

**STUDENT/PARENT
HANDBOOK**

HILLCREST SCHOOL



2023-2024

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AS SOME RULES AND REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN MODIFIED.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

1. Students may enter the building at early as 7:45 a.m.
Entry for students will be through the South Gate for lower and middle school. High school students enter through the north doors.
2. School begins at 8:00 a.m. After three tardies, parents of high school students will be notified.
3. Advisory is one of the most important classes of the day. It begins at 8:00 a.m. Social skills and study skills are taught at this time.
4. School is dismissed Monday through Friday at 3:20 p.m.
All students are picked up through the appropriate carpool line. The only exceptions to this procedure are:
 - A. students that are picked up early by parents who have come into the school and checked them out with parental signature on the sign in-sign out sheet.
 - B. students that drive.
5. Students with a valid driver's license must have a copy of their license and proof of insurance on file and must use the assigned student parking.
6. If your child is going home with another child, walking to specific place, or in any way deviating from the usual carpool plan, please send a note to the child's advisor. We want to completely safeguard each child.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Should the weather be too severe for school, and/or MISD/ECISD cancel classes, then Hillcrest will also cancel classes. However, Hillcrest may close or delay opening when the surrounding districts do not close. Hillcrest students come from several surrounding communities; therefore, we may need to cancel or delay class opening on occasion. Please refer to Channels 2, 7, 9, ClassTag, and Facebook for information concerning school cancellation. The students will be notified by their advisors to inform them of cancellations or late starts.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

In order to ensure full credit for the semester, student absences must be limited to no more than 10 days.

When your child is absent, please notify your child's advisor by calling the office by 10:00 am. Please remember to sign your child out each time he/she needs to leave the school during regular school hours. The sign out sheet is on the desk in the entry.

ILLNESS

In the interest of each child's health, please keep your child home if they are showing signs of an illness, such as temperature, sore throat, headache, congestion, cough, etc. Please be aware that Hillcrest School will contact the parents if an administrator deems they need to be taken home.

MEDICATION

Please note the following medication policy:

1. **Non-prescription drugs** must have instructions on the bottle (securely taped) and signed by the parent. All over the counter medication must be provided by the parent and in the original bottle. (We must have permission to dispense all medication including any over the counter medication.) Please complete form in enrollment packet.
2. **Prescription medicine** must be in most recent and original bottle and have a doctor's name and directions clearly typed on the bottle with specific dosage and times of administrations clearly specified. Counting of the number of doses must be witnessed by the parent and administrator when the medication is delivered.

LUNCHES

Hillcrest does not provide a meal service and each student should bring his/her lunch each day. In the event that a student forgets a lunch, we will be unable to provide their lunch, and the parents will be contacted. Microwaves are available if your child needs to warm his/her lunch. In order to reduce disruption throughout our academic day, Uber Eats, Door Dash, or other delivery services will not be utilized.

CARPOOL

1. Parents will organize their own carpools.
2. Please follow the detailed carpool map for morning and afternoon carpool. ALL students must arrive and depart through the designated carpool area, unless prior arrangements have been made with the director.
3. PLEASE LOOK VERY CAREFULLY AT MAP ATTACHED TO THE BACK OF MANUAL.
4. All students will be expected to remain in the carpool area under teacher supervision. Students who are not picked up during regular carpool dismissal will report to their advisor to await their ride. Students must then, be signed out by their designated driver and leave by the front door. Parents are required to sign students out at front desk.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Communication between the school and parents is an important aspect of the Hillcrest program.

1. **Please remember to provide your email address.** Hillcrest School will be sending important notices, reports, and vital information via email and ClassTag.
2. Please check your student's "Homework To Do" folder daily for additional communications.
3. **REPORT CARDS** are sent out on a quarterly basis. The students receive grades based on their individual ability.
4. Please feel free to call your child's advisor to set up an appointment at any time. Please call during school hours, leave a message, and your child's advisor will return your call. Please feel free to email your student's teacher at any time.
5. Emails are always welcomed and encouraged to help strengthen the interaction between the school and the home.
6. Teachers are not allowed to send or receive text messages on their personal phone. Please email or call the school phone if you need to contact a teacher.

PLEASE NOTE YOUR STUDENT'S ADVISOR'S AND ADMINISTRATION EMAIL BELOW:

Starnes, Betty—Executive Director

bstarnes@hillcrestschool.org

Bakke, Debbie –Dean of Students

dbakke@hillcrestschool.org

Ready, Jennifer –Registrar and Office Coordinator

jready@hillcrestschool.org

Haas, Kim – School Receptionist

khaas@hillcrestschool.org

Alderson, Peggy-Lower School Advisor

alderson@hillcrestschool.org

Claxton, Kasey-Middle School Advisor

claxton@hillcrestschool.org

Chambers, Brooke –Middle School Advisor

chambers@hillcrestschool.org

Eskew, Kay-Upper School Advisor

eskew@hillcrestschool.org

Ingram, Cindy – Lower School Advisor

ingram@hillcrestschool.org

Lynam, Krista – Fine Arts

lynam@hillcrestschool.org

Orosco, Lorrie – Lower School Advisor

orosco@hillcrestschool.org

Petteway, Kristi – Lower School Advisor

petteway@hillcrestschool.org

Robinson, Tom-Middle School Advisor

robinson@hillcrestschool.org

Rosser, Katie – Upper School Advisor

rosser@hillcrestschool.org

Smith, Jaci-Physical Education

smith@hillcrestschool.org

Sumner, Laura – Physical Education

sumner@hillcrestschool.org

Thomas, David – Upper School Advisor

davidthomas@hillcrestschool.org

Thomas, Delanna-Upper School Advisor

thomas@hillcrestschool.org

Thomason, Trudie – Take Flight Instructor

thomason@hillcrestschool.org

Tilley, David – Physical Education

tilley@hillcrestschool.org

THINGS TO BRING TO SCHOOL—THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME

Things to bring:

1. Basic supplies are provided on the first day of school. The teacher or advisor must approve any additional items brought to school.
2. The teacher may request additional supplies.

Things to leave at home:

1. Please do not have the students bring any expensive items or excessive amount of cash to school. No toys.
2. Students are not permitted to use such items as cell phones, cameras, or electronic devices or games inside the school building or on any school sponsored trip without prior permission from the Executive Director. Without such permission, teachers will collect the item and turn it in to the Executive Director. Parents will need to pick the item up from the office.
3. Please do not send live animals.
4. No chewing gum.

SUPPLIES

1. Student's notebooks are completely outfitted at the beginning of the school year. After that, parents need to replace supplies if requested by their teacher.
2. Student's textbooks are covered by the Supply Fee paid at the beginning of the year. If a student loses a textbook, he/she will be assessed a replacement fee.

TELEPHONE USE

1. Since we are limited in the number of telephones, students may ask for permission to use the school phone for emergency calls only.
2. Students may never use the phone without permission.
3. **Please limit calls/messages to your student to those of an urgent or serious matter.**
4. **Please do not call or text your student directly during the day.** If you need to speak to your student or student's teacher, call during school hours and leave a message with the front office. Your student's teacher will call you during his/her conference time.

HILLCREST SCHOOL CELL PHONE POLICY

Maintaining the integrity of the learning environment is our top priority at Hillcrest School. In order to maintain a safe, respectful, and productive environment. However, Hillcrest School recognizes the importance of communication and collaboration, and therefore provides devices for students to be productive in the classroom. To keep the focus on academics and to reduce unnecessary distractions, the school enforces the following:

- **Cell phones or any other mobile device may NOT be used at any time during the day or anywhere on campus without a teacher's permission.**
- Cell phones and all mobile devices shall be **TURNED OFF** when entering school campus.
- Cell phones and all mobile devices shall be kept in designated and secure assigned area which will be clearly communicated by administrators or advisors for the entirety of the academic day.

- Cell phones and all mobile devices can be turned back on at the end of school bell and used to communicate directly with parents who are assisting in transportation with the permission of the student's advisor or an administrator.
- If a student needs to make an emergency call during the day, they are to do so in the front office.
- All communication that needs to be relayed to a student during the school day needs to be addressed by contacting the front office.

Should a student violate the cell phone policy, disciplinary action will be taken. The privilege of bringing the cell phone to school will be revoked and the cell phone confiscated. Should confiscation of a cell phone occur, the parent must retrieve the phone from the director and be subject to a fine.

Hillcrest School and its employees are in no way responsible for any theft or damage of student's personal device while on school grounds. The school is not obligated to investigate the loss or damage of any cell phone that is brought to school or school event.

HILLCREST SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY / INTERNET USAGE AGREEMENT / ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Internet access is available to students, teachers, and employees in the Hillcrest school. We are pleased to offer this resource and believe it provides vast, diverse, and unique opportunities. Our goal in providing current technologies to students, parents, teachers, and employees of Hillcrest School is to insure the educational value of technology resources. Technology users need to be aware that the intentional inappropriate use of school resources, in any location, will result in consequences which may include reprimand, exclusion from technology assets, loss of network privileges, suspension, and/or expulsion. Use of the Hillcrest technology is a privilege and may be revoked by the school at any time and for any valid reason. Hillcrest reserves the right to inspect and/or remove files, limit or deny access, and refer the user for further disciplinary action.

1. **Acceptable Use**—The purpose of our network, which is the backbone to the internet, is to support research and for education in and among academic institutions in the United States by providing access to resources and providing opportunities for collaborative work. The use of technology resources must be for education or research purposes and consistent with the educational objectives of Hillcrest School. We reserve all rights to any material stored in files that are generally accessible to others and will remove any material that Hillcrest School, as its sole discretion finds to be unlawful, obscene, view, download, or otherwise gain access to such materials. Users may not transmit any material in violation of any federal, state, or municipal law, including copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material and information protected by trade secret. Users may not use technology resources for gaming, plagiarism, copyright infringement, commercial activities, and/or advertisement.
2. **Use of Technology Resources Is a Privilege**-The use of the technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use can result in a cancellation or limitation of those privileges. Internet usage is only allowed under the supervision of a Hillcrest School staff member. The system administrators determine what is inappropriate use and reserve the right to remove files or limit or deny access, that determination being conclusive and final. The administration, faculty, and staff of Hillcrest School may also request the system operator to deny or limit specific user access to technology resources. Appropriate reasons for revoking privileges include, but are not limited to, the altering of configurations and programs on or through the

computer system.

3. **Vandalism**-Vandalism will result in immediate consequences. The consequences will include, but are not limited to cancellation of privileges and monetary reimbursement. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data and/or equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, installing unapproved software, physical damage, and changing equipment configurations.

As a responsible user of technology:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>I take steps to protect my personal information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ I keep my usernames and passwords private.→ I log out of computers and other technology services before leaving a computer or device.→ I keep my documents and other electronic data secure. | <p>I respect and take care of the technology to which I have access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ I do my best to keep the technology assigned to me safe and secure.→ I don't take assigned technology from school.→ I don't make changes to technology equipment or settings, including downloading apps or programs. |
| <p>I use technology ethically.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ I respect the digital privacy of others.→ My use of technology does not put myself or others at risk.→ I comply with applicable laws, policies, and agreements. | <p>I use technology solely for educational purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ I access and use information to complete my school work.→ I avoid online resources that are inappropriate, offensive, or illegal.→ If I see inappropriate material online, I report it in a timely fashion. |

CHROMEBOOKS

Hillcrest School recognizes the importance of communication and collaboration, and is proud to provide Chromebooks for students to utilize as a learning tool in the academic setting. To maintain the integrity of the Chromebooks and their usage, the school enforces the following:

- Chromebooks will be assigned to each specific student.
- Chromebooks will be stored and charged in each classroom.
- Chromebooks usage will adhere to the Responsible Use Guidelines.
- Chromebooks will NOT be permitted to leave school grounds for any reason.
- Loss or damage to your Chromebook, both structurally and mechanically, is your responsibility. **Cost of replacement due to loss or irreparable damage is \$300.**
- Failure to follow these guidelines may result in a disciplinary action and/or loss of privileges, as determined by administration.
- One pair of earbuds will be issued for each student each academic year. If they are lost or damaged, replacement earbuds are your financial responsibility. Cost of replacement is \$5.

Remember, the use of all Hillcrest technology resources is a privilege, not a right.

VISITORS IN THE SCHOOL

1. Visitors are always welcome at Hillcrest School. We do ask that potential visitors call in advance and **sign in at the secretary's desk when they arrive at the school.**
Alumni visitors are permitted to visit ONLY during the lunch hour.
2. If you would like to visit and observe your student's classes, please call the school and a schedule will be arranged for you.
3. We strongly discourage student's outside friends visiting or attending private school functions as it is considered a school event. Requests presented in writing and in a timely manner to the Dean of Students will be considered.

HOMEWORK AND QUIET TIME

Students may have homework each evening, Monday-Thursday. For the younger students, this may only consist of daily reading minutes on some evenings.

Please follow these procedures for homework:

1. Provide a quiet place for your student to do his/her homework, free from distractions.
2. Each student should do his/her homework by himself/herself. Your student on his/her assignment sheet in the front of the notebook will have recorded all assignments.
3. **Homework is your student's responsibility, not yours!**

We will always strive to give homework to your student that he/she can complete by himself/herself. Occasionally, your student will forget the directions or have difficulty completing the assignment. If a simple direction from you is sufficient, that is fine. Your student may also call a friend in class for help with the directions, but not answers to the assignment. If your student continues to have difficulty, please send a note or initial/sign the homework page indicating to the teacher that your student could not do the specific assignment. This assignment will be re-taught or re-emphasized as needed.

DRESS CODE

Hillcrest School's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill self-discipline, prevent disruption and avoid safety hazards. A student's attire must not distract from the learning environment. Modesty and avoidance of distracting and disrupting influences are the key to student dress. In order to meet and follow these guidelines, the students of Hillcrest School shall:

1. Wear white, hunter green or black collared shirts (**without logos**) that tuck in with light khaki pants, shorts, or skirts. Hunter green or black cardigans with or without the Hillcrest logo may be worn any day of the week with a collared shirt underneath. Socks and tights must be hunter green, black, or white. The length of shorts must meet our dress code standard determined by the Hillcrest Staff.
2. Wear uniforms or a Hillcrest T-shirts each Friday and on field trips if so desired. Undershirts must be plain white, hunter green, or black with no printing.
3. No hoodies, tank tops, hats, caps, sweatbands, visors, or head coverings in the building.
4. On non-uniform days, or any other school sponsored event students may not wear any clothing that advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, firearms, lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene writings and pictures or death and dismemberment. Dress code guidelines referring to modest grooming will be adhered to.
5. Not have additional body parts pierced and no earrings for male students. Female students may wear only one pair of modest earrings in the lower lobe, no gauges will be allowed.
6. Wear a black or brown belt with pants, skirts or shorts.

7. Not have facial hair.
8. Not wear flip-flops, slides, or high heels. Athletic shoes must be worn for P.E.
9. Not have a visible tattoo.
10. Remember that hair should not interfere with, nor be a distraction to the student's ability to complete their work in the classrooms. Hair color must be within the natural range. Hair should be styled so that it is not covering the eyes. It is required that boy's hair should not touch the top of their collars.
11. Fingernails must be modest in length, decoration, and accessories.

The parents of students who are dressed inappropriately will be called to bring a change of clothing to school or to pick up a student to correct an infraction of the dress code. Students not returning to school will be counted absent. Students may wear attire provided by the school until such time replacement attire has been acquired. School supplied clothing should be washed and returned.

Hillcrest's uniform policy is based on preparing our students to be successful in life including their academics, professional, and social interactions.

DISCIPLINARY CODE

A disciplinary code has been adopted to ensure the safety and well-being of each student and staff member of the Hillcrest School. The following serious infractions constitute a violation to the code:

1. Possession of any weapon on campus or at a school sponsored activity or event.
2. Sexual harassment; threatening remarks or bullying of any kind.
3. Sexually explicit gestures or movements will not be tolerated.
4. Violations of the Texas Penal Code, the Texas Controlled Substances Act or the Texas Dangerous Drugs Act.
5. Please note that Hillcrest School takes all threats of any kind to staff, students' or the school seriously. Any and all will be reported to the proper authorities.
6. In compliance with Texas state law, Hillcrest staff and faculty will notify CPS if there is any reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a student.

Consequences for any of the above violations include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Conference with Executive Director
2. In school suspension
3. Off campus suspension
4. Disciplinary probation
5. Expulsion

The Executive Director makes the final determination regarding the disciplinary action. If expulsion is warranted, all fees and monies are non-refundable.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To receive an accredited diploma from Hillcrest School, the following requirements must be met:

| SUBJECT | CREDITS |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| ENGLISH/LITERATURE | 6 |
| MATH (includes Algebra 1) | 4 |
| HISTORY (includes Government) | 4 |
| SCIENCE | 3 |
| PE | 1.5 |
| COMPUTER, FINE ARTS | 2 |
| ELECTIVES | 4 |
| SENIOR METHODS | 1 |
| HEALTH | .5 |
| TOTAL | 26 |



**Hillcrest School
Student/Parent Handbook
2023-2024 Acknowledgement Form**

I am in receipt of the Student/Parent Handbook and have read and understand all items. I am returning this sheet signifying that I am aware of and understand all Hillcrest rules and will abide by all rules.

Parent

Parent Cell Phone Number

Teacher

Student

Student Cell Phone Number

Date



Hillcrest School's Policy Regarding Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment

Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in physical conduct against another student; directly engages in negative written, electronic, or verbal expression; or engages in physical misconduct against another student.

Bullying should be reported to a Hillcrest Faculty member when it occurs on school property, at a school sponsored event, or in a Hillcrest operated vehicle and the behavior results:

- Harm to the student or student property, or
- Places the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student victim and the student perpetrators and if it interferes with a student's educational environment or disrupts the operation of the school.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined by any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, which negatively affects students.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to benefit from an educational program or activity which ultimately affects the student's academic performance.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a Teacher, Director of Educational Programming, or Executive Director. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with the investigation, however may be subjected to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination is prohibited. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students.



Hillcrest School

Policy Regarding Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment

I _____ the parent/guardian of Hillcrest Student _____, have read and discussed Hillcrest School's policies regarding Bullying, discrimination, and Harassment with my child.

I understand that it is the vision of Hillcrest School to promote an educational environment where students can focus on learning. Behavior such as bullying, discrimination, or harassment which negatively affects students' academic progress will be subject to appropriate discipline, as deemed by the Executive Director.

Parent/Guardian

Student

Date