

**CONSTITUTION
OF
H-B WOODLAWN**

Preamble

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Preamble: We, the community of H-B Woodlawn, in order to further the important goals of fostering mutual respect between students and teachers; recognizing the individual rights and talents of community members; and allowing students to play an active role in their education, including taking responsibility for their actions, as embodied by the principle of *Verbum Sap Sat*, do ordain and establish this constitution.

Article I Relation to Other Institutions.

Section 1. Rules Affecting all Public School Students. H-B Woodlawn is a program of the Arlington County Public Schools. Rules established by the Arlington County Public Schools, or Federal and State governments that apply to the education of students in public schools apply to H-B Woodlawn.

Section 2. Policies Generally Applicable to Public Schools. H-B Woodlawn is technically a program, and not a school, and thus may implement differently some policies applicable to public schools.

Article II Town Meeting

Section 1. The Town Meeting is the decision-making body of H-B Woodlawn. It is responsible for developing community rules governing non-curricular matters. Town Meeting decisions are binding on the members of the H-B Woodlawn community. Anyone dissatisfied with a decision of the Town Meeting may return to Town Meeting for further resolution. The principle of *Verbum Sap Sat* shall, in general, govern the enforcement of Town Meeting decisions. However, in the event of noncompliance with a Town Meeting decision, the principal ultimately shall be responsible for ensuring that the Town Meeting decision is enforced. Any member of the H-B Woodlawn community may refer a violation of a Town Meeting decision to the principal for enforcement.

Section 2. Town Meeting decisions are passed by a simple majority vote. All current students, parents of current students, teachers, administrators, and other staff of H-B Woodlawn are eligible to vote. Any of these individuals may bring an issue to Town Meeting for decision. The document entitled *The Authoritative Guide to Town Meeting Rules of Order* (and any amendments thereto) governs the operation of Town Meeting, and it is incorporated by reference into this constitution.

Section 3. Town Meeting shall be held at the time and in the place determined by the Town Meeting. Town Meeting takes precedence over classes, and students shall not be penalized for any class time or class work missed while attending Town Meeting.

Section 4. Town Meeting shall have the authority to establish standing and ad-hoc committees to which it can delegate work. Committees have open membership unless the motion creating the committee specifies a certain membership or size of membership. Most committees, such as Allocation, No-Sweat, and Outside-Teacher, report back to the Town Meeting for approval of their actions. Some—Hiring Committees are the most notable example—are empowered to act without further Town Meeting approval.

Article III Administration

Section 1 The principal (also known as the head teacher) and the other members of the administration are responsible for the health and safety of the H-B Woodlawn community. They are also responsible for focusing attention on and solving school problems and for providing leadership. The administration is responsible for overseeing the teacher evaluation process and for facilitating the creation of an academic schedule.

Section 2. The principal is charged with implementing the decisions of the Town Meeting. The principal often advises the Town Meeting about the background of an issue or about Arlington Public School policy on an issue. The principal never overrules a Town Meeting decision. The principal is the liaison and advocate for the school, representing the position of the Town Meeting with the central staff of the Arlington Public School system, the School Board and the Parents Advisory Committee.

Section 3. In executing the duties in Section 1, the administration may undertake emergency actions without consulting the Town Meeting. Any such action may be brought up for review in a subsequent Town Meeting by any member of the H-B Woodlawn community. The principal attempts to have every important issue placed before the Town Meeting by posting it on the agenda.

Article IV Non-Administrative Staff

Section 1. Teachers have control over their own curriculum; that term to be defined to include course offerings, course content, how teachers choose to teach and grade, and teaching space. However, students have a right to question general classroom policies (but not individual grades) and bring them before the Town Meeting for review.

Section 2. The staff meeting is an important advisory group where many school issues are discussed, but it is not a policy-making body. The staff meeting provides a forum for discussion of schedule options, curricular initiatives and staff events. Students are permitted to attend all staff meetings and bring pertinent issues to the meeting, except when confidential matters (such as other individual students) are being discussed.

Section 3. A full-time teaching assignment at H-B Woodlawn is six classes or the equivalent. After their first year, each full time staff member will serve as a teacher advisor. Part time or first year staff may elect to serve as a teacher advisor. Everyone on a T or P scale will teach at least one class.

Article V Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

Section 1. The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will provide a forum, in addition to Town Meeting, for parental involvement in H-B Woodlawn. Any parent of an existing H-B Woodlawn student is entitled to be a member of the PAC. The PAC may extend membership to additional classes of individuals as it sees fit.

Section 2. The PAC shall advise the students, administration, faculty and staff of H-B Woodlawn on issues of concern to the parents and the school. It will provide a forum for parents to express concerns and suggestions about H-B Woodlawn. The PAC may raise funds to support school activities, prepare a newsletter for parents, report home school news, and represent the views of the parents before the School Board, ACI and similar bodies.

Section 3. The PAC leadership shall consist of a PAC chair and such additional officers as the PAC determines to be necessary. The leaders will be elected by a majority vote of the membership. PAC decisions will also be made by majority vote of the membership. The PAC may establish such committees as it determines are needed to carry out the business of the PAC.

Section 4. The PAC shall meet on a schedule to be determined by the PAC membership. Meetings shall be governed by rules established by the PAC.

Article VI Means of Amending the Constitution

Section 1. Whenever it deems it necessary, Town Meeting may propose amendments to this constitution. A motion to amend may be introduced at any regularly scheduled Town Meeting

Section 2. A motion to amend must be passed by a 2/3 affirmative vote by those in attendance at a regularly scheduled Town Meeting. Procedures for proposing and passing an amendment to the constitution shall be as set forth in the document entitled *The Authoritative Guide to Town Meeting Rules of Order* (and any amendments thereto) which is incorporated by reference into this constitution.

Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

Section 1. All members of the H-B Woodlawn community are expected to know and understand their rights and responsibilities, as set forth in the sections below. They are expected to follow these guidelines in lieu of defined and specific rules and regulations, and to understand the motto *Verbum Sap Sat* (*A word to the wise is sufficient*), which forms the basis of the H-B Woodlawn system. Students have the unalienable right to a quality education. If the exercise of any of the rights listed in the sections below conflicts with another community member's right to learn, the right to learn takes precedence.

Section 2. Safe, Accepting Environment. All community members are entitled to a school where they feel safe, known, and appreciated for who they are today. All members of the community shall honor and protect this safe, personal, accepting school environment.

Section 3. Academic Challenge. All students have a right to a challenging, relevant, and appropriate education that takes into account personal interests, talents, and needs. It is the responsibility of all students to take advantage of the education offered by attending class, doing their best, and negotiating with teachers to ensure that they receive an education that is personal, relevant, and appropriate. It is the duty of all community members to assist students in meeting this goal.

Section 4. Equal Rights. All community members have the right to an equal voice in making decisions important to the policies and practices of H-B Woodlawn. Community members are expected to be knowledgeable about the issues and problems facing H-B Woodlawn and to attend Town Meeting regularly.

Section 5. Freedom to Make Personal Decisions. All community members have the right to move around campus at will, associate with whomever they choose and wherever they choose, express themselves (*e.g.* in speech or dress) in any manner they choose, and to bring and use their possessions on campus. In exercising these rights, all community members must conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate and acceptable and that honors the rights of all members of the H-B Woodlawn community.

Section 6. Due Process. Any time a community member is charged with infringing upon the rights of another, and the administration is called upon to determine the appropriate consequences, the community member so charged is entitled to a voice in deciding what, if any, sanctions are to be imposed.