession, exhibition, and/or distribution of obscene material.
- Gambling.
- Inciting to fight or contributing to a disruptive situation.
- Dangerous behavior.
- Academic dishonesty.
- Misuse of computer or violation of network practices.

Level I Corrective Actions

- Verbal and/or non-verbal warning.
- Restorative practices with school personnel.
- Family contact.
- Student safety plan when needed.
- Face-to-face family meeting and formal documentation when needed.
- Mandatory minimum 3-day OSS and referral for Board hearing when appropriate.

Level II Infractions

- Possession and/or use of tobacco or tobacco products.
- Chronic misconduct.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying or cyber threats.
- Fighting.
- Possession and/or use of a simulated weapon.
- False fire alarm.
- Vandalism.
- Threatening another student.
- Threatening school personnel.
- Possession and/or use of a weapon other than a firearm.
- Possession of identifiable drug paraphernalia.
- Distribution and/or use of non-controlled substances.
- Possession and/or use of toxic substances.
- Stealing.
- Unauthorized entry.
- Sexual harassment.

Level II Corrective Actions

Level II consequences may include restorative practices, family contact, safety plans, face-to-face family meetings, formal documentation, OSS, referral for Board hearing, and reporting to local law enforcement when appropriate.

Level III Infractions

- Assault of another student.
- Assault of school personnel.
- Causing serious physical injury to a student or staff member.
- Possession, use, and/or sale of explosives.
- Arson.
- Possession and/or use of a firearm.
- Possession and/or use of drugs.
- Possession of drugs with intent to sell or distribute.
- Possession and/or consumption of alcohol.
- Sexual misconduct.

Level III Corrective Actions

Level III infractions may result in mandatory minimum 3-day OSS, referral for Board hearing, and reporting to local law enforcement.

School Bus Discipline

School buses, bus stops, and all other forms of transportation provided by the school or incidental to school activities are considered school property. Students are subject to HLA authority and discipline while waiting for, entering, and riding transportation. Students who fail to observe rules or contribute to a safe transportation environment may lose riding privileges.

Misconduct Notice

- A misconduct notice may be sent to parents/guardians whenever a child's behavior is disruptive.
- If school-level discipline does not improve conduct, transportation records may be forwarded for resolution.
- Students who commit misconduct on transportation may be subject to the Code of Student Conduct and loss of riding privileges.
- When transportation privileges are lost due to misconduct, transportation becomes the responsibility of the parents/guardians, subject to IEP requirements when applicable.

School Bus Infractions and Consequences

Infraction	Consequence
Physically assaulting the bus driver or other personnel	Loss of riding privileges for one school year
Possession of weapons of any kind, including firearm	Loss of riding privileges for one school year

Possession of drugs, smoking, or lighting fires	Loss of riding privileges for one semester
Tampering with emergency exits	Loss of riding privileges for 30 school days
Extending body parts or objects out of the window	Loss of riding privileges for 10 school days
Fighting, wrestling, and/or horse playing	Loss of riding privileges for 10 school days
Failure to follow bus procedures	Loss of riding privileges for 3 school days
Disorderly and/or disruptive behavior	Loss of riding privileges for 3 school days
Repeated use of abusive, obscene, or offensive language	Loss of riding privileges for 3 school days
Vandalizing or defacing the bus	Loss of riding privileges for 5 school days
Throwing objects on or from the bus	Loss of riding privileges for 5 school days
Playing electronics out loud	Loss of riding privileges for 2 school days
Eating food, drinking beverages, or littering	Loss of riding privileges for 2 school days
Loud, boisterous, and/or distracting noises	Loss of riding privileges for 3 school days
Failure to exit the bus at assigned stop	Loss of riding privileges for 2 school days

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