

RIVER HORSE ACADEMY

Hutto Independent School District



Parent & Student Handbook 2021-2022

River Horse Academy
309 East Live Oak Street
Hutto, TX 78634
Office: 512-759-3020
Fax: 512-759-3035
Hours: 9:00-4:25 PM
Drew McConaughay, Principal

Welcome

We are happy you have decided to become a part of the River Horse Academy (RHA) Family! The staff at RHA prides itself on service to its community and a passion for educating at-risk students. We are proud to serve this purpose by inspiring the students at RHA to embrace excellence in learning, life, character, and career!"

Mission

RHA inspires students to embrace excellence in learning, life, character, & career.

Vision

RHA aspires to build life-long learners through relevant and individualized instruction unique to each student and career pathway.

Motto

Make excellence your habit!

ex·cel·lence

/ˈeks(ə)ləns/

noun

1. the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.

RHA Mission: *To inspire students to embrace **excellence** in learning, life, character, & career.*

"MAKE EXCELLENCE YOUR HABIT!"

RHA Staff

Principal: Drew McConnaughay cary.mcconnaughay@huttoisd.net Ext. 1601

Secretary: Benita Alexander benita.alexander@huttoisd.net Ext. 1608

Counselor: Melissa Barnes melissa.barnes@huttoisd.net Ext. 1610

Teachers:

- English: Dana Harris dana.harris@huttoisd.net Ext. 1604
- Math: Robert Bickerton robert.bickerton@huttoisd.net Ext. 1605
- Science: Cheryl Frazier cheryl.frazier@huttoisd.net Ext. 1602
- Social Studies: Aaron Lawson aaron.lawson@huttoisd.net Ext. 1603
- Special Education: Richard Paz richard.paz@huttoisd.net Ext. 1609

Parents are encouraged to contact the principal, counselor, or advising teacher with any questions or concerns regarding their student.

Teacher Mentor

All students enrolled at River Horse Academy will be assigned a teacher mentor. Students will meet routinely with their mentor to review attendance, productivity, and behavior. In addition, mentor teachers will attend all pertinent meetings (ARDs, 504s, LPACs, etc.) pertaining to their student caseload. Students will also meet with the RHA principal and counselor on a regular basis to review the student's progress on their graduation plan which was developed during their orientation meeting. Students are expected to keep track of their academic progress by using their personally designed "Personal Pathway 2 Graduation (PP2G)." Students and RHA staff are expected to communicate student progress to parents/guardians on a weekly basis.

Academic Probation

If a student is not progressing academically according to their PP2G, a meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian, Faculty Mentor, Counselor, and RHA principal. The student will be placed on academic probation for a period determined by the RHA principal, Counselor, and Faculty Mentor. **Probation will include switching to a full 8 hour school day or a potential return to Hutto High School.**

Intervention Options

Students will be afforded the opportunity, depending on individual student needs, to attend intervention sessions as. Students will be able to attend interventions which focus on End-of-Course (EOC/ "STAAR") preparation and post-secondary readiness through the Texas Success Initiative (TSI). EOC preparation will review specific concepts and testing strategies to help students be successful on their EOC exams. The post-secondary readiness intervention class will assist students in TSI prep, identifying various post-secondary options, and preparing students for life after high school.

Attendance

Attendance is not only of extreme importance, but it's *required by law!* Students are expected to attend for the length of their designated assignment (8 or 4 hours). RHA has three academic blocks of time in which students are able to attend: 9:00-4:25, 9:00-12:45 or 12:45-4:25.

- The law requires a student between the ages of 6 and 18, to attend school and District-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused.
- A student may not be given credit for a subject unless they have attended 90% of the classes for that year.
- If a student is absent without excuse for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send home warning letters. Letters will be sent home when the student has missed 3, 6, or 9 days or parts of days. The letters will state students and/or parents may be filed on in a court of law for a criminal truancy charge.
- If a student is absent without excuse for 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period, the school must file criminal truancy charges on the student and/or parents.

- In order to receive credit for a class in which the student has missed too many days, the hours owed must be made up by the end of the semester. Community service and summer school attendance are options to make up the hours owed. However, the one hour a week minimum volunteering time will not count towards the hours owed.

Procedures for Absences

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) should call the office at 512-759-3020, Ext.1608 to report an absence.
- In the event a parent/guardian has not notified the RHA office within 3 business days of an absence, RHA staff will contact a parent /guardian to determine the reason for the absence.
- Written verification of the absence must be received by RHA staff within 48 hours of a students' return to school or the absence will be "unexcused."
- Written documentation (note) from the parent(s)/guardian(s) for absences must be presented within 48 hours for the day in order for it to be considered "excused."
- Official documentation/note must include the following:
 - The date of the absence
 - The reason for the absence
 - Student's name
 - Student's ID number
 - Parent/guardian's contact number
 - Must be signed by the parent/guardian
- Notes cannot be sent via email, although the note can be scanned (including the above information) and sent through e-mail or faxed to the campus secretary.
- The DAEP staff will contact the parent to verify the legitimacy of the note if needed.
- A doctor's note is required if the child is absent for 4 or more consecutive days.
- Absences will be marked as "excused" on a case by case basis provided all previously listed items are included, or for any one of the following reasons:
 - Observance of a religious holy day; or,
 - Attendance to Court; or,
 - A doctor's visit; or,
 - Visit to a college campus (2 per year if Jr. or Sr.)
 - Attendance to a family member's funeral; or,
 - Any absence pertaining to other exemptions of the Compulsory Attendance Law.

Visiting HHS

If an RHA student needs to visit Hutto High School, they must report to the main office and be prepared to show identification. Students are only allowed at Hutto High School if they are taking care of official school business. **RHA students may not return to the campus to visit friends or teachers.** Any RHA student caught at HHS will receive a Criminal Trespass Warning issued by Hutto ISD PD.

Leaving Campus

Once a student arrives at school, he/she is not permitted to leave the campus without administrative and parental permission. Leaving without permission will result in disciplinary action. If a student needs to leave during the day, a parent/ guardian will be notified and must consent.

Tardies

Classes begin at 9:00 and end at 4:25. For the AM Cohort, students are to be in the building from 9:00 until 12:45 PM. For the PM Cohort, students are expected to be in the building from 12:45 until 4:25 PM. Students are expected to be in the building and in class on time. Students who arrive after 9:00 AM or 12:45 PM will be counted tardy. Repeated instances of tardiness could result in disciplinary action including a referral to Truancy Court.

Transportation

Transportation is available, but will take 2-3 days for transportation services to be added to routes. Parents must provide transportation for the initial days of enrollment at RHA. Need for transportation must be indicated at the student's intake meeting.

Breakfast & Lunch

Students may arrive 20 minutes early to eat breakfast or lunch. A sack breakfast or lunch will be available if the student informs RHA personnel that they plan to eat lunch or breakfast. Breakfast is available at 7:40AM and lunch is available at 11:40AM. Breakfast and lunch will only be allowed to be eaten in areas designated by the principal. Students may bring outside food or drinks, but **deliveries via Door Dash, etc. will not be allowed.**

Curriculum & Instruction

RHA uses a Blended Learning approach to learning. We use Edgenuity, an online learning management system, as the backbone for instructional delivery. This platform is reinforced with individualized and differentiated instruction from a certified classroom teacher along with the implementation of Project-Based Learning. In Edgenuity, students are assigned a predetermined amount of coursework at a time, and are expected to be self-starters whether working independently or with their peers. In addition, students are given a prescribed percentage for which they're required to complete on a daily basis. Students are allowed to work on their courses at home asynchronously with one exception: Pre-tests and Post-tests are required to be completed in the classroom. The use of the HISD network and technology is for academic purposes only.

Dress Code

Students at RHA will follow the dress code standards outlined on page 68 of the Hutto ISD Student & Parent Handbook ([HISD Student & Parent Handbook](#)). If the RHA administrator determines a student's grooming or clothing violates the dress code as outlined within the HISD Student & Parent Handbook, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at

school (this includes masks, etc.). If unable to do so, or the student refuses to comply, the student will be sent home. Repeated offenses will result in more serious disciplinary action.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices must remain turned off during the instructional day. If a student uses an electronic device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated and kept in the principal's office for the remainder of the day.. If a student refuses to give the device to their teacher, the student will then meet with the principal. If the student does not surrender their phone to the principal, a \$15 fine will be issued and the electronic device will not be returned until the \$15 fine is paid. Should an electronic device become a persistent issue, further disciplinary actions may be taken. In regards to headphones, students will be issued a set of headphones for the year. If a student wants to use their own bluetooth listening devices, their phone must be turned into the teacher. If a parent and/or employer needs to get in contact with a student, they can contact the front office (512-759-3020, Ext. 1608) and ask to speak with the student.

Medication

All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the principal's office in a locked box and administered by an authorized district employee. The only exception is if a student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy.

Music

Students have the privilege of listening to music from their District issued device, not their personal device. Exceptions can be made if the student surrenders the phone to the teacher during the instructional time. Students will be given five minutes at the start of the class period to select their music. If the student begins to exceed that time limit and if listening to music becomes a distraction, the privilege of listening to music will be taken away.

Tobacco & E-Cigarettes

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), or any other electronic vaporizing device on school property at any time or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

Contracts & Agreements

In addition to this handbook, all students and parents are required to sign an Attendance Agreement and a Personal Pathway to Graduation (PP2G). These contracts will be kept on file at RHA.

- **Attendance Agreement:** States that students agree to follow the Compulsory Attendance Laws. Excessive absences will result in full day enrollment and/or truancy charges. Further issues can result in the removal from River Horse Academy and the potential of being sent back to Hutto High School.

- **Personal Pathway to Graduation (PP2G):** Students are expected to work at a more accelerated pace than a normal high school student. Therefore, RHA students should work at a minimum pace of earning 12 credits in a year; this amounts to the completion of a course every week and a half. However, each student's Personal Pathway 2 Graduation (PP2G) will be unique to the student and could possibly mandate that they complete more than the minimum. A student's failure to meet the minimum productivity requirement may result in a recommendation for removal from the River Horse Academy program and return to Hutto High School.

Levels System:

Upon entry to RHA, students will be assigned "levels" which will determine their schedule and need for intervention with the teachers. Listed below are the level specifications and requirements for moving from one level to the next:

- **Level 1: Regular 8 Hour Academic Day w/ Accelerated Instruction**
 - Students will attend a full, regular in-person school day
 - Students will meet with their mentor teacher every day
 - Students will receive targeted intervention for core content
 - Students will be required to meet a daily percentage completion in course progress
 - Benchmarks to Advance:
 - Student must have 18 credits.
 - Must have completed at least 3 EOCs
 - 90% attendance or completion of make-up hours.
 - Cohort must not have graduated.
- **Level 2: Flexible Day 4 Hour Day w/ Accelerated Instruction**
 - Students must attend in-person for 4 hours everyday with the rest of the school day being virtual. The mentor teacher in collaboration with the student, parent, and principal will set the schedule.
 - Students will meet with their mentor teacher every day.
 - Students will be required to meet a daily percentage completion in course progress.
 - Benchmarks to Advance:
 - Student must be within 4 credits of graduation with all Jr. core courses completed.
 - On-level with graduating cohort (no credit recovery)
 - At least 3 EOCs completed
 - TSI Taken
 - CPR & Police Officer Training complete
 - FAFSA complete
 - Apply Texas complete
 - 90% attendance or completion of make-up hours.

- **Level 3: Personalized Flexible Day**

- Students must attend at least 4 hours per day on a schedule designed by them and their mentor teacher.
- Students will be required to meet a daily percentage completion in course progress or meet in-person for certain classes (per mentor teacher mandate).
- Students should graduate from this level.
- 90% attendance or completion of make-up hours.

Academic Progress & Tracking

Upon entry to River Horse Academy, the student will meet with the counselor to construct their Personal Pathway to Graduation (PP2G) which will outline the courses and timeline towards graduation. This plan reflects credits received from their home campus and credits toward graduation which must be completed at River Horse Academy. The goals for graduation and completion of credits will be decided on by the student, mentor teacher, and counselor. This information will be communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) following the meeting. RHA faculty mentors will then monitor the student's progress and mentor them throughout their time at RHA to graduation. In addition, students are expected to track their own progress within the PP2G while faculty will send parental communication regarding progress weekly. An exit interview will be held once students have earned 22 credits. During this interview, future goals, credits remaining, and final paperwork for approval will be discussed.

Each student will be enrolled in a predetermined amount of courses based on academic progress, student input, and the discretion of the counselor, mentor teacher, and/or principal. Upon successful completion of a course, the mentor teacher will notify the RHA counselor who will work with HISD registrars to apply the credits to the student's transcript. The student will then begin working on another course.

Students will rotate between four classrooms. Interventions for STAAR EOC and TSI are built into the schedule. Students will attend the intervention sessions according to need. Students are required to work on their assigned course in their assigned classroom unless given explicit permission from the teacher to work on a different course.

Graduation Requirements

- Complete credits as required for their specific Graduation Plan
- Pass all state required EOC (STAAR) tests:
 - Algebra I
 - Biology
 - English I
 - English II
 - US History
- Obtain at least one CCMR Indicator (Usually through College Prep Math)
- Take the TSI
- Complete Apply Texas & FAFSA

- Complete CPR & Peace Office Training
- Make-up any hours owed due to non-attendance
- Pay all fines/dues and return all library books, calculators or other items checked out from Hutto High School

Once their transcript and paperwork have been approved, students who complete all the above requirements will be considered “graduated.” This process normally takes 3-5 business days after completion of their coursework, so students are expected to continue attending class during that time. Once the paperwork is complete and approved by HISD registrars, students will not have to return to class. These students will be able to participate in all senior activities such as senior trip, prom, graduation activities, and the graduation ceremony.

Students who have completed the required credits for graduation but have not passed all State required STAAR tests, will continue to report to RHA for EOC tutoring. They will attend intervention classes for each EOC until the required test is taken and passed.

Junior students who complete the required credits but have not passed all STAAR EOCs, will remain classified as a “junior” until tests are passed. Only when all tests are passed will the student be moved to “senior” status and will then be able to participate in senior activities. They will attend intervention classes for each EOC until the required test is taken and passed.

River Horse Academy is a Privilege

Attendance at River Horse Academy is a privilege that can reward a student with the opportunity for accelerated graduation, an innovative learning environment, additional help from a small teacher-to-student ratio, and class times which are able to accommodate job opportunities and life circumstances. Please note, spaces at River Horse Academy are limited. Students may lose their opportunity to attend by not meeting the academic performance or attendance standards and/or by behavior which suggests the student’s placement in River Horse Academy is not in the best interest of the student to the school. Students must take this opportunity seriously, or it will be revoked. Make **excellence** your habit and success will follow!

RHA STUDENT AFFIRMATION

Hutto ISD seeks to inspire **excellence**. I *am* a Hutto ISD student, therefore...

I am a reflection of my parents, my family, my school district, and my community.

I will learn from my challenges and always find positive ways to overcome them.

The mistakes I made yesterday do not define the person I will be tomorrow.

I will seek to get better every day in at least one way.

I control my emotions; they don't control me.

No one can make me feel inferior without my consent.

I will never give up on myself, even if others have given up on me.

I will make **excellence** my habit, because...

I am a Hutto ISD student!!!

-Adapted from Dr. Lakesha Whitfield's, "Student Affirmation"

RHA Parent & Student Handbook Acknowledgement on next page.



RHA Parent & Student Handbook Acknowledgement 2021-2022

- I understand that the RHA handbook contains information my child and I may need during the school year and understand that it is my child's responsibility to abide by the standards and expectations outlined in the RHA Parent & Student Handbook.
- I also understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Hutto ISD Student & Parent Handbook and the Hutto ISD Student Code of Conduct.
- I also understand as the parent/guardian I play a vital role in the academic and behavioral success of my student and agree to cooperate with RHA staff in developing the academic and behavioral growth of my student.
- I and my student agree to comply with all stipulations presented in the River Horse Academy Parent & Student Handbook.

Printed Student Name: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Printed Parent #1 Name: _____

Signature of Parent #1: _____ Date: _____

Printed Parent #2 Name: _____

Signature of Parent #2: _____ Date: _____