



Horizons School Handbook



Welcome to Horizons! We want to help you achieve your highest potential.

The mission of Horizons School is to assist students toward self actualization by providing a stimulating environment academically, socially and artistically within a diverse supportive community.

Horizons' Philosophy

The intent is to develop in students those values and skills which ensure maximum opportunities. Students learn real-life skills through active participation in the classroom as well as in other aspects of the school. They learn responsibility, decision making skills, and problem solving skills through active participation in the management of the school community. Such a leadership role empowers students, giving them the knowledge that they have control of personal decisions and interpersonal interactions.

Mutual education is the basis for teaching and learning in Horizons' classrooms. This philosophy depends on an underlying respect for each person involved and recognizes the potential for every individual's unique contribution to the process. Therefore, we encourage diversity, participation and exploration by giving students increased responsibility. Horizons recognizes peer interaction as an important factor in classroom teaching, in school governance, and in the development of social skills, peer leadership abilities, and effective communication skills.

Goals

- To build a positive self concept through expanding confidence in academic, social and physical abilities.
- To promote academic excellence.
- To encourage students with subject proficiency to accelerate into advanced classes and individual projects.
- To help students make the transition from external motivation to self-motivation.
- To provide an appropriate structure to meet each student's needs, at each phase of her or his growth, with the objective of self-discipline.
- To empower students to develop themselves fully.
- To teach decision making and problem solving.
- To assist each student's acquisition of a sense of personal responsibility.
- To strengthen leadership potential and effectiveness.
- To provide experiences to improve interpersonal skills.
- To grow from a community of many nationalities, races, religions, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.
- To encourage a sense of belonging and contributing to a community.
- To support opportunities to develop personal creativity.

History

Horizons School is a subsidiary of the Educational Center for Applied Ekistics. After a preparatory year, Dr. Lorraine Wilson and Les Garber opened Horizons in August 1978, beginning with four students and six staff members in an office at West Peachtree

and Thirteenth Street. In the second year, the school lease-purchased a small building at Piedmont and Tenth Street. The fourth year began at the Poneana, a fifteen unit apartment building at 229 Ponce de Leon. During the 1985 - 86 school year a group of students and staff built the main building on the present campus. In 2002, after more than two decades of service impacting the lives of so many students, Dr. Wilson passed away. In the spring of 2006, Horizons celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. The school now encompasses over four acres, three school buildings, four houses, a green house, a garden, a barn, a shed, and a quarter interest in the Lake Claire Pool.

Democratic School

Since its inception in 1978, Horizons High School has been a democratic school. Each week students and staff meet to plan and schedule, deal with rule infractions, recognize positive contributions (“kudos”) of the community members, and discuss issues. When matters come to a vote, decisions are made by voting. Most school rules are common sense – the rationale for the resistance to codification. Working together assures all members take responsibility for the smooth running of the school.

Accreditation / Membership

Horizons High School and the Elementary and Middle School are accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (G.A.C.) and approved “with quality”, its top rating. The school is a member of NADEC and IDEC North American and International organizations for Democratic schools. We are members of The Southeastern Association of Boarding Schools (S.A.B.S.). Horizons subscribes to the values of N.A.F.S.A., an organization which suggests guidelines for international education.

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General Information

Daily Schedule

Doors Open at 7:30AM

Classes Begin at 8:30AM

Class Day Ends at 2:45PM*

Doors Close at 6:30PM**

* Some classes are taught after school.

** Aftercare extends to 6:30. Fees are determined by aftercare workers. Elementary and Middle School students are not allowed to stay without staff supervision past 6:30.

High school students are turned over to the supervision of dorm duty staff.

Pick up Persons

Parents should establish with aftercare staff a list of regular pick up persons. Students will be questioned, if an unusual person arrives for pick up.

If there are persons who should not be allowed to pick up a student, it is important that you inform the office and aftercare staff.

Driving and Parking on campus

Please be aware that numerous children are present on campus and may not be looking out for vehicles.

The City of Atlanta has judged there is adequate parking for the needs of campus buildings and pool. Additional parking is located on both Hampton Terrace and Sutherland Terrace. If leaving a car, please use a parking place rather than blocking delivery trucks and others needing to use the drive.

Students should think of parking on campus as a privilege and drive carefully, looking out for other students. Visits to parked cars during the school day must be cleared with the office.

Dress Policy

There is no expected uniform or dress. There are several things about which there is community agreement:

In general, ads or depictions of products inappropriate for the use of any community member, any symbol of religious, political or racial exclusivity, or clothing which by its nature or positioning may be distracting, provocative, or revealing are to be avoided. Students or other community members are expected to be responsive when one or more community member(s) expresses concern about his/her dress being offensive.

Bringing Valuables to School

Students are discouraged from bringing expensive equipment, clothing and toys to school.

Meals / Snacks

There is generally a snack time in the morning and after school. Thirty minutes are allowed for lunch each school day. Please send appropriate food.

If a snack or lunch is forgotten, the school will provide credit for a school lunch.

Students are asked, particularly in the Elementary and Middle school programs, not to share food. We have a number of students who have food practices and allergies which other students are not aware.

Many students bring sack lunches. Refrigerators and microwaves are provided for these students. No silverware, dishes or cooking facilities are made available. Students are expected to clean up after snacks and meals.

Nutritious, hot meals are available at \$3.50 (2009 – 2010). Lunches may be purchased on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. A menu is posted on the website. An I O U will be accepted for meals, unless notified by the parent otherwise.

Vending Machines & Sales. Food and drinks are available in vending machines owned by the school. Occasionally, pizza and bake sales help to raise money for various class functions. The school has no way to guarantee the quality of those offerings.

Illness, Absence, & Insurance

Although we do not recommend sending students who are ill to school, we urge parents to be consistent and diligent regarding attendance. Please arrange doctor's appointments and other appointments for after school. Classroom work is dependent on your student's presence. Project based work often makes others students progress dependent on your student's attendance.

Absence with no notice may be assumed to be unexcused. Parents or student should notify the school between 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. of an absence. The office may call the home if absence endures or seems suspicious.

State law requires a statement from the school regarding regular attendance in school prior to issuing a driver's license.

The school does not have a professional nurse or infirmary facilities. Parents will be notified of illness or accident. Parents should come to pick up sick students as soon as reasonably possible. The medical release form allows the school, in an emergency, to treat students when the parent cannot be notified. The administrator will use his/her judgment about treatment with medicines on hand or calls to 911. Parents are expected to pay for medical care promptly.

Parents should have students examined to determine whether health, dental, eye sight, or hearing problems may interfere with school performance and take corrective action.

Parents should inform the school when students have been prescribed medicines. The school will hold prescriptions medicines and dispense according to specific written instructions.

The school, as a part of its service, insures each student against accident, not illness. This covers day students from leaving home to returning home. Boarding students are covered 24 hours per day. Students must inform the school of an accident as soon as practically possible.

Parents should inform the grade teacher and administration when a student has been exposed to a contagious, or transferable condition so that other students can be protected.

Medical Records. State law requires that medical record of immunization or waiver of such should be a part of every student's record before school attendance. Parents are responsible to provide a copy for the student's file.

Academic make-up planning and penalties are the jurisdiction of the teacher whose class or work is missed due to absence or tardiness. Skipping school is a school offense.

General Permissions

The following forms are expected to be in a student's file. Forms are available in the office.

Travel. Allows students to go on local trips with the class without getting permission each time.

Medical Release. Allows students to be treated in case of medical emergency, when a parent cannot be contacted.

Immunization Record or Waiver. State law requires this be in the student's file before enrollment.

Open Campus (high school only). Parents provide information about circumstance for students to go off campus without supervision.

Students, except under special permission, provided by parents in advance, shall not leave the campus without supervision except to go home. Students shall not leave campus and return.

In case of illness or other reason, the parent must give permission prior to the student's leaving campus.

Parents of students required by law to use a car seat must provide an appropriate car seat for field trips.

Multi Day trips require specific permission. A permission slip will be provided, including instructions for needed clothing and equipment.

Photo/ Video Release

It is understood that any student at Horizons School may be photographed or recorded in whatever format for newsletter and promotional purposes by the school. Horizons will not allow this material to be used by others.

Weather

Horizons has chosen an easy way for parents to know whether the school is closed due to weather. If the City of Atlanta public schools are open, Horizons will be too. Parents will be notified directly, if we are closed for any other reason.

Communications

Change of address. Please inform the office of any change in communication information.

Newsletter

Horizons publishes a newsletter quarterly. The newsletter is posted to the website and Sycamore Education. Back copies may be found on the website.

Transcripts

Transcripts are provided free of charge to graduates. Request for transcripts should be made on the transcript request form on the website. Anticipate a full week to process a transcript request.

Academics

Grades

Horizons School operates on the semester system. The yearly calendar provides the beginning, mid-term, and ending dates. The high school has a “Short Term” between Thanksgiving and winter holiday. Reports should be posted on Sycamore Education within one week of mid-term and the end of semester.

Mid-term reports will take the form of S= satisfactory, NI= Needs Improvement and U=unsatisfactory. Often, teacher comments are included.

End of the semester grades K-7 are A – F. For high school A,B. or NC= Not Competent. NC does not mean failure, but that student and teacher has come to terms about completing the course at a “A” or “B” grade.

HOPE Scholarship. Graduating Georgia resident seniors should be eligible for the HOPE scholarship, unless transferring with low grades.

Teacher conferences

Teacher conferences may be scheduled at any time convenient for the parties. A list of teacher contacts is available through the office. While many issues may be resolved in

the halls, setting up an appointment allows teachers to set aside uninterrupted time and to have a grade book and representative samples of student work available for your conference.

Homework

Horizons believes homework reinforces and practices concepts taught in the classroom, allows pre-class introduction, or project work time. Expect that students will have homework. This may be done with assistance in aftercare or before school. Often assignments require internet access. Students do have supervised use of our high speed network and printers.

Testing

Horizons is not subject to State of Georgia testing. Testing may be used for placement, checking the quality of teaching methods and giving student testing experience. Georgia Special Needs Scholarship requires pre and post testing. PSAT and ACT are provided one time during October on an optional basis for additional cost. Horizons is sometimes used as a test site for validation of test methods. Students are not “failed” or assigned summer school on the basis of testing.

Rules

These are absolute rules which may be punished by expulsion:

- Community members may not be involved in any form of violence or threat of violence, physical, verbal or mental.
- Community members may not bring or possess items which are intended to threaten or harm others. Students, may on occasion, be given knives, razor blades, costume props, etc. for school projects and activities under staff supervision.
- Community members may not bring onto campus controlled or illegal substances, not specifically prescribed for them, for any purpose. Possession or use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages is illegal for students.
- Horizons demands respect for each community member. Racial epithets and other forms of disrespect are not tolerated.

There are many rules which are not written down. Learning them is a part of the joining the community process. Most are common sense. Two stand out as important to our program:

1. Students should not leave their group without letting the teacher/supervisor know.
2. The “Stop” Rule. Students should stop any annoying behavior immediately, when asked by another community member.

A judicial process including students as judges may be used to resolve rule infractions. Appeal to an administrator is part of a due diligence process.

Honor Code

Students are expected to subscribe to the school's honor code. The Honor Code is signed upon acceptance to the school and is as follows:

Horizons School Community Honor Code

I promise to be a contributing member of the Horizons School Community and supportive of its mission:

- To be responsible for my choices of behavior,
- To be honest in all my academic endeavors,
- To be respectful of the property and persons of others,
- And to live in harmony with the social and natural environments which sustain this community

Statement of Student Rights and Privileges

Horizons School is an academic and residential community dedicated to the development of the individual. All members of the Horizons Community are guaranteed certain rights and privileges so long as they abide by the conditions for membership in this community. For students these rights include, but are not limited to:

A. The right to an education.

This includes the reasonable and legal use of all services and facilities intended for the purposes of development and growth.

B. The right to study and live in a safe environment, freedom to attend and live in comfortable surroundings without fear, without humiliation and without destruction or diminution of self-esteem, integrity and personal character.

C. The right to safety of persons and property.

All individuals have the right to personal safety, to be free from offensive, riotous, unruly or disruptive behavior on the part of others. Included in this is the freedom from personal force, violence, and threats of personal abuse or harassment either as individuals or groups.

D. The right to give commentary on or to propose change to the community.

The Community functions by shared governance; any member of the Horizons Community may, through proper channels, work to modify, enlighten or comment on the structure and nature of the Community.

Student Responsibilities

A community is an assemblage of individuals who have come together for a specific purpose. In any community there are responsibilities that must be observed by the individual in order to live in harmony with the social and natural environments which sustain the community.

Responsibilities, however, do not supersede rights. Individuals are expected to adhere to these responsibilities only when enforcement of them does not interfere with the rights of a community member. In order to be a contributing member of the Horizons School

community, all individuals are expected to adhere to certain levels of responsibility. These responsibilities include.

- A. The responsibility to participate in the shared governance of the community. Governance of a community succeeds because people participate. The individuals responsible for the character of the community are not merely the staff and administration, but every member of the Horizons community. Members of the Horizons student body are members of the community and as such are expected to be aware of their role and potential in the community as a whole.
- B. The responsibility to respect and observe all duly established Horizons rules and policies, and those of outside communities. Also, the responsibility for ensuring that everyone in the Horizons community understands the rules and abides by them.
- C. The responsibility to respect the privacy and personal safety of others within the Horizons community. In a community, behavior choices affect other members. It is irresponsible and improper for one's behavior choices to deny freedom of participation to other members of the Horizons community.
- D. The responsibility to cooperate with Horizons staff and administration and to comply with their requests.
- E. The responsibility to monitor, respect and protect the environment and property of Horizons School. It is the duty of each student to take action in cases of persons inflicting damage to Horizons School property and environment.
- F. The responsibility to work within the Horizons School community, to give as well as take from the whole, use Horizons School resources such as staff, administration, meetings and Judicial Committee, become involved in community activities and events, etc. and to make the community a stronger, more capable body.

I, _____, agree to abide by the Horizons School Honor Code.
Signed _____ Date _____

Admissions

Visitation is encouraged by both parents and students prior to applying for admission to Horizons. Many visitors come to share their expertise or observe. An appointment should be scheduled in advance. All visitors must check in with the office.

Enrollment Steps

- Potential students must fill out an application form. Application forms are available on the website, may be faxed, or provided by the office. There is no application fee for day students. For international students an I-20 form and acceptance letter are sent from the school before a visa interview in the student's home country. A \$250 US fee is required for international applications due to the added processing and shipment.
- Transcript. Request an official (sealed) withdrawal form and grades from the previous school. Transcripts may be mailed or faxed to the school's address.

- Students should visit for a school day so they know how Horizons operates. Sometimes this visit must be a student's first day. For international students a phone call or email must take the place of the visit.

Enrollment Philosophy

Helping students become achievers, leaders, and contributors to the community is what Horizons is all about. We do not expect students to be "perfect" prior to enrolling.

Horizons is proud that 100% of our graduates go on to further education. We are proud of our diversity. Believing strongly that students learn from each other, students are chosen to benefit from and contribute to the school community. Our best asset is positive peer pressure.

Tuition and Fees

Please ask the administration for a current tuition and fees schedule.

During the school year various school trips are organized that require an additional fee in order to participate. We believe these outings are an additional dimension to the learning experience. We understand that these outings may not work well with some families' schedules or be within the budget of some families. Participation in these activities is not mandatory.

Financial agreements are made in writing in the enrollment agreement. Horizons provides a payment plan for the convenience of our families. Day student payments are made in the first ten days of each month. International students pay at the beginning of each semester. Parents are encouraged to talk with the administrator about financial difficulties prior to getting behind. Changes to the enrollment agreement must be made with the administrator.

Teaching is done in good faith in anticipation that payments will be made. The school will not provide withdrawal forms, transcripts, official or unofficial, or other communications regarding transfers, until the tuition balance is paid in full. The school may pursue overdue tuition through the courts and collections agents. The cost of collections will be born by parents.

Special Information for Parents

Volunteers

Parents, graduates and others contribute significantly to our program. Please inform the administration of skills you wish to share. There are many opportunities: teaching seminars or assisting teachers, chaperoning or driving on local and multi day trips, coaching after school sports and organizing and assisting with fundraising, marketing or special events. Whatever your talent, we welcome it!

Parent Voice Committee (P.V.C.)

The Parent Voice Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month. Its purpose is to assist the school with fundraising and sponsoring events, sharing information and many other things. A portal, bulletin board, is available for the community to ask questions, post notices and contribute to on-going discussion about the school. This site is designed to be helpful, but may not represent the official position of the school. The address is: www.horizonsparents.com

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship

Horizons School believes that the State of Georgia has created a wonderful opportunity to help students who need a small school environment to be able to pay for it. Currently about 8% of Horizons student's tuitions are partially or fully paid through this program. Students are carefully chosen so that they will benefit from the program, and not detract from other students.

Non-discriminatory Policy

Horizons School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender identity/expression, age, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, or disability and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

The campus buildings are completely handicap accessible.