

Katherine Anne Porter School

Student Handbook Highlights

2017-18



Welcome to Katherine Anne Porter School!

The Katherine Anne Porter School (KAPS) is a Public Charter School. We provide educational services to students in the counties of Hays, Blanco, Travis, Caldwell, Comal, and Gonzales. We are funded partially by state and federal financing and partially by private fundraising, parents, students, and staff. KAPS is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation headed by an elected Board of Directors.

KAPS currently provides a full high school curriculum with an emphasis on Great Art and Great Thought for students in grades 9 through 12 and offers a TEA-accredited high school diploma to its graduates.

We are NOT a private school; there is no tuition or fee structure, and it is open to all applicants who meet normal high school prerequisites, subject to availability of openings.

We are a member of the Texas Charter School Academic and Athletic League (TCSAAL) and field limited athletic and academic teams in interscholastic competition.

We are Dragons, and our colors are blue, black, and silver!

Who was our namesake?

Katherine Anne Porter was born near Brownwood, TX in 1890 and moved to Kyle, TX in her early childhood. She worked as a writer and teacher most of her life in various spots around the United States, Mexico, and Europe. She wrote articles for a number of magazines and newspapers and published several notable short stories. In 1962, she published the very popular novel *Ship of Fools*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and was later made into a film.

She is known as a writer of great clarity, achieving a style of objectivity without sacrificing sensitivity. Many of her stories used the geographic locales of the South, the Southwest, and Mexico. Although most of her works were written and published outside of Texas, she is considered one of the state's best and most famous writers.

Katherine Anne Porter died in September of 1980. Her childhood home in Kyle was purchased by a group dedicated to preserving her memory. That group evolved into the founders of the KAP School, who saw a need for a school focused on the arts in the rural hill country area.

What is Our Shared Vision?

Our Identity

We are a creative community celebrating diversity and freedom in learning.

Our Mission

We educate and empower our students with knowledge, skills, and practices to be successful and compassionate in school and life.

Our Vision

We envision highly developed and valued individuals who are engaged and successful at reaching their full potential.

Our Values and Commitments

We value the voice of every member of our community and expect everyone to embrace and employ these values and commitments.

Academic Achievement-We put learning first, with the belief that knowledge and understanding lead to positive action and empowerment, positioning individuals for success.

Freedom-We offer diverse opportunities for people to bring all of who they are to our community so that creativity thrives.

Participation & Collaboration-We work together to have focused participation and collaboration toward the positive development of our community.

Respect-We practice respect for oneself, others, and our world.

Great Art and Thought-We are committed to fostering appreciation, participation and creation of great art and thought.

Community Involvement & Service-We shape our community just as our community shapes us through engagement and service based projects.

Environmental Stewardship-We teach and practice conservation and protection of our natural resources and wildlife.

The Restorative Model

Restorative discipline and practice is a whole school approach to school culture. It “is a relational approach to building school climate and addressing student behavior that fosters belonging over exclusion, social engagement over control, and meaningful accountability over punishment.” It is an investment of time and emotion. Restorative practice is a much slower process and it involves more hands-on commitment from the teachers, the students, the parents, and the admin. It is a “pulling in” rather than a “pushing out,” and sometimes the ones you are “pulling in,” resist. It is difficult some days and weeks, but it has been, for me, totally worth it.

At our school, Katherine Anne Porter, the idea to begin implementing restorative discipline and practice began about 3 years ago. In many ways, even earlier than that - as a charter school - our goal has been to find alternatives to both teaching and discipline in the school systems. As we move into our third official year of Restorative Practice, I, as Principal, will be implementing more restorative practice into our discipline procedures.

The most common form of Restorative Practice is the circle. However, the circle is not the only aspect of the restorative practice. It is something that we do in all our day-to-day interactions with each other. It is a way of speaking with one another and most importantly of listening to one another. It begins with “I” statements and asking questions of the other. If a person is acting out or acting in a way that isn’t usual for them, learn to ask questions instead of jumping to conclusions. Sometimes the cause, is not what you expect. Learn to ask, “what is going on with you today? Are you feeling okay? Is there something you need from me, that you are not getting?” If you, yourself, are upfront and honest, and you learn to listen, then you can solve more problems than you can cause or escalate.

The circle model in Restorative Practice can be applied to many areas of the school. We use them in the classroom as check-ins, teaching circles, respect agreements, and topical issues inside and outside the classroom. We also use them for staffings, mentor groups, and during staff inservices. The circle is a forum to vocalize one’s opinions. Everyone gets a chance to speak, and all get the opportunity to listen. With that being said, speaking is optional. Anyone who does not feel comfortable answering, or simply has nothing to say, may pass when it gets to their turn. The main elements of the circle are the talking piece, the center piece, the opener, the closer, and the rounds.

The circle not only gives voice to all, it protects as well. It gives people - students, parents, teachers, and admin alike, a space to speak and be heard. It gives the school an opportunity to have the difficult conversations that need to occur, so that our community can grow together.

Looking forward to the journey!

Dr. Erin Flynn
Principal

Technology Policy

Technology at the Katherine Anne Porter School is provided to facilitate the student's education. It is a privilege and will be taken away if the student violates school policy. Violation of school policy will also result in appropriate disciplinary action.

All students at the KAPS are required to follow these acceptable use guidelines:

1. The student may only use his/her password and user ID to enter the computer system.
2. Under no circumstances are students allowed to share their login credentials.
3. Students are not allowed to bring food or beverages into any computer lab nor are they allowed to have food or drinks around any school computer equipment. Students will not be allowed in the computer lab unless they are accompanied by faculty member.
4. The student will follow the directions of the Faculty Member in charge.
5. Vandalism or misuse - The student may not do anything to damage or disrupt equipment or system performance.
6. Students will not use the school's technology for personal, financial, or commercial gain.
7. The unauthorized use of programs/applications is prohibited – (i.e., Students can only use programs for which he/she has been given rights.).
8. The student will not engage in any communications or transactions via the Internet unless specified and supervised by the teacher in charge or by the network administrator.
9. Students are not allowed to tamper with another student's account.
10. The network administrator reserves the right to disable any student's account upon suspicion of improper use of equipment or the violation of any of the stated guidelines.

If there is a violation of monetary value, then the student and parent/guardian will be held responsible. No teacher or Katherine Anne Porter School Employee may be held responsible or legally liable for material distributed or acquired from the network or Internet.

Internet Filtering:

The school computers and network are not to be used for any communication (e.g., unauthorized email, social networking, chat, etc.) unless directed by a faculty member. The school uses an internet filter to aid in the reduction of violent, offensive, inaccurate, inappropriate and illegal material found on the Internet. If for some reason the filter stops functioning, students are still expected to adhere to school policy.

Any attempts to bypass the web filter will result in severe disciplinary action.

Portables:

Phones, SmartPhones, Tablets, Media Players and Notebooks are only allowed for school work and only in cases where students are instructed to use them by a faculty member. If they are used under any other circumstances they will be confiscated, except during Breakfast and lunch. These devices can be confiscated by any staff member. They will be returned at the discretion of the Principal and will result in

a monetary fine. In order to access the Katherine Anne Porter WiFi, the student must bring the device to the IT department so that the MAC address can be recorded and entered into the system. Students are not allowed to unplug anything to charge their devices. Doing so will result in disciplinary action.

WiFi:

WiFi will be provided for the students. In order to gain access, the student must sign the acceptable use policy. After the acceptable use policy is signed, the student must bring his/her device to the IT Department, which will maintain a log based on the device ID. Any policy violations will result in the revocation of WiFi access by that device. If a student loses his/her Domain login privileges WiFi access will also be revoked.

Hotspots:

The establishment of unauthorized WiFi hotspots is strictly prohibited and may result in expulsion.

Student Expectations

Students at KAPS are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, to adhere to all school rules, to represent the school in a positive manner **at all times**. The aim of the KAPS student should be to become both a high school graduate and a productive citizen of our community and society.

KAPS Students Rights and Responsibilities:

- 1) Students have the right to an education in an environment conducive to learning.
- 2) Students have the right to respect and dignity.
- 3) Students have the responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity.
- 4) Students have a responsibility to attend school punctually.
- 5) Students have a responsibility to be prepared for class with appropriate materials.
- 6) Students have a responsibility to maintain and improve the school environment, respect school property, and exercise due care while using school facilities and equipment.
- 7) Students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in such a way that they do not disrupt, distract, or otherwise interfere with the teaching and learning process.
- 8) Students shall not jeopardize the health and safety of others by their acts.
- 9) Students shall refrain from malicious comments and obscenity in verbal or written form.
- 10) Students shall be appropriately dressed and groomed.

Prohibited Materials

Weapons:

Firearms of any kind, knives, dangerous toys, martial arts equipment, or any other materials that could be used as weapons are not permitted on school grounds, at school events, or in school transport. These items will be confiscated if found. Possession of weapons at school or at school functions is considered a serious offense that may result in expulsion. Additionally, toys that imitate weapons are prohibited.

Prohibited Substances: Students shall not possess, use, or transmit illicit, prescription, or illegal drugs, alcohol, drug or alcohol paraphernalia, or tobacco (including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, e-cigarettes, or other forms), items that may be used as inhalants (e.g. aerosol sprays), or any substance that may reasonably be considered an intoxicant (e.g. synthetic chemical intoxicants) on KAPS premises, in KAPS-provided transport, or while participating in KAPS-sponsored events. Students shall not come to campus or any KAPS event under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The consequences for any of these behaviors may include involvement of law enforcement, medical assistance, and/or expulsion. All confiscated items will not be returned.

Student Behaviour

Threats of Violence:

Threats of violence will not be permitted. Students are discouraged from any form of threatening behavior. Verbal or physical threats of any kind will be treated as serious offences and may warrant disciplinary action, including expulsion.

Hazing Prohibition:

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment that is free from hazing for students and staff members. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school and are prohibited at all times. No student, teacher, administrator or other school district employee, contractor or volunteer shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing. No student, teacher, administrator or other school district employee, contractor or volunteer shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing. Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act. This policy applies to hazing behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours. The school will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school district employee, contractor or volunteer who is found to have violated this policy.

Theft and Vandalism:

Students are encouraged not to bring large amounts of money or items of value to school in order to lessen the likelihood of theft. Vandalism and theft are serious infractions, and will result in disciplinary action which may include expulsion. These offenses are forbidden on KAPS premises, in KAPS-provided transport, or while participating in KAPS-sponsored events.

Safety: Students are obligated to ensure that the Katherine Anne Porter environment is safe and comfortable for all its members. Students will not engage in any conduct, be it physical, verbal, or otherwise, that poses any level of harm to themselves or others. This includes scaling walls or climbing over handrails.

Students will not exhibit any behaviors that create a physically, mentally, or verbally hostile environment for other members of the KAPS community. Bullying will not be tolerated and can result in expulsion.

Students will not move furniture and block thoroughfares. Students will not tamper with ANY school equipment including, but not limited to, alarms, fire extinguishers, and kitchen equipment.

Disruption:

Students are expected to be attentive in class and other school functions and to be respectful of the staff and their classmates. Disruption of class or other school activities will not be permitted.

Public Displays of Affection:

The Katherine Porter School is a learning environment and students are expected to prioritize their education over other considerations. Students are to refrain from public displays of affection (PDA) beyond hand-holding. Other forms of prolonged physical contact are not appropriate at school.

Leaving classes:

Students are expected to be in their assigned classrooms from the beginning of a school period until the end of that period. If they have no assigned classroom, they may be in the school cafeteria unless prior arrangements have been made. Students may leave class only upon requesting and receiving a hall pass from their teacher. Teachers will sign only one hall pass at any time, and **students are expected to attend to the requested business (bathroom, office visit, etc.) and return to class immediately and by the most direct route possible.** School staff will monitor students with hall passes; excessive delays in returning to class or visiting unauthorized areas with a hall pass may result in the suspension of those privileges for that student and the student will be placed on “pass restriction” after which they will not receive hall passes for any class in routine circumstances.

School assemblies, fire drills, and other group functions:

Students are expected to attend all school assemblies and to listen courteously to the presentation. Likewise, from time to time, the school will hold fire drills requiring the cooperation of all students. At the conclusion of these events, students are expected to return promptly to class or their assigned location.

Food and drink: Food and drink are allowed in the cafeteria, outside, and open areas **excluding** on the sports court and in the bleachers. Bottled water is the only exception to this rule, and is permitted in class at the discretion of the teacher. This privilege is contingent on students cleaning up after themselves; littering in the common areas of the school may lead to restrictions on eating outside of the cafe. Outside food and drink are not permitted to be delivered to students during the regular school day.

Responsibility

Care of Campus: If a student creates a mess, s/he is expected to clean it up. If a student moves school property, s/he is expected to put it back. If a student damages school property, s/he should repair it, or the parent/guardian will be financially accountable for repairs to be made.

Leaving Campus: Once Students arrive on campus, students must remain on campus unless the administration receives communication from parent or guardian stating otherwise. If a student leaves campus on a regular school day, **they are not permitted** to return to campus that day unless they have

received preclearance from school administration (e.g. prior scheduled medical appointments)

Absences: Students are responsible for being on campus and in class at the appropriate times. If an absence occurs, students are responsible for getting and completing any and all missed work. Excessive absences can affect grades and may lead to a loss in credit. [See Online School Policies Book for more details.]

KAPS Ambassadors:

All students are expected to be ambassadors for the school to the surrounding communities. Students are expected to behave in those communities in a manner that brings credit to themselves, their parents, and the KAP School.

KAPS Dress Code

Overall Dress Code:

Students are prohibited from any form of nudity or indecent exposure within the KAPS school property. Students shall not wear clothes that promote tobacco, sexual themes, alcohol, drugs, express hatred or prejudice, portray or glorify violence, or identify the student as the member of a gang or cult. Appropriate footwear, as determined by staff, must be worn at all times. Transgender students may dress in accordance with their gender identity.

In Classroom Dress Code:

Students are prohibited from being bare-chested.
Groin and buttocks must be contained and covered entirely.
Swim attire can only be worn under clothing.
In Classroom Dress Code must be in accordance with section I.

Athletic Activity* Dress Code:

Groin and buttocks must be contained and covered. Appropriate athletic footwear must be worn in accordance with the instructor. Instructors may set their own dress standards for matters concerning sports team uniforms, shirts and safety including sports-bras and athletic support.
Athletic Activity Dress Code must be in accordance with section I.

*Athletic Activity pertains to athletic periods and sports in the afterschool program. This does not include lunch or passing periods.

School staff may at any time refer potential dress code violations to the Principal. The Principal will exercise his/her discretion in accordance with this section and will be the final arbiter on the appropriateness of the attire in question. The Principal may direct the student to change to acceptable clothing. If the student refuses, the parent will be notified, and/or the student will face immediate disciplinary action or may be asked to leave campus until properly attired in accordance with this section. If students do not have appropriate attire the school will provide appropriate clothing with accordance to the dress code. Any absences and/or tardies caused by disciplinary actions for dress code violations will be considered unexcused.

School Property

Unauthorized use of school equipment:

All school equipment, including (but not specifically limited to) computers, audio/video gear, construction and mechanical tools, and science lab equipment shall be utilized only as authorized and supervised by KAPS staff. Engaging in any unauthorized computer activity such as illegal/unauthorized entry into files, illegal/unauthorized software installation, destruction of property, deletion of files, unauthorized Internet access, downloading of pornography, playing violent video games, etc. is prohibited. Construction, mechanical, and electronic tools shall only be utilized in a safe manner and under the direct supervision of KAPS staff. In addition, there is a separate school technology policy (see below).

Textbooks:

Students may be assigned textbooks, or they may be used in a community pool, depending upon the class. If a textbook is assigned to a student, he or she is expected to take care of it and replace it if lost or damaged. Students are expected to treat pooled textbooks with the same care as assigned ones.

Library materials:

Students are expected to take care of the school's library materials, to check them out of the library as needed, and to return them promptly to the library. Maximum borrowing time for books, videos, CD's, and other materials is two weeks. Our library works on the honor system; students must sign out materials in the logbook before removing them from the library.

School Phone Usage:

Students may not use the school telephones for outgoing or incoming conversations unless authorized by the KAPS office personnel. The office phones may only be used at the discretion of the office staff, during Breakfast or lunch, before school, or after all classes have been concluded; no calls may be placed during class time. Students' cell phones should be turned off during the school day including during passing periods, except during lunch and Breakfast when use of cell phones and other electronic equipment is permitted.

School Transportation:

The bus is an extension of the school, once on, all rules of KAPS apply. Cooperate with the driver and other school personnel at all times. Be at the designated stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time and be ready to board. Board the bus carefully and courteously. Take our assigned seat and remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop at your authorized stop. If there is a seat belt provided you **must** wear it. Leave the bus carefully and courteously. Driver is authorized to assign seats. Be courteous to other riders; do not try to save seats for your friends. Report any problems on the bus to the bus driver, Director of Transportation, or school personnel. All loose items, including instruments, should be secured. All students who use school transportation must board buses at authorized stops only. Authorized stops will be designated annually by the Superintendent or designee. Bus drivers will load and unload passengers only at authorized stops. Except for water in a plastic or non-breakable bottle, no eating or drinking is allowed. The following items are prohibited: glass objects, live animals and/or

insects, aerosol containers, open flame of any kind, explosives or fireworks, tobacco products of any type, objects too large to fit in a student's lap or seat, any item that may present a risk to the safety of passengers. Cell phones and all electronic devices should remain in the possession of the owner in order to prevent loss or damage. The school will not be responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices. Parents should be aware that drivers are unable to monitor appropriate use of electronic devices while on the school bus. Conduct Resulting in the **Loss of Bus Privileges:** Fighting, physical abuse or threat of physical abuse, throwing objects within the bus or out the windows, possession of any controlled substance, possession or use of any object used to inflict bodily injury to a person including, but not limited to chains, explosives or fireworks, anything that resembles a weapon shall be considered as a weapon, extending body parts from the bus, boarding or leaving the bus through the emergency door unless there is an emergency, vandalism of any part of the inside or outside of the bus, in addition to being charged for the damages, further bus privileges may be denied, flagrant disrespect or disobedience to the driver, repeated infractions of bus safety rules. **Steps of Discipline for Bus Safety:** Verbal warning to student with notification to parent, Written warning to student with notification to parent and campus disciplinary action, One (1) school day in school suspension, Three (3) school days suspension from the bus, Five (5) school days suspension from the bus, Ten (10) school days suspension from the bus, Twenty (20) school days suspension from the bus, Suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year. Any subsequent infraction(s), regardless of the level of offense or the time, will result in the next level of disciplinary action.

Personal Property

Electronic Equipment:

Personal electronic equipment, including but not limited to CD players, game devices, musical instruments, portable computers, cell phones, iPods, and MP3 players, shall only be brought into classrooms with the teacher's permission. Students are cautioned if bringing any of these items to school, as KAPS is relieved of any liability surrounding the loss or damage to student's personal property. A teacher has the discretion to forbid or allow a student to listen to music through personal headphones while reading, writing, or independent work. Students are permitted to possess but not use cellular phones during regularly scheduled school hours EXCEPT during meal and passing periods, including surfing the web, texting, talking, or any other usage during class time or passing periods. Use of cellular phones will result in temporary or permanent confiscation. In accordance with TEC §37.082 the students will be fined \$15 if caught using a cell phone during the school day except during lunch and Breakfast. The student's cell phone will be returned at the end of the school day on which payment is received. Students are not permitted to use their cell phones, tablets or other portable devices when excused from class for a water break, restroom break, etc.

Student Parking

Students must register their vehicles with the Front Desk in order to park on school property, this includes parking in the field. **Student driver will need to provide copy of valid driver's licence and insurance.** Students are expected to drive safely entering, exiting, and within the parking lot to protect the lives or property of others. Students are expected to park in the center of a marked parking spot and to avoid handicapped spots unless they hold valid state handicapped tags. Students are expected to lock their

vehicles and to not leave valuables in them. KAPS is not responsible for any damages to, or theft from, student vehicles on KAPS property. Students may visit their vehicles during the day to retrieve books or other materials only if explicitly granted permission by a school staff member, and the student will be escorted to and from their car by a staff member. Otherwise, students are not to be in the parking lot between arrival and departure to/from KAPS. Students are expressly prohibited from sitting in their vehicles during school. Student vehicles are subject to search at the discretion of school administration and law enforcement. Drivers need to follow the arrows of direction and not to exceed 10 mph. Having a vehicle at school is a privilege that may be revoked if student is irresponsible.

Community Service Hours

Additionally, all students are required to complete 5 hours of community service per semester during their tenure at the Katherine Anne Porter School. Completion of community service must be fulfilled in order to meet graduation requirements. Appropriate project and venues to satisfy the community service requirements for graduation are determined by the principal in accordance with KAPS guidelines. Students are responsible for documenting, obtaining signatures, and keeping track of community service logs in collaboration with their mentor.

KAPS also awards The Porter Volunteer Service Award to all eligible seniors. The Porter Volunteer Service Award is a blue ribbon that will be worn at graduation by each senior student who has completed 100 or more community service hours during their high school tenure.

Exciting Clubs, Societies, and Committees!

KAPS offers a wide variety of clubs, societies, and extracurricular activities.

Clubs

Leos
Humanities
Nerds Club
SAGA
Astronomy Club
Freshman Club

Societies

National Honor Society

Sports

Volleyball
Soccer
Basketball
Archery

Other

Theatre

Peer Jury

Dragons in the Round

**KAPS STUDENT HANDBOOK HIGHLIGHTS
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

We understand that the complete Student Handbook/Policy Book of the Katherine Anne Porter School is available at the school, and is also posted on the school website at www.kapschool.org. We have read the Student Handbook/Policy Book of the Katherine Anne Porter School and agree to abide by **all** of its provisions.

As a student of KAPS, I will be a Leader of the Hill Country, a Dragon of Life!

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date