



**LAWSON**ACADEMY



# **Student-Parent Handbook 2021-2022**

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# The History of The Lawson Academy



The Lawson Academy was conceived by Mrs. Audrey Lawson and established to meet the critical academic and social development needs of inner-city youth. Since opening its doors in the fall of 2002, The Lawson Academy has attended to middle school males enrolled in grades 6 - 8, providing them an authentic, enriched learning community that believes all students can learn and that, given the right guidance and preparation, all students can become their best selves.

Early on in its development, The Lawson Academy purposefully implemented a single-gender strategy for education. Located on the Texas Southern University campus and warmly embraced by non-profit, for-profit, fraternal and community organizations, this model has demonstrated a positive impact on the students and families it serves. Within our single-gender educational program, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders can address students' unique physical, social, and emotional needs, and provide them with a safe, secure, and nurturing environment that fosters their academic growth.

In 2011, the academy expanded its model to include a girls' program. Female middle-school students had an opportunity to benefit from an equally rigorous academic experience as well as build meaningful relationships and reinforce invaluable character traits that continue to make The Lawson Academy program so successful.

The Lawson Academy is an open-enrollment public institution with established academic requirements and requisite parental commitment. We welcome any students who willingly accept the challenge to become college ready and to demonstrate personal integrity and a responsibility.

Each scholar who attends The Lawson Academy is recognized as an individual who has unique abilities, needs, and interests. For that reason, we foster a student-centered learning environment that models high expectations for academic achievement and that provides an atmosphere of mutual respect for students, staff, family, and community members.

The **vision** of The Lawson Academy is to create a student-centered, collaborative learning environment in which our scholars utilize innovative learning approaches and technology to become college-ready and to develop into civic-minded, contributing members of the global community.

Our **mission** is to provide a comprehensive education in single-gender environment based on four cornerstones:

- Relevant curriculum
- Rigorous instruction
- Respect for self and others in the learning community
- Reciprocity, or give and take, of ideas and talents

Our **values** rest on six pillars of excellence:

Scholarship  
Work

Integrity  
Culture

Brotherhood/Sisterhood  
Liberty

## From the Principal's Office

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of The Lawson Academy faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to a new school year! We are eager to get to work, challenging your child in the classroom and reinforcing the attitudes and behaviors you are teaching at home.

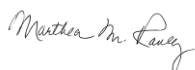
The Lawson Academy maintains a solid tradition of academic excellence. Each young man and young woman who attends the academy is expected to contribute to that tradition. To be sure, much of our success this year will depend on our teachers' commitment to fostering students' conduct, character and achievement. Nevertheless, every single scholar must also accept responsibility to honor scholarship, to respect the members of the learning community, and to act and speak with integrity.

This year, our school theme is "Turning Up the Lawson Pride". The faculty and staff are committed to setting the standard of high-quality performance on campus, and the Lawson Academy Parent-Student Handbook provides you with some of the tools you will need to ensure your student is informed and prepared.

The handbook will help you and your child understand The Lawson Academy school policies and procedures, insuring that we reach our goals as The Lawson Academy family. As you know, children are most successful when parents and school staff work together. One of the first ways you can demonstrate support is by reviewing this booklet with your child, signing all the required documents, and talking periodically with your student about the importance of following school guidelines. Knowing that you are actively interested in school will help your child get off to a good start and set the tone for an excellent year.

Thank you for entrusting your children's development at The Lawson Academy. We are honored to serve the next generation of leaders, and we look forward to building a strong partnership with you.

Respectfully,



Dr. Marthea Raney, Director of Schools

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Attendance

When a student is absent, the parent is to call The Lawson Academy office (713) 225-1551 before 9:00 a.m. and report the absence by giving the following information: student name, grade, and the reason for absence. Failure to provide a proper written excuse (within three days of return to the school) will result in an absence being considered an unexcused absence. Students must always maintain a 90% attendance rate. Excessive absences will result in loss of credit for coursework. Three or more consecutive absences will result in an attendance referral.

Upon returning (from an absence) to school, the student is required to do the following:

- a. Bring a written excuse/note from a parent or doctor stating the reason for the absence.
- b. Deliver the written note to The Lawson Academy office which opens at 6:30 a.m.

Note to Parent: Absences are excused for personal illness or a death in the family. It is very important for every student to be in class every day to maximize their every opportunity for academic success. To that end, please do not schedule any vacations, family trips, etc. during school time. **In addition, please do not check your child out of school (as a matter of convenience) prior to the end of the school day. Interruptions to the instructional setting (even the last five minutes of the day) are not appropriate.**

### Daily Attendance Time

Our state requires that daily attendance be taken every day at 10:00 a.m. Parents are asked to schedule appointments (dentist, doctor, orthodontist, etc.) after school.

### Tardy Policy

Students should arrive to school at 7:00 a.m. Beginning the day promptly is important and demonstrates their commitment to success. **If a student arrives late to school, he/she is to report to the school office for possible disciplinary action.** If a student arrives after official attendance is taken (10:00 a.m.), he/she must report directly to the school registrar's office.

The Lawson Academy Tardy Policy has been developed to emphasize the importance of each student being in the classroom for the entire period, as well as arriving on time to school every day. Learning the responsibility of getting to class on time is an integral part of The Lawson Academy standard of excellence, which prepares students for success. During the first few days of school, all teachers will be working with their students, focusing on getting organized and arriving to class on time, or early, every day.

**The student's responsibility** is to consistently improve personal efficiency in transitioning between classes, planning the quickest route while still moving safely with the hall traffic. Students must be in class and in their seats when the tardy bell rings.

**The teacher's responsibility** is to encourage students to discover the best routine for transitioning between classes. All teachers will be standing at the classroom door to supervise students during time and to close the classroom door immediately after the tardy bell. Classroom instruction starts when the tardy bell sounds.

**The parent’s responsibility** is to discuss this policy with his/her child, reinforcing the student’s ability to meet this responsibility of learning promptness, and supporting the necessity for the school’s establishing immediate consequences to prevent chronic tardiness.

**Student Schedule**

The Lawson Academy students follow a regular daily schedule designed to maximize instructional time and address instructional deficiencies. Classes meet every day (Monday through Friday) for 70 minutes.

The formal academic day ends at 3:20 p.m.

**Bell Schedule for Monday through Friday**

**2021-2022 Master Schedule**

Period	Time	ELAR	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Edgenuity/Varsity Tutoring/Stem for Kids	Physical Ed.
		Williams/O’Neal	Whiting/Williams	Sow/Houvouras	Miller/Braziel	Wilson/Nickerson	Holder/Allen
Period 1	7:30 - 8:40	6A	6B	8A	8B	7A	7B
Period 2	8:40 - 9:50	6B	6A	8B	8A	7B	7A
Period 3	9:50 - 11:00	7A	7B	6A	6B	8A	8B
Period 4	11:00 - 12:10	7B	7A	6B	6A	8B	8A
Lunch & Plan	12:10 - 12:55						
Period 5	12:55 - 2:05	8A	8B	7A	7B	6A	6B
Period 6	2:05 - 3:20	8B	8A	7B	7A	6B	6A
	3:20 - 4:05	PLC/Extended Learning	PLC/ Extended Learning	PLC/Extended Learning	PLC/ Extended Learning	PLC/Extended Learning	PLC/Extended Learning

***School Hours - 7:15am- 3:20pm***

- ***Breakfast in the Classroom – 7:15am – 7:30am***
- ***Lunch in the Classroom – 12:10pm – 12:55pm***
- ***Campus Lunch Supervisors – Kelton Penson (boys) Jacqueline Kemp (girls)***

**Student Check-Out and Visitor Procedures**

All visitors are required to sign-in at the main office and will be given a **Visitor’s Pass** that must be worn and clearly visible. When students are checked out, they must be signed out through the main office at his/her respective campus. Only authorized parents/guardians will be allowed to check students out.

## Academic Program

Grading periods at The Lawson Academy are divided into nine-week periods. Over the course of each nine-week period the student's progress will be assessed by homework, tests, quizzes, and projects and will be reflected in the student's grade for the term.

Students are graded on the following scale:

100-90	A	Demonstrates exceptional mastery of material
89-80	B	Demonstrates mastery of material
79-75	C	Demonstrates average mastery of material
74-70	D	Demonstrates minimum mastery of material
69-below	F	Demonstrates lack of mastery of material

Student behavior is graded on the following scale:

E	Excellent behavior
S	Satisfactory behavior
P	Poor behavior/Needs improvement
U	Unsatisfactory behavior

### **Consequences:**

Academic grades that are below average and behavior grades below satisfactory will prohibit students from participating in school-sponsored activities such as dances and field trips. Failing grades will prevent students from participating in extracurricular activities including athletics etc.

### **Retention:**

A student who receives two or more F's in the four core classes on their final report card will be retained in the grade level.

### **Make-up Work**

Upon returning to school, scholars who have been absent will be given an opportunity to make-up missed work. The number of days afforded to students for make-up work will be equal to the number of days absent. It is the student's responsibility to see that the work is made-up. During extended absences (**3 days or more**), parents may contact teacher to request missing assignments.

## **Academic Reports to Parents**

School officials communicate the student's academic progress through the following methods:

- Teacher-issued Progress Reports:** Teachers can send home a progress report to students any time during the grading period. All progress reports require a parent signature.
- School-issued Progress Reports:** The school regularly sends home a progress report every fourth week.
- Report cards:** At the end of the nine-week grading period, each student will receive a report documenting the level of academic mastery for the term

## **Request for Student Records**

All requests for student records should be made formally to the registrar. Only the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is allowed access to a student's records. A minimum of 48 hours is required to reproduce a student's records.

## **Textbooks/Library Books**

The Lawson Academy provides textbooks for student use during the school year. Parents must present a valid driver's license or other form of photo ID to check out texts from the school. Students are responsible for the care of textbooks, library books, and other school equipment and property. Students will be charged for lost or damaged books and equipment.

## **Activities & Organizations**

The purpose of the activities and organizations of The Lawson Academy is to promote scholarship, integrity and sisterhood/brotherhood. Each student is encouraged to become a part of the organized activity life of the campus. Information regarding specific clubs and organizations may be obtained from organization sponsors.

## **Field Trips/Assemblies**

The Lawson Academy hosts several assemblies each year. We choose our assemblies based on cultural and educational value they will add to our students. All students in grades 6 through 8 are provided access to on-campus assemblies at no cost. However, during the course of the year, some off-campus field trips **may** be priced to cover the cost of admission tickets, and/or transportation. Information about prospective field trip costs will be sent home with students well in advance of the actual event or activity. All parents are required to complete a field trip permission form that remains valid the entire school year.

## **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)**

The National Junior Honor Society is an honor organization whose purpose is to recognize students who excel in academics as well as leadership, citizenship, service, and character. This organization is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who maintain a grade point average of 93 or above, and an E average in conduct for each nine-week period.

## **Code of Student Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities**

The Lawson Academy teachers and administrative staff have the right and responsibility to respond to student acts of misconduct that interfere with the goals of education. Students and parents are expected to become familiar with the provisions outlined in The Lawson Academy *Code of Student Conduct*. Carefully review the responsibilities of the students, parents, teachers, administrators and the school board. All stakeholders must work together to ensure the educational and social development of the child.

Parents and students are to review the information below and sign and return the acknowledgement page.

- Level I** These offenses generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher, i.e., excessive talking, getting out of a seat without permission, or any other disruptive act which violates the S.T.R.O.N.G. principles.
- Level II** These offenses are more serious than Level I and/or represent the student's inability to control Level I misconduct. Level II offenses call for administrative intervention, i.e., disrespect of faculty/staff members, horse playing (or "playing"), or using vulgarity or profanity.
- Level III** These offenses seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, the school, and/or at school related activities, or are a continuance of repeated Level I or Level II offenses. Level III misconduct may result in student suspension and optional removal to an alternative education program, i.e., gang-related activity, stealing, persistent bullying, and deliberate destruction of school and/or The Lawson Academy family property.
- Level IV** Level IV misconduct involves more serious criminal offenses. This includes any felony, whether school related or not, inclusive of those for which expulsion is required.

### **Student Telephone Usage**

Lost/Stolen cell phone- The Lawson Academy will assume no responsibility for lost or stolen cell phone. Cell phones are brought at the STUDENT risk. Each classroom teacher will collect and return cell phones at the beginning and end of each class period. They will be stored in a numbered pouch assigned to specific students behind the teacher's desk during class time.

There will be a **\$ 20.00 return fee** if a student is caught using his/her cell phone during school hours.

Students may use the school telephone in the main office in case of an emergency. The telephone is not to be used for general conversation or to call home for non-emergencies. Parents are asked to remember that the office telephone is a business telephone. Students are only allowed to use the telephone before school, during their lunch period, and after school. **Students will not be allowed to leave class to make telephone calls.** Messages will be delivered to students only in case of emergency, otherwise the school staff will not be responsible for delivering messages to students.

### **Dress Code**

The Lawson Academy is a full uniform school. It is our collective belief that students develop school pride not only by attaining honor in extracurricular activities and in scholastic accomplishments, but also by maintaining high standards of behavior which are reflected in their dress and grooming. Boys and girls are expected to be clean, neat and appropriately dressed each day. Hairstyles and fashions, which cause or may cause a distraction are unacceptable.

**Uniforms may be purchased from Flynn O Hara**

### **Uniform Requirements for Girls Scholars**



- Uniform Black/ grey slacks (no leggings)
- Uniform Plaid skirt
- White long/short sleeve oxford dress blouse (polo style not acceptable)
- Appropriate grade level tie
- Black sweater/vest with Lawson Academy patch
- Black dress shoes (no slides allowed)
- Socks (white/black socks only)
- Jacket – solid black dark navy or grey with front zipper ( no outside graphics or hoodies allowed)
- Hair- Natural color ( distracting hair color or styles not allowed)
- Eye Wear – prescribed glasses only.
- **Students** will not be allowed to wear artificial eyelashes or fingernails of an unnatural length
- Caps, hats, head wraps or scarves of any kind are not allowed

### **Uniform Requirements for Boys Scholars**

- Uniform black or grey dress slacks
- Long/short sleeve oxford dress shirt ( polo style not accepted)
- Appropriate grade level tie
- Black sweater vest with Lawson Academy patch
- Black dress shoes only (no tennis or slide shoes allowed)
- Black dress socks only
- Jacket solid black, navy or grey must have a front zipper ( no outside graphics or hoodies allowed)
- Hair – Natural color, well groomed ( no distracting hair designs allowed)
- Visible ear piercings with earrings not allowed
- Caps, hats or head wraps of any kind are not allowed
- Necklaces or chains not allowed

**The administration of The Lawson Academy reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of clothing and/or accessories.**

### **Dress Code Violation Procedures**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Violation | Phone call to the parent and a violation letter sent home with the student.             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Violation | Parent Conference and loss of school privilege, including sports enrichment activities. |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Violation | Parent/Teacher Administrative Conference  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Violation | Possible suspension from The Lawson Academy   |

If the violation is one that can be corrected, such as removing a colored undershirt, it should be done so immediately. If a student is not wearing the appropriate top or bottom, a phone call will be made to the parent in an attempt to correct the problem. Frequent violations of the Student Dress Code could lead to more serious consequences up to suspension from The Lawson Academy and/or civil remuneration.

**On Spirit Fridays, ALL Students can wear the following:**

- The Lawson Academy Spirit T-shirt.
- Dark blue jeans (no writing, rips, gems or designs)
- Tennis shoes or close-toed shoes of student's choice

**On Free Dress Days, ALL Students can wear the following:**

**School appropriate clothing:**

- Shirt of student's choice (no negative slogans, no skulls, or offensive illustrations)
- Jeans (no khaki, ripped pants, embellishments or offensive illustrations)
- Close-toed shoes of student's choice

**Stay S.T.R.O.N.G Policy**

At The Lawson Academy, the acronym S.T.R.O.N.G has a special purpose for our students and is essential to every student's success:

- S** – Stay Seated
- T** –Track the speaker
- R** –Raise your hand before speaking
- O** – Offer constructive comments
- N** –Never distract others from learning
- G** –Gain respect by giving respect

**Bus Transportation**

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Transportation is provided as an auxiliary service and can be discontinued at any time per The Lawson Academy ***Bus Rider Contract***. Responsible student behavior is important for the safety of passengers. Bus conduct reports are forwarded to the principal if the student exhibits misconduct. Please review the bus contract with your child, sign it, and return the document to school and parent contact is made immediately. Eight grade students will have the opportunity to meet with their mentor during lunch period in a designated area of the school.

**Cafeteria Management Plan**

The Lawson Academy students eat in the cafeteria or in their classrooms at the designated lunch periods. The assigned lunch period is an opportunity to enjoy being with friends and enjoying a well-prepared lunch from the cafeteria or sack lunch from home. Occasionally, students do have working lunches, eating in the classroom so they can continue studying or receiving instruction. Students are required to maintain their eating areas and are to remain seated until they are dismissed. These guidelines will assist all in making the lunchtime a more enjoyable experience.

**Cellular Telephones/Electronic Devices**

The use or operation of cellular telephones, electronic devices or any other type of electronic communication system on The Lawson Academy campus or at functions during school hours is **prohibited**. In addition to

disciplinary action, the use or operation of these devices will result in confiscation. These devices will only be released to the parent after school and only on Fridays. Parents will be charged a **\$20.00** administrative fee if the device is confiscated. These devices are not permitted on either campus and all students are subject to the same disciplinary action and confiscation policy. The school will not be responsible for **any** electronic device that is lost or stolen.

Cell phones are bought at the STUDENT's risk. Each classroom teacher will collect and return cell phones at the beginning and end of each class period. They will be stored in a numbered pouch located behind the teacher's desk.

### **Fundraising**

All collections of fees from students and all fundraising activities must be approved by a campus administrator. Students are not allowed to sell or purchase non-approved items.

### **Damage to School Property**

The Lawson Academy students take pride in their school. They must not destroy or deface school property. Any scholar who participates in acts of vandalism on campus may be referred to the proper law enforcement agency. In any case, students will be required to pay restitution or perform civil remuneration.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent concerns can best be resolved at the campus level, where most issues arise. Arrangements can be made for parent conferences with individual teachers, and school administrators. These meetings must be prearranged and cannot be guaranteed on a walk-in basis.

Parents should call the school at (713)225-1551 to schedule a conference. Upon arriving to campus for a scheduled visit, parents are not to report directly to the classroom. A visitor's pass must be secured from the main office. Conferences are not scheduled during teachers' instructional periods.

To resolve concerns, parents, guardians, and/or students can meet with a teacher at appropriate times to discuss existing challenges. If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with the teachers' decision or explanation, they can schedule an appointment to meet with the school principal.

### **Health Services**

The Lawson Academy does not staff a full-time nurse on either the boys' or the girls' campus. If a student is to take medication during the school day, the parent must supply the school with a doctor's permit, allowing the school staff or the student to administer medication. Otherwise, The Lawson Academy staff is not permitted to administer over the counter medication of any kind to students.

All medication that is administered on campus must be dispensed from the bottle/container provided by the pharmacist and cannot be transferred into a baggie or other receptacle. The Lawson Academy staff will not be permitted to dispense medication to students without written parent consent. All medication must be registered with the Director of Schools and registrar and, thereafter, can be administered in the school's main office.

### **Medication Policy**

According to state policy, a school is required to dispense medications only to students with long-term chronic illnesses or disabilities where failure to take the medication would jeopardize the student's health or educational progress. The following rules govern our ability to assist your child:

1. A physician's order for administration of medication must be on file at the school.
2. The medication must be in the original prescription bottle with the student's name, physician's name, medication name, schedule of administration, dosage, and date clearly marked.

It is the students' responsibility to remember to come to the main office and take their medications. The school is not always able to remind the students of daily medications.

### **Texas Immunization Requirements**

**Varicella Vaccine:** All students entering seventh grade will be required to have two (2) doses of varicella vaccine. A written statement from a parent (or legal guardian or managing conservator), school nurse, or physician attesting to a child's positive history of varicella disease (chickenpox), or of varicella immunity, is acceptable in lieu of either dose of varicella vaccine.

**Tetanus, Diphtheria, and acellular pertussis-containing vaccine (Tdap):** All students entering the seventh grade will be required to have one dose of Tdap vaccine, students in the seventh grade will be required to have a booster dose of Tdap only if it has been five years since their last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine, students in grade eight is required to have a booster dose of Tdap if it has been ten years since their previous dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine, Td is acceptable in lieu of Tdap if a contraindication to pertussis exists.

**Meningococcal Vaccine:** All students entering seventh grade will be required to have one dose of meningococcal vaccine.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Fire Drill**

State law mandates that the school conducts monthly fire and emergency evacuation drills. At the request of their teachers, students are expected to exit the building quickly and quietly. It is imperative that students follow directions so that teachers can take attendance and insure that every student has safely cleared the building. During these drills, students' failure to adhere to these expectations is considered a severe behavior violation.

#### **Lost and Found**

Many items are lost and found during the school year. We strongly encourage students to be responsible by taking care to secure their personal items to avoid losses. Unclaimed student items will be donated to local charities. **The Lawson Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

## **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is organized parent engagement activity that is developed to maintain a positive communication with parents and The Lawson Academy staff. The PTO/Parent Engagement meets on the third Thursday of each month.

## **Student Supplies**

A school supply list has been provided to all parents. Students are required to enter each classroom ready to learn. Please make sure that your child comes to school with the following materials daily:

- Interactive Notebook
- Notebook paper
- Pens and pencils

All consumable school supplies should be replenished by parents/guardians on a regular basis

## **Honor Code**

In accordance with the mission of the school, The Lawson Academy students will not participate in dishonesty, cheating, stealing, bullying or harassing.

The Lawson Academy students will conclude an orientation annually by promising, in writing, to uphold the Honor Code:

*I pledge to uphold The Lawson Academy Honor Code in letter and in spirit throughout this school year.*

The Lawson Academy students will also use a pledge on all tests, projects, papers, reports and long-term assignments:

*I pledge that I have upheld The Lawson Academy Honor Code in letter and in spirit.*

**“The Lawson Academy students will not participate in dishonesty, cheating, stealing, bullying or harassing...”**

## **Dishonesty**

At The Lawson Academy, we believe it is vital to tell the truth at all times, recognizing there is honor in telling the truth even when that truth reveals a mistake or an error in judgment. It requires courage to face mistakes and accept responsibility for their consequences.

Telling the truth includes explaining accurately why work was not completed on time or was incomplete, why one was absent or late from school, why one missed an obligation, how one interacted with other students or a

teacher, and any other specifics about one's actions. A student who makes false excuses for his or her behavior has not upheld our Honor Code.

### **Cheating**

At The Lawson Academy, we believe students must engage in honest scholarship. Honest scholarship in student work means that the product comes from a student's own mind and effort. Such work includes all tests, exams, long-range projects, and homework. Written work, for instance, needs to reflect a student's ideas, organization, punctuation, and sentence structure. To help families and students alike understand types of habits and help which are suitable or not, we provide the following examples of permissible and non-permissible help that can be given and/or received, keeping in mind that the spirit of the law is more important than the letter. All families should review and discuss these examples at home.

Students who give or receive help with the intent of providing or gaining an unfair academic advantage are not living up to the Honor Code.

### **Permissible Help From Fellow Students and Parents**

- Telling another student what the assignment is
- Repeating specific directions given by the teacher
- Identifying weakness in organization, style, word choice or content. It is permissible to comment: "This paragraph is weak," or "These words are misspelled," or "You didn't answer all the questions."
- Sharing notes (unless the notes are the assignment)
- Showing another student how to do a problem by using another example
- Brainstorming ideas on creative writing assignments
- Reviewing material in preparation for a test or exam
- Discussing concepts that were addressed in class or engaging in discussion of course material for better understanding

### **Non-Permissible Help From Fellow Students and Parents**

- Giving another student your answer or answers to any given question
- Telling another student how to re-write something (i.e. "...just write this down.")
- Sharing with another student any content that is part of an answer

- Letting someone read your answers, knowing or suspecting he or she intends to paraphrase those answers
- Showing or explaining to another student where to find information for an assignment (i.e. “look on page 34 for the answer”)
- Looking at another student’s paper and/or using his or her ideas or answers
- Using a calculator when not permitted
- Having another person, including a parent, assist with the production of an assignment, including typing or word processing written work. (Exceptions are made for students with special learning needs.)
- Discussing any aspect of a quiz, test or exam before all students have taken the test
- Letting a project partner do all of the work and then putting your name on the final project
- Using any part of someone else’s work without proper acknowledgement

### **Homework, Papers, Projects**

Our Honor Code does not expressly address plagiarism, though it is clearly a form of lying, cheating, and stealing. When doing research, students may use the ideas, even the exact words, of other authors. Whether quoted directly or paraphrased, however, such borrowed material must be properly cited. Students will learn and practice how to use proper citations in their composition classes. All teachers assigning papers requiring research will reemphasize the importance of proper citations and will expect compliance.

All rough and final drafts of assigned papers and written projects must reflect the student’s ideas, organization, punctuation, and sentence structure. All projects must reflect the student’s own labor, design, and artwork.

### **Exams, Tests, Quizzes**

Honest scholarship in test situations means that students refrain from looking at other students’ papers, even if the information is not used. Obviously, taking answers from another test and using them or looking at one’s notes or a text is forbidden. Any time a student is unable to finish a test during a given period and the teacher allows the student to return later to complete it, the student may not talk to others about the test or look at related materials in the interim. Moreover, if any aspect of a test (content, format or level of difficulty) is discussed between students who have and who have not taken the test, students on both the giving and receiving end of this conversation are guilty of breaching the Honor Code. Students also may not give advance notice to others of pop quizzes.

Collaboration among students is often directed by faculty, but students should know that unless specific directions for collaboration are given by their teacher, it is understood that assignments are to be done individually. When appropriate, students will be encouraged by the teacher to help each other by critiquing writing, clarifying the directions, comparing the length of answers, sharing resource books, discussing a group project or lab experience in preparation for writing it up, and giving examples.

There are several very difficult “gray” areas. For instance, we strongly discourage students from comparing answers (the familiar “What did you get on number 12?”) because while the intent is simply to identify errors (permissible), the result is often to supply answers (a violation).

Similarly, we urge parents to use discretion when providing correct spellings; in many cases, looking the word up and copying it from a dictionary stimulate better retention.

### **Stealing**

At The Lawson Academy, we believe in respect for one another's property. A student who demonstrates this respect never defaces anything that belongs to another student or the school, never "borrows" property (including money, clothing, books, academic work, papers, calculators, uniforms, art supplies, library books or classroom supplies) without specific permission, never takes or hides food or other items that were intended for another person, never takes things from the "Lost and Found" that are not his, and never violates a student's or teacher's privacy by entering her room, computer files or folder, locker, or other personal property without permission.

Use of the school's computers and network is a special privilege, and analogous standards of integrity apply in this realm. Tampering with operating systems or other students' files or folders is analogous to "taking" or "hiding" property. Using another person's E-mail account is dishonest. The *Guidelines for Acceptable Internet Use and Statement of Student Responsibility* signed by all students elaborates on these guidelines.

### **Harassing Behavior and Bullying**

At The Lawson Academy, we believe every person deserves to be treated with sensitivity and respect. Students who uphold the Honor Code will strive to make all members of the community feel accepted from the first moment they arrive at the school and will treat everyone, regardless of physical, mental, or other differences, with respect.

As a community, we will not tolerate harassment of any kind, whether it is of a general nature or falls within the specific examples listed below.

- Ethnic harassment: abuse of an individual or group on the basis of ethnic origin
- Religious harassment: abuse of an individual or group on the basis of religion
- Gender harassment: abuse of an individual or group on the basis of gender
- Sexual Orientation harassment: abuse of an individual or group on the basis of sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment: use of sexuality to harass
- Cyberbullying: use of technology to harass, threaten, or defame another person's character

Harassment includes both the more easily identified acts of verbal, written or physical abuse, (i.e. persistent derogatory comments, persistent demeaning remarks, threatening remarks, racial or ethnic slurs, leering references to someone's body) and the subtler, but equally damaging forms, such as graffiti and stereotypical jokes.

In our world, to "look the other way" is often to condone, and there is no better time than the Middle School years to harness our students' idealism by joining together to make our school a community where honesty and integrity prevail.

The staff hopes to create an environment in which students expect their peers to adhere to the Honor Code and feel comfortable reporting violations or confronting one another. Because the age of our students and the size



of our student body make the burden of *required* reporting of violations too great, students will be encouraged, and taught how, to speak up when they observe another student violating the Honor Code. Likewise, all other members of the school community – parents, teachers, and staff – will be called upon to do their absolute best to protest, in an appropriate way, behavior that lacks integrity.

### **Bullying**

Bullying occurs when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he/she has difficulty defending himself or herself. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. “Cyber-bullying” occurs when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both side, or at least have been instigated by a minor against a minor. Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyber-stalking.

It is important for each student to report any bullying or threats, whether made during school or away from school, to the nearest teacher or adult at school as soon as possible so school officials may take appropriate action. Similarly, parents who have concerns about bullying should meet with the campus administrator. If your child is receiving SpEd/504 services, go to the ARD committee to focus on the problem and arrange a plan to intervene at the campus level.

## **THE LAWSON ACADEMY Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Lawson Academy is a “Bully-Free” School, and as such, acts in full compliance with House Bill 1942 as well as the policies outlined by the United States Department of Education. This Anti-Bullying policy is in compliance with state of Texas requirements that school board trustees adopt a policy on bullying that prohibits the bullying and the retaliation against any person.

### **Definition of bullying –**

Every individual should have the right to be spared oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation, in school as in society at large. A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. The following are some negative actions associated with bullying:

- **Physical aggression** – Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury, i.e., hitting, kicking, destroying property, claiming to have a weapon or referencing family members who will
- **Social aggression** – Engaging in socially alienating behaviors that interfere with another student’s willingness to participate in the educational process, i.e., spreading rumors, excluding someone from a group, persuading other students to give someone else the silent treatment
- **Verbal aggression** – Engaging in threats or other acts of intimidation that interfere with another student’s desire or willingness to participate in the educational process, such as name calling, teasing, threatening, or making intimidating phone calls
- **Written aggression** – note writing, graffiti, slam books, cyber-bullying

- **Sexual harassment** – comments or actions of a sexual nature which are unwelcome and make the recipient uncomfortable, i.e., inappropriate touching, grabbing, comments about someone’s body, sexting
- **Racial and ethnic harassment** – Making comments containing racial or ethnic content which are unwelcome and make the recipient uncomfortable, i.e., ethnic jokes, racial name calling, racial slurs

The Lawson Academy Code of Student Conduct considers bullying a Level III disciplinary offense. A student may be suspended, placed in in-school suspension, or, if serious or persistent behavior occurs, removed from the regular classroom, suspended up to expulsion from school.

**Campus procedures for addressing incidents of bullying --**

If a student believes that he or she is the victim of another person’s bullying, that student is expected to immediately inform a teacher and allow the teacher to conduct a timely investigation. \* If the teacher is able to substantiate the student’s claim, then the teacher will inform the appropriate campus administrator.

Once the administrator has been informed and/or has substantiated that the student has engaged in bullying, the administrator will immediately contact parents and schedule separate conferences between the aggressor, the victim, any witness(es), their parents and the academy counselor.

**Campus responsibilities related to bullying prevention policies and procedures –**

All faculty and staff have engaged in professional development related to bullying, and they are trained in the acceptable and effective methods they must practice.

**The Lawson Academy District responsibilities related to bullying prevention policies and procedures –**

The procedures for reporting bullying will be posted on the district’s Internet website to the extent practicable.

\*If a student does not follow the correct procedure and retaliates against his/her aggressor, he/she will be susceptible to the same consequences that govern students’ discipline. (See The Lawson Academy Code of Student Conduct).

**Title I at The Lawson Academy**

Title I is a federally funded program designed to improve educational opportunities by providing aid to elementary and secondary education. The intent of Title I is to expand learning opportunities while supplementing basic skills instruction in reading and math. This program serves students who need to improve their reading and/or math skills.

The goals of the Title I program are to:

- Develop positive attitudes toward reading/language arts and math
- Individualize reading/language arts and math instruction according to student needs
- Increase reading/language arts and math achievement
- Increase student self-esteem
- Involve children with parent(s) in reading/language arts and math activities at school and at home

The Lawson Academy is a School-wide Title I school. Title I Schools that operate under a School-wide Plan use the funds received to provide academic services to eligible children who have been identified by the school as failing or most at-risk of failing to meet the State's student achievement standards. The Title I program is designed to reach as many students as possible providing them with the opportunities and support needed to achieve higher standards of performance within the classroom. Individual or small group help is provided to

students who are “struggling” with a given concept – determined by the classroom teacher through the use of pre/post testing, daily work, and informal observations.

Children are selected to receive services on the basis of multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the district and supplemented by the school. Services for these eligible students must provide instruction that will enable the students to reach proficiency.

### **Highly Qualified Staff**

The Title I staff has met the criteria set by the State of Texas for highly qualified/ certified teachers.

### **Parents Right to Know**

According to Student Success Initiative (SSI), parents have the right to know the qualification of his/her child’s teacher(s). Please contact the school’s principal for this information, if you so desire.

### **Parental Involvement Policy Statement of Purpose**

The Lawson Academy is committed to the goal of providing quality education for every student and recognizes that some students may need the extra assistance available through the Title I Program. It also recognizes the extremely important role a parent plays in the educational success of a student. As such, this **Parental** involvement policy has been established to promote parental involvement within the school.

The Lawson Academy believes that activities to increase involvement are a vital part of the Title I Program. Parents will have an opportunity to design, implement, evaluate, and suggest changes to improve the program. Components of the Title I Program include: parental notification, parental in-service, student program reports, parent-teacher conferences, parent visitation, parent advisory committees, meetings, in-service for teachers, announcements, and policy dissemination.

### **Notification of Progress**

Student academic progress will be monitored, and written notification will be provided parents monthly, through the use of progress reports and report cards. The Lawson Academy instructors are also available for consultation during scheduled parent-teacher conferences or ad hoc held once each semester. Parents are encouraged to talk to the Title I staff if they have concerns about their child’s progress or the Title I program.

### **Student/Parent/Teacher Compact**

A student/parent/teacher compact has been established to encourage shared responsibility for high student performance and achievement. This compact will be sent home at the beginning of the school year, with the appropriate The Lawson Academy Student-Parent Handbook. Parents are encouraged to discuss the compact with their child.

### **Types of Parental Involvement**

Parents can become involved with their child’s education in many ways. The Lawson Academy values the at-home contributions and those that take place at school. Reading to students at home, helping with homework, or discussing the day’s activities over the dinner table are as important as volunteering at school. The Lawson

Academy will work to assist parents in understanding the academic standards and assessments, help parents work with their child(ren) to raise achievement, and plan activities throughout the year for families.

### **Evaluation of the Title I Program**

Parents of students participating in the Title I program will have the opportunity to evaluate the Title I program. This evaluation will include a section pertaining to the effectiveness of the parental involvement policy, areas of strengths and weaknesses, and barriers to be overcome. The Title I staff, with the help of the PAC, will use this information to evaluate the program and to make changes within the program as needed.

### **Special Education**

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline

**Special Education/504 Referral Contact Person: Terrell Hutchinson  
Email- [thutchi22@aol.com](mailto:thutchi22@aol.com)  
Phone Number: 713-225-1551**

## **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

### Special Education Referrals:

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies.

Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person:

Phone Number:

Section 504 Referrals:

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person:

Phone Number:

Additional Information:

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

Notes

