



HBW

Underground

Student

Handbook

Philosophy

Today, schools still do the two things they were set up to do: babysit and teach. However, the babysitting role seems to have become more important in many schools than the teaching role. At H. B. Woodlawn we try to change that. Less babysitting (see "Verbum Sap Sat") and more learning, creating, and experiencing. We believe that if society is going to give us this time in our lives, we might as well use it to find out about the exciting world we live in. And have a little fun at the same time. (H-B Student Handbook 1979)

(VSS)

Verbum Sap Sat (VSS) is the de facto school motto of H. B. Woodlawn. It is vulgar Latin for "A word to the wise is sufficient." This means that your life is your responsibility. We believe that you have the sense to manage your education and work through your problems with the help of the people around you. It also means that we believe you have the consideration and respect to let other people go about their business—we're all human enough to really appreciate and care for each other.

Most of all, Verbum Sap Sat means that people don't have to be told to be sensible. Enough said. (H-B Student Handbook 1979)

(Pillars)

The main way that H-B's philosophy is talked about today is its pillars. The original three pillars were caring community, student governance, and self-guided learning. In March of 2021, a fourth pillar, equity, was added. The pillars are designed to shape the day to day goings on at H-B and "hold up" the school's philosophy (cause they're pillars? Get it?) (Haha, except it's not really that funny Niko-Owen). There has been some discussion about whether the equity pillar is really a pillar or more of a foundation or goal of the other three but needless to say they're all very important.

Town Meeting

Town Meeting, H-B Woodlawn's governing body, is one of the most powerful student-run assemblies in the United States and is based off of the administrative town meetings in many New England towns. It is a democratic body, so all votes, whether they be from teachers, students, or administrators, are valued equally.

Town Meeting makes all decisions about school allocation of department funds (and thus has control over most of the courses offered), the block schedule, and school-wide events. Town Meeting also has significant control over hiring new employees and dozens of other

school policies. The only major restriction on Town Meeting is that it cannot directly make binding decisions related to the curriculum, though it has the power to decide whether or not a decision relates to the curriculum, so it's a wash of sorts. A core tenet of H-B Woodlawn's philosophy is to provide students with the power to direct their own education and environment. Therefore, Town Meeting is a key vehicle through which students wield said power.

Teaching Hiring Committee

H-B Woodlawn has a wonderfully unique way of hiring new teachers. When a vacancy occurs, a small committee of interested students, staff, parents, and frequently Ray interview candidates. The committee has the power to make a recommendation to the Head Teacher, who makes the final decision. Effectively, though, the committee makes the decision, since to our knowledge there has never been an instance of the Head Teacher overruling a committee decision.

TA System

We don't have a real guidance department here at H-B. Instead of spending tax dollars on guidance counselors as other schools do, the allocation committee spends the money each year on a couple of extra teachers. This system has the major advantage of giving H-B smaller classes while also giving the advising/counseling functions for a smaller group of students to each teacher, who can hopefully get to know each kid better than a guidance counselor could.

Your TA has all the functions of a guidance counselor, including approving what courses you take, checking up on your academic performance, and, when the time comes, writing college recommendations.

Transportation

The regular school buses usually get everybody to school between 8:40 am and 9:00 am and leave here around 4:00 PM, which is all you need to know if you don't do sports, take a class at the Career Center, or ever for any other reason want to leave this school.

If you don't mind putting up with crazy schedules, you can use the Metrobus or ART buses to get around Arlington. If you talk to Graham you can get a student Metrocard that makes all rides on Metrobus and ART free.

Another common way people get to and from school is by driving. Unfortunately students cannot park in the teacher garage so they will park in this neighborhood known as Dawson Terrace which is about a 10 minute walk to the school. If you are staying after school for Ultimate

conditioning, Theatre, etc. you can move your car to the teacher garage.

Off Campus

Starting in eighth grade, all H-B Woodlawn students are able to enter and leave school grounds whenever they want provided they get their parents to sign a waiver. With great power comes great responsibility, of course, so students are strongly advised to behave responsibly in the real world, lest they face punishment not just from the school but also from the police and criminal justice system. (H-B Student Handbook 2017)

We also find it important to mention that off campus privileges are not found at many other high schools, and so as to not ruin it for all the other students at our school, please make wise decisions and maintain a respectful manner when in the Rosslyn wilderness (VSS).

Top 3 Recommended Spots In Rosslyn

Phó 75:

Owen- 5/5, truly one of the best restaurants in the area. Phó 75 is perfect for a cold winter's day. I would highly recommend a large number 12 paired with an iced Vietnamese coffee with condensed milk (does a little chefs kiss), just make sure you avoid the lunch rush.

Simple Greek:

Noah- 4/5, the food there is great with very fair prices.

Safeway:

Niko- 3.5/5, some people have never bought a quart and a half of ice cream and then stashed it in the teacher fridge for like three days and all I can say is, you're missing out.

A Conclusion of Sorts

H-B is a place where students can take control of their education. That is to say, if you don't like something, change it! With the power of Town Meeting, students can do almost anything here if they get enough support. This school was designed to be alternative and we don't always think it does everything it can to achieve that. Maybe you agree, maybe you don't. Either way, this school is designed to be student-led. So rally your friends, come up with some cool ideas, and make this school your own. Oh, and have fun doing it!

If you want to learn more, the full Underground Student Handbook can be found using the QR Code to the right!

