



Pillars Academy

Student/Parent Handbook
2025-2026

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I. Our Vision

Pillars Academy envisions becoming the foremost weekend Islamic school, providing exceptional **education** and **tarbiyah** to middle and high school students, and preparing them to enter college and university as well-rounded, **exemplary Muslims**.

II. Our Mission

The mission of Pillars Academy is to develop Muslim youth who are **proud** of their Islamic identity, through an education that is **structured** and **relevant** to contemporary American Muslims

III. Academic Calendar

Calendar 2025–2026

Registration Opens	Sunday, August 3
First Day of Classes	Saturday, August 23
Labor Day Break	Saturday, August 30
Thanksgiving Break	Saturday, November 23 – Saturday, November 30
Last Day of Class – Fall	Saturday, December 14
Fall Parents' Teacher Meeting	Saturday, December 21
Winter Break	Saturday, December 20 – Saturday, January 3
Last 10 Nights Ramadan & 'Īd Break	Saturday, March 14 – Saturday, March 21
Last Day of Class – Spring	Saturday, May 9
Spring Parents' Teacher Meeting	Saturday, May 16

IV. Student Code of Conduct

Pillars Academy acknowledges the importance of a code of conduct as essential for safeguarding the academic integrity and culture of the Academy. This code sets clear boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and implements measures to help students avoid inappropriate conduct.

The Code of Conduct is binding on students from the moment they accept their admission to Pillars Academy until the conclusion of their enrollment, culminating with the closing ceremonies of the academic year. It applies during academic modules, throughout the academic year, and during breaks between terms.

1. Academic Integrity

At Pillars Academy, academic dishonesty occurs when a student prioritizes the appearance of knowledge over true understanding. This goes against the essence of genuine learning (ta‘lim) that PA aims to foster. Our commitment is rooted in the pursuit of authentic knowledge, making any form of academic dishonesty entirely unacceptable. To uphold these values, the following actions are treated with the same seriousness as behavioral misconduct violations (as detailed in the subsequent section), and not just as grounds for academic probation:

1. **Plagiarism:** Submitting someone else's work as your own.
2. **Unauthorized Assistance:** Receiving help on any coursework without proper authorization.
3. **Unacknowledged Use:** Using someone else's work without giving due credit or citation.
4. **False Attribution:** Incorrectly attributing information to a source or author.
5. **Fabrication:** Creating or altering information or data.
6. **Improper Cross-Usage:** Submitting work from one course in another without obtaining permission.
7. **Interference with Others' Progress:** Intentionally hindering the academic progress of fellow students.
8. **Artificial Intelligence:** Using AI tools or services for assignments, as this undermines individual skill development and authentic knowledge demonstration.

It is important to note that students who facilitate or collaborate in any of these actions bear equal responsibility. To ensure compliance, students are encouraged to seek guidance on citation practices and collaboration policies directly from their instructors before starting an assignment.

At Pillars Academy, we place the utmost importance on academic integrity. By upholding these values, students not only honor their own educational journey but also help create an environment dedicated to genuine knowledge acquisition and ethical behavior.

2. Behavioral Integrity

IALFM Premises and Property Care

Every member of the Pillars Academy community is responsible for maintaining a safe and well-kept campus. The following guidelines are designed to protect staff, faculty, students, community members, and Academy property.

IALFM Culture

- **Behavior and Speech**
 - Always exhibit courteous and respectful behavior and speech.
 - Avoid any disorderly, lewd, or indecent conduct.
 - Do not disturb the peace.
- **Interactions and Relationships**
 - Maintain appropriate boundaries with individuals of the opposite gender. Necessary interactions should be purposeful, brief, and in public.
 - Romantic relationships that violate Islamic decency, hinder any student's academic responsibilities, or disrupt campus culture are prohibited.

Recording and Privacy

- Obtain explicit permission before recording anyone (audio or video), including instructors.
- Respect the privacy of others.

Engagement and Disruption

- Engaging in business with fellow students is discouraged.
- Avoid disrupting or interfering with institutional programming.
- Use facilities as intended.

Property and Facilities

- Do not leave food items at IALFM premises (including Nūr)
- No smoking or vaping on IALFM property.
- Remove shoes before entering the classrooms
- Do not enter areas designated for faculty and staff only.

Student Responsibilities

- **Behavior and Attire**
 - Clean up after yourself.
 - Dress in Islamically appropriate business casual attire and maintain decent clothing standards.
- **Respect and Reporting**
 - Respect all facilities and programs.
 - Immediately report any suspicious activity to the administration.
- **Compliance and Directives**
 - Comply with reasonable directives from institution officials.

Safety

- Do not endanger others or their property.
- Do not allow unauthorized access to the building after hours or to restricted areas.
- Do not share your entry code with others.
- Do not prop open doors.
- Avoid using open flames.
- Do not interfere with emergency services, including IALFM safety, fire services, or law enforcement.

Classroom Conduct

Instructors have the ultimate authority over student conduct in their classrooms. Each instructor will provide and reinforce specific expectations for their classroom. They may address any violations during class as they see fit, including asking a student to leave. In addition to instructor-specific rules, the following general rules apply:

- **Electronic Devices:** Using cell phones, computers, or any electronic devices beyond their intended class usage is prohibited.
- **Attention and Focus:** Be attentive and focused in class; avoid sleeping or conversing.
- **Minimize Distractions:** Do not distract yourself or others.
- **Harassment Prohibited:** Any form of harassment towards instructors or students is prohibited as it undermines our values and disrupts our educational mission. This includes:
 - Unwanted personal inquiries or comments.
 - Intimidation, bullying, or humiliation.
 - Invasion of personal space.

Pillars Academy Anti-Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated, unwanted aggressive behavior that involves a power imbalance. It can be physical, verbal, social, or cyberbullying. Here are some examples:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, kicking, tripping, spitting, stealing, or damaging belongings.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Name-calling, insults, teasing, put-downs, threats, or intimidation.
- **Social Bullying:** Exclusion, spreading rumors, or making someone feel isolated.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using technology (text messages, social media, etc.) to bully someone.

This Policy Prohibits:

- Any behavior that intentionally hurts, humiliates, or embarrasses another student.
- Threats of violence or harm.
- Creating a hostile environment that interferes with a student's ability to participate in school activities.
- Targeting someone based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other personal characteristic.

Procedures:

- **Reporting:** If you are being bullied, witness bullying, or have any concerns, you are encouraged to report it immediately to a teacher, counselor, administrator, or any other trusted adult at Pillars Academy. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated confidentially.
- **Investigation:** The administration will investigate all reports of bullying promptly and thoroughly.
- **Response:** Based on the investigation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the student(s) involved. This may include counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. The victim will be offered support and guidance.
- **Prevention:** Pillars Academy will implement various strategies to prevent bullying, including:
 - Creating a culture of respect through Islamic teachings and promoting positive student relationships.
 - Integrating anti-bullying lessons into the curriculum.
 - Providing training for staff to identify and respond to bullying effectively.

Parent and Student Responsibilities:

- **Parents:** Please discuss this policy with your child and encourage them to report any bullying incidents.
- **Students:** Students are expected to treat each other with respect and kindness. If you see bullying happening, you should report it.

Confidentiality:

Pillars Academy will strive to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process, while also ensuring the safety of all parties involved.

Retaliation:

Retaliation against someone who reports bullying is strictly prohibited.

Steps to Address Bullying:

When a bullying incident is reported, a designated staff member will meet with the reporting student to gather details about the incident in a safe and confidential space.

The administration will promptly investigate the report. This may involve interviewing witnesses, gathering evidence (e.g., screenshots), and speaking with the student(s) alleged to be involved in bullying.

Parents/guardians of all involved students will be contacted and kept informed throughout the investigation process.

Depending on the severity of the incident, mediation may be attempted to resolve the issue directly between the students involved, with the goal of fostering understanding and preventing future incidents.

The administration will determine appropriate disciplinary action based on the investigation's findings. This may include:

- **Counseling:** For both the victim and the student(s) who bullied, individual or group counseling sessions may be recommended to address underlying issues and promote positive behavior change.
- **Detention:** After-school detention or in-school suspension may be assigned as a consequence.
- **Suspension/Expulsion:** In severe cases, suspension or expulsion from Pillars Academy may be necessary.

Consequences of Bullying:

The consequences for bullying will vary depending on the severity of the incident and the student's past disciplinary record. However, potential consequences may include:

- **Formal Reprimand:** A written warning issued by the administration, outlining the specific behavior and the expected consequences of further violations.
- **Loss of Privileges:** Restrictions on participating in extracurricular activities, PA events, or field trips.

- **Community Service:** Assigning community service projects to instill a sense of responsibility and encourage reflection on the impact of their actions.
- **Parent Conference:** Mandatory meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the incident and develop a plan to address the student's behavior.

This policy reinforces a culture of respect and accountability at Pillars Academy. We believe that addressing bullying promptly and effectively will create a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

Please Note: This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

3. Violations of the Code of Conduct

Violations of the Academic or Behavioral Code do not always need to be reported to the administration. However, there are times when it is necessary and advisable for students, staff, and faculty to report violations.

Faculty members and students must report all suspected violations of the Code of Conduct to the Academic Affairs Committee. Failing to do so jeopardizes the academic and behavioral integrity of Pillars Academy. Additionally, any suspected violations that endanger the safety of people and property must be reported. Reporting violations that undermine the campus culture is encouraged when disciplinary action could improve the situation and deter others from similar behavior. It is each individual's responsibility to determine when it is more important to protect the community than to conceal a peer's faults. Faculty are not required to report violations of classroom conduct.

When a violation is reported, the Committee will conduct an investigation to determine if a violation occurred. This includes meeting with each student involved individually to allow for a defense. The Committee will inform students of any disciplinary actions, which may include a forced leave of absence or administrative withdrawal from the Academy. Faculty and students should limit discussions of an alleged violation to the relevant parties. Individuals who are not members of the institution (e.g., parents, legal counsel) may not be present at conduct hearings or conversations without Committee approval.

4. Illegal Activity

All misdemeanors or felonies are violations of the Code of Conduct and must be reported to law-enforcement.

V. Academic Credit

We strive to maintain high academic standards by setting important benchmarks to ensure that the educational component of Pillars Academy's approach is fully realized. Below are guidelines for coursework, attendance, and participation. Additional academic policies can be found in the respective course syllabi.

1. Coursework

Individual assignments will be given a numerical or percentile value to provide students with the feedback needed to gauge their academic progress. Students are expected to:

- Complete all required assignments, quizzes, and exams satisfactorily.
- Maintain an overall course average of 70% or above to pass.

2. Attendance

Attendance is crucial for creating a rich and engaging learning environment that supports the academic success of our students. Students are expected to maintain an overall attendance rate of 80% across all their courses.

Once the instructor has closed attendance, any late check-ins are considered unexcused unless they fall under the excused absences category below.

Excused Absences

- It is recommended that students notify pillars@ialfm.org in advance of an absence via email.

Unexcused Absences

- Failure to check in at the beginning of the class period or late check-ins after attendance is closed will be considered unexcused absences.
- Unexcused absences will affect a student's attendance percentage and "Student Academic Progress."

Leave of Absence

The Academic team will handle emergencies resulting in an extended leave of absence on a case-by-case basis. A formal request must be made to the PA Admin at least 2 weeks in advance to create an academic recovery plan.

Attendance Records and Transparency

- Students can access their attendance percentages at any time through the Google Classroom platform, allowing them to monitor and maintain their required attendance rate.

Communication and Support

- If there are life circumstances that may affect class presence or performance, students should communicate with instructors and the Academic team as early as possible. This will help ensure success in the course and is part of the adab of a student of knowledge.
- Note that Instructors and TAs are not obliged to use office hours to assist with material from a missed class.

Failure to meet attendance requirements will have similar consequences to failing coursework requirements.

3. Class Participation

Active class participation is essential for fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment at Pillars Academy.

Expectations

Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions, activities, and group work during all scheduled sessions. Students in this track must attend classes in person

4. Community Service Requirement

In line with Pillars Academy's commitment to social responsibility and fostering well-rounded individuals, students are required to complete a minimum of **5 hours of community service** each semester as a graduation requirement. This requirement is designed to provide students with the opportunity to:

- Give back to the community and make a positive impact.
- Develop valuable life skills such as teamwork, empathy, and communication.
- Explore personal interests and connect with causes they care about.

Community Service Options:

Pillars Academy offers various community service opportunities throughout the semester. Students can choose from options approved by the school, including (but not limited to):

- **Volunteering at local charities or non-profit organizations.** This could involve assisting with food banks, soup kitchens, animal shelters, or elderly care facilities.
- **Participating in school-organized service projects.** Pillars Academy may organize events such as park clean-up drives, clothing donations, or fundraising initiatives.
- **Assisting with school-related or masjid activities.** Students can volunteer their time to help with PA or IALFM events.

Approval Process:

Students are encouraged to discuss potential community service projects with their teachers or PA admin for approval.

- **Prior Approval Required:** Students must receive prior approval from the designated PA staff member before starting their community service project. This ensures alignment with the program's goals and avoids any safety concerns.
- **Documentation:** Students are responsible for documenting their completed service hours. This may involve collecting signed verification forms from the organization where they volunteered or keeping a detailed log of their activities.

Meeting the Requirement:

- **Completion Deadline:** The 5-hour community service requirement must be completed by the end of each semester.
- **Verification:** Students are required to submit proof of their completed service hours to the designated staff member for verification before the semester ends. Failure to meet the deadline or provide proper documentation may result in not passing the semester.

Additional Considerations:

- Students are welcome to exceed the minimum requirement of 5 hours.
- Community service hours completed outside of school-approved options may be considered on a case-by-case basis, with prior approval required.
- Students with extenuating circumstances that prevent them from completing the service hours should discuss alternative options with their school counselor or principal.

This community service requirement fosters a sense of civic responsibility and allows students to contribute positively to their community. We believe this experience will enhance their academic development and prepare them to be well-rounded citizens.

5. Satisfactory Academic Progress

Pillars Academy operates on a semester system divided into four quarters. Each quarter lasts eight to ten weeks, and students are evaluated at the end of each quarter to ensure they are making appropriate academic progress.

A student's academic progress at Pillars Academy is monitored through Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) evaluations. These evaluations ensure that students meet the requirements to remain enrolled, advance to the next year of the program, and eventually graduate. SAP also provides early notice and support for students at risk of failing a class. Students who maintain SAP throughout their enrollment will graduate, provided there are no other Code of Conduct violations.

6. SAP Interventions

Audits of a student's incomplete homework will be conducted regularly. Students who have completed less than 90% of their assignments will receive the following notices:

1. **First Notice / "Warning Status"**: The student will receive an email from the Academic team.
2. **Second Notice / "Academic Probation"**: The student will be required to meet with the Academic Coordinator.
3. **Third Notice / "Scheduled Withdrawal"**: The student will be withdrawn from the course.

Tracking

A student's attendance and submission of watched recordings will also be audited regularly. Students with less than 85% attendance will receive the following notices:

1. **First Notice / "Warning Status"**: The student will receive an email from the Academic team.
2. **Second Notice / "Academic Probation"**: The student will be required to meet with the Academic Coordinator.
3. **Third Notice / "Scheduled Withdrawal"**: The student will be withdrawn from the course.

7. Graduation / Academic Credit Fulfillment

Graduation requirements encompass coursework, attendance, and class participation policies as outlined above. These standards ensure students' successful academic progression, active engagement, and overall growth within Pillars Academy's educational framework. Graduation, at any level, is determined by the successful completion of all required classes as detailed in the program catalogs.

VI. Administrative Withdrawal

Students may be administratively withdrawn from Pillars Academy for the following reasons:

1. Receiving a third notice for incomplete coursework or attendance.
2. Violating the Student Code of Conduct.
3. Failing to consistently respond to communications regarding academics and tuition.

A student who wishes to be readmitted following an administrative withdrawal must reapply.

VII. Parent-School Partnership

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Pillars Academy values strong partnerships between parents and teachers. To facilitate these partnerships, we hold Parent-Teacher conferences twice a year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss a student's academic progress, social development, and overall well-being in a more in-depth setting.

Scheduling:

- Parents can schedule their preferred conference time slot through the online portal or by contacting the school office.
- We encourage scheduling conferences early, as slots fill up quickly.

Purpose:

Parent-Teacher conferences are designed to:

- Review student progress reports and discuss academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Collaborate on strategies to support student learning at home and school.
- Address any concerns or questions parents or teachers may have.
- Develop a plan to help students achieve their academic goals.

Preparation:

- **Parents:** Review your child's report card and any recent schoolwork. Come prepared with specific questions or topics you'd like to discuss.
- **Students:** Encourage your child to participate in the conference. They can share their perspective on their learning experience and ask questions of their teacher.

Format:

Parent-Teacher conferences are typically individual meetings between parents or guardians and the student's teacher. In some cases, students may be invited to participate in a portion of the conference.

We believe that regular communication between parents and teachers is essential for student success. Parent-Teacher conferences are a valuable opportunity to build strong relationships and ensure a positive learning environment for all students at Pillars Academy.

VIII. Pillars Academy Community

Pillars Academy fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment where students, parents, and staff feel valued and connected. We are dedicated to nurturing a strong sense of community that reflects the spirit of *ṣuḥbah* (Arabic for camaraderie). This sense of community aligns with the IALFM vision of growth, as we strive to create a nurturing and supportive environment for students' intellectual and spiritual development.

Here's how we'll achieve this together:

- **PA-Focused Socials and Bonding Programs:** Throughout the year, we will organize exciting events and activities designed specifically for families to connect with each other and the school community. These events will celebrate Islamic culture and traditions while also promoting interaction and fun.
- **Open Communication:** We believe in open communication between parents, teachers, and staff. We encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns, and we are committed to providing clear and timely information throughout the school year. Together, we can build a strong foundation of trust and transparency.

We invite all families to actively participate in building this vibrant community. Your involvement is essential in creating a nurturing and supportive environment where students can thrive. Look out for upcoming events and announcements, and don't hesitate to reach out to the school administration with any suggestions for fostering a strong PA community!

IX. Right to Action

No set of policies can cover all possible behaviors. Therefore, Pillars Academy reserves the right to take action on any of the above policies, as well as any other conduct it deems necessary to address.

X. Emergency

Pillars Academy is committed to providing a safe and secure environment. Faculty, staff, and students should be familiar with the following information to respond appropriately in case of an emergency. The Pillars Academy building is equipped with an Emergency Response System for quick announcements during emergencies.

1. Emergency Telephone Numbers

- **Emergency requiring immediate assistance (police, fire, or ambulance):** 911
- **Non-emergency Flower Mound Police Dispatch:** (972) 539-0525
- **Texas Poison Control Network:** (800) 222-1222
- **Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Flower Mound:** (469) 322-7000

2. Emergency Plan

Pillars Academy has an emergency response plan in place.

Fires: In the event of a fire or smoke in the building:

- If safe, alert all occupants.
- Exit the building promptly and move to a safe distance.
- Notify the Flower Mound Fire Department.
- Do not reenter the building until an official "all clear" notice is received.
- Firefighting is the responsibility of the Flower Mound Fire Department.

Severe Weather: The City of Flower Mound has an emergency siren system for severe weather alerts. In the event of a tornado, the administration will activate the Emergency Alert System on campus, directing occupants to the inner parts of the building away from windows. Remain in the area until the administration issues an "all clear" signal.

Medical Emergencies: Medical emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All building exits lead to roads accessible by ambulances.

Pillars Program Administrator

Initials

Signature

Date Signed

Parent/Guardian

Initials

Signature

Date Signed