

Houghton Academy

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (By boarding students, parents, and agents)

1. How does drop-off and pick-up at airports work?

a. We offer free rides to and from Buffalo (BUF) International Airport on the following highlighted dates (Please do not arrive in Buffalo after 8 pm or depart before 9 am):

b. Important Dates for 2026-2027 School Year

i. New Boarding Students arrive | 8/18

ii. Returning Students Arrive | 8/19-8/20

iii. Student Orientation | 8/21

iv. Athletics Pre-Season Practice Begins | 8/24

v. First day of school / first semester | 8/24

vi. Thanksgiving Vacation | 11/25-11/29

📅 Tuesday, November 24: Departing HA at 3:30pm after school.

📅 Wednesday, November 25: Departing HA 6:00am.

📅 Sunday, November 29: Pickup airport 12:00pm & 8:00pm.

xi. Christmas Vacation | **12/19-1/10**

📅 Friday, December 18: Departing HA 3:30pm after school.

📅 Saturday, December 19: Departing HA 6:00am.

📅 Sunday, December 20: Departing HA 6:00am.

📅 Saturday, January 9: Pickup airport 8:00pm.

📅 Sunday, January 10: Pickup airport 12:00pm & 8:00pm.

xii. Spring Students Arrive | 1/7-1/10

xiii. First day of second semester | 1/11

xiv. Easter Vacation | 3/20-3/29

📅 Friday, March 19: Departing HA 3:30pm after school.

📅 Saturday, March 20: Departing HA 6:00am.

📅 Sunday, March 28: Pickup airport 8:00pm.

📅 Monday, March 29: Pickup airport 8:00pm.

xv. Last day of classes including final exams | 5/27

xvi. Non-graduates may leave after 6:00 PM | 5/27

xvii. Graduation | 5/29

xviii. End of School Year

Middle School, May 21:

📅 Friday, May 21: Middle Schoolers departing HA 3:30pm after school.

📅 Saturday, May 22: Middle Schoolers departing HA 6:00am.

High School, **May 27**

📅 Thursday, May 27: Departing HA 3:00pm after school.

📅 Friday, May 28: Departing HA 6:00am.

📅 Saturday, May 29: Departing HA 3:00pm.

🗓 Sunday, May 30: Departing HA 6:00am.

xix. All students must leave | by 5/31

- c. Students arriving on non-designated days will be charged \$100 one way and be required to wait until a special driver can be found for that day.
- d. Since the airport is a three-hour round trip, we try to only make one trip per day but sometimes two if many students are arriving or departing on that day. But this means students will need to wait a bit to be picked up or wait at the airport for their flight to leave.
- e. Buffalo airport is very small, safe and user-friendly, so it is not a problem. There is a waiting area within sight of the baggage claim area on the same level or a larger open lounge immediately above the baggage waiting area on the second floor. Both are very comfortable. Students should never leave the airport for any reason except with a designated Houghton Academy adult.
- f. Unless otherwise notified, Houghton Academy Staff will pick up students.

2. Where can adults stay when they visit Houghton?

- a. The Inn at Houghton Creek, 9722 Genesee St., Houghton, NY 14744-8773 is a five-minute walk from the school and most convenient. The phone number is 1+(585) 567-8400 or visit their website.
- b. Other options in the area, needing car ride:
 - i. Oaks Oramel Inn (Oramel, NY): 1+(716) 353-1981 (10 minutes)
 - ii. Colonial Inn: (Portageville, NY) 1+(716) 574-4595 (20 minutes)
 - iii. Microtel Inn (Wellsville, NY) 1+(585) 610-4167 (30 minutes)

3. Are students safe in Houghton?

- a. Houghton is one of the safest places in the USA. Rarely is there ever any crime. People are generally very trustworthy, friendly and respectful. But of course, it is always wise to take common sense precautions.
- b. Our dormitories are locked overnight, and we have security cameras covering entrances and public areas for everyone's peace of mind.

4. How can parents get updates from the school?

Parents can view social media posts, read the monthly updates, or call the school directly if they have any questions or concerns.

5. How can parents send packages to a student at school?

- a. Please send packages to the school address and not the dormitories.
Put "Attention: your student's name" and the school address:
Houghton Academy, 9790 Thayer Street, Houghton, NY 14744

6. What happens if a student cannot get his/her visa in time to arrive for the start of school?

- a. That is okay. Houghton Academy is one of the few schools in the world that will let students start any day of the school year. We are flexible and adaptable to

the unexpected events in life that impact our best planned schedules and calendar. Our teachers and staff are ready to welcome students when they can get here. We will make it work.

7. What happens if our visa is denied?

- a. If a student's visa application is denied twice, all but \$1,000 of everything paid to date will be refunded. Documentation is required.

8. What documents does a student need to bring?

- a. I-20, Passport, Acceptance Letter and Enrollment Contract.
- b. Please make copies of each and keep them in a separate location within your luggage during travel.

9. Where do students keep these valuable documents upon arrival at school?

We require them to be turned in and kept in the secure school office for safekeeping. Students may keep copies on them and retrieve the originals whenever needed.

10. Does the student need to fill out the 2nd page of the I-20?

- a. No. Just sign the front page. Nothing else.

11. What will be in a dorm room?

- a. Two beds, two dressers, two desks, two chairs, one shared closet.
- b. Some rooms have a mini refrigerator.

12. Will my student have his/her own room?

- a. No. We will have full dorms. This means students will have one roommate. Our rooms are designed for two per room. Living with a roommate is a great life skill challenge to learn to communicate needs and solve problems. We are available to assist if needed.

13. What does a student need to bring for his/her dorm room?

[What to Pack](#)

14. How does a student buy supplies once in the USA?

- a. We usually make a Walmart stop on the trip home from the airport. If not, there is a Dollar General (all-purpose store) within a five-minute drive of our school that students can access the next day.

15. Does a student need to buy and bring a computer?

- a. This is up to you. The school can provide a basic laptop to help students do homework. Most students do bring their own laptop or device or buy one here

upon arrival.

16. Does a student need a phone?

- a. Yes, all boarding students must have a USA functioning phone for safety purposes. Since we travel a lot and are off campus frequently, it is important. It is also the method our boarding students use to stay aware of daily student announcements.
- b. We will take students to a phone store, and they can decide on a plan that meets their needs and budget.

17. How does the school control the use of technology?

- a. The internet is turned off at 11 pm on school nights and 12 am on non-school nights. Younger students must place all electronic devices in “technology beds” in the lounge overnight. This practice encourages students to get their sleep.
- b. Students are not allowed to use phones during the school day, per New York State law.
- c. Students that are struggling to maintain a healthy technology usage balance may be required to live by stricter standards.

18. What is the School Dress Code?

Students are encouraged to review the Student Handbook on the website for the Dress Code and many other standards.

19. What is the best way for a student to handle money?

- a. First, it is best to exchange foreign money into USA currency before you come to America or to the airport. Remind students to always keep cash and valuables on them at all times. Do not put in luggage that will not be with them.
- b. Each family has paid their \$1,500 personal deposit before they arrive at school. It is available at designated times during the week in the business office. Students will be made aware of when this “school bank” is open to them.
- c. Students that bring or have access to additional cash are encouraged to deposit it into the “school bank” for safety purposes. Having cash sitting in Dorm rooms is never a good idea.
- d. Students are able to open a bank account in our local bank (Note: Obtaining a credit card often requires an age of 17).
- e. Many parents will send family credit cards with their students.

20. What if a student wants to play sports?

- a. First of all, we strongly encourage participation by everyone regardless of experience or expertise. Our teams have a “no cut” policy. So, if you consistently attend practice, you will be on a team.
- b. Participation in a team is a great way to build quick friendships.
- c. Fall practices coincide with the First Day of School 2026. Students interested in

joining should arrive prior to the first scheduled practice. See the calendar section for dates.

d. Attending all practices is critical because each student is required to practice six times before they can play in a game.

e. Girls playing volleyball must have rubber-bottomed sneakers, knee pads and black spandex (4" inseam) to wear under uniform shorts.

f. Boys or girls playing soccer must have shin guards, soccer cleats and at least one pair of competition white and competition blue soccer socks.

g. All athletes must have a sports physical from a medical professional.

21. When does a student get his/her class schedule?

a. During Orientation week, students will be advised on their schedule.

b. In some cases, students may need to take placement assessments before finalizing classes.

22. What if a student does not feel well?

a. The first step is to talk with our dorm parents and see how they can help.

b. If needed we have a local medical clinic that we can take students to. It is located immediately next to one of our dorms.

c. In serious medical situations, we can take the students to the hospital urgent care about 25 minutes from school. We also have access to a local ambulance service if needed.

d. Our School has access to a local pharmacy.

23. When do I need to turn in my Houghton Academy Medical Form?

a. Before travel plans to arrive in the USA can be accepted.

24. What about medication?

a. All prescription medication needs to be reported to and turned in to the dorm parents and documented with the nurse upon arrival for adult supervision.

b. Over the counter medication may be kept by students if they are aware of intended use.

25. What about the cost of medical treatment?

a. The school provides basic medical insurance, but the parents usually remain responsible for a co-pay and deductible. Any pre-existing conditions, dental, and vision needs are not covered.

b. Any additional vaccines and medical requirements that are required upon arrival into the USA are the financial responsibility of the family.

26. What if a student misses his/her home food?

a. Of course, living in a foreign country this is to be anticipated. Parents

would be wise to prepare their students for this reality. Practice eating a variety of new foods before arriving is recommended.

b. Our dining halls and menus are obviously USA focused but we try hard to offer options that will be comfortable for students far from home.

c. We also take our students periodically to ethnic supermarkets as well as local American grocery stores. Select dorm rooms may have individual mini-refrigerators.

27. How do students wash their clothes?

a. Laundry facilities are in both dorms. Dorm parents will teach students as needed. Students need to buy their own laundry supplies like soap and fabric softeners.

28. Where will students eat their meals?

a. On weekends and dinners, we have the wonderful opportunity to enjoy dinners buffet style in our next door, sister university Dining Hall. Weekend lunches are also at Houghton University.

b. School day breakfast and lunch are available in the Houghton Academy Cafeteria.

29. What if a student doesn't get along with a roommate or another student?

a. We encourage all of our students to practice relational problem solving by trying to work things out directly. But, if two students are unable to resolve conflict, they should enlist the help of a dorm parent or school adult.

30. Does a student have to attend church and participate in some religious activities if he/she does not come from a religious background or necessarily have an interest in religious things?

a. Yes. As a Christian School, Houghton Academy believes that a growing understanding of religions in general and Christianity in particular is a crucial element of a well-rounded, well-educated individual.

31. How will a student know what is going on?

a. We have a group WhatsApp or WeChat just for our Boarding Students.

b. School adults will make announcements and updates for which students are responsible.

32. Are boarding students allowed to date?

a. We believe boarding students, while away from their parents, should be focusing on their studies, building many friendships and accumulating as many new experiences as possible.

b. We do allow young men and women to attend designated social events

chaperoned by school adults (school banquets, etc.) as pairs. We believe these types of formal affairs provide excellent opportunities for young people to refine their social skills and practice appropriate etiquette.

c. If we detect any potentially unhealthy close relationships, we will be in touch with parents.

33. Does the school give tuition refunds?

a. No. Once a student enrolls, we provide a year's worth of support and dedicate that "space" to that student. If a student leaves, our expenses do not change.

34. Can a student stay in the dorm over vacations?

a. For Thanksgiving and Easter/Spring Break, yes, but students are responsible for providing their own food during these times but also there is no additional charge for this time of vacation supervision. The dorm is closed for Christmas Break.

b. For the summer vacation between school years, the dorm is closed.

35. What about cars?

a. We do not allow Boarding students to ride in another car with a teenage driver.

b. If they receive permission ahead of time, and the adult is approved by the school, a Boarding student may ride with a school parent or adult.

c. We do not offer driving training for Boarding students due to the liability issue.

36. What are some behaviors that Houghton Academy does not tolerate from its students?

a. Lying, stealing, inappropriate language, bullying, disobedience, disrespect, pornography, tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs or sexual activity. Students unable to live by these and our other clear will be asked to leave.

b. We are absolutely committed to a positive, productive, and respectful school environment for everyone.

37. What is the standard that boarding students have the most trouble adjusting to?

a. Most of our students do not have a problem adjusting to our rules because they generally find them very reasonable, understandable, and consistently applied.

b. We are serious about teaching the most basic but important life skills such as being on time and getting responsibilities done.

c. Two of our regularly very important expectations are: Get to school on time and get all your assignments in on time. Successful people start by mastering these two life skills.