

Dear Hillcrest Families,

The Hillcrest School Parent Handbook was created to provide you with guidelines for daily procedures and serve as a quick reference tool for practices that occur throughout the school year. While some of the following descriptions are basic and to the point, others are condensed summaries. If you need more clarification at any time, do not hesitate to call the school office. We will be happy to answer questions and provide clarification.

Contact Information:

Hillcrest School

1435 Jefferson

Downers Grove, Illinois 60516

Phone: 630-719-5840 School Office FAX: 630-719-0122

District Website- www.dg58.org

Hillcrest Website- www.dg58.org/hl

PTA Website- hounddogs.org- *currently under construction

Principal ~Mrs. Michelle Rzepka

Secretary ~Mrs. Lisa Reinhart

Part-time Secretary ~Mrs. Rebecca Booher

School hours:

Kindergarten Grades 1-6:

8:15am-2:00pm Monday, 8:15am-3:00pm Tuesday-Friday

(first bell is at 8:15am, tardy bell is 8:20am)

Lunch/Recess: 11:30am-12:10pm

K-1 Lunch: 11:20am-11:40am, Recess: 11:40am-12:00pm

2-4 Lunch: 11:40am-12:00pm, Recess: 12:00pm-12:20pm

5-6 Lunch: 12:00pm-12:20-pm, Recess: 12:20pm-12:40pm

Kindergarten classes will have a 20-minute recess each morning.

All 1st-6th grade classes will have a daily 15-minute recess.



Absences ~ Parents /caregivers should call the school office (630-719-5840) to report that a student will be absent or late. Voicemail is available between 4:00 P.M. and 8:00 A.M. and absences can be reported in advance as needed. If the office is not notified of an absence or late arrival, staff will call home, as well as all emergency numbers provided on the student's emergency sheet until the student's absence has been verified. We must be sure that all students are safe, and that their whereabouts are known.



Absentee Homework ~Homework for students who miss one day of school is generally not sent home. If a longer absence takes place, call the school before 10:00 A.M. to request your student's assignments. Detailed homework is not given for trips, although special activities may be assigned.



Arrival and Departure ~ Students may arrive at Hillcrest School beginning at 8:05 a.m. each day when adult supervision begins. In order to assist with a timely and safe arrival process, the school playground will be closed before school. Upon arrival, students should line up by their assigned door. Students will be directed to enter the building beginning at 8:15 am. Anyone arriving after 8:20 a.m. should enter through Door One for an office pass. If it is 9:00 A.M. or after, parents must accompany their child into the school office. Please note, in the event that there is inclement weather (rain or below zero feels like temperatures), students will be permitted to enter the building at 8:05 a.m. when supervision begins.

Following daily dismissal at Hillcrest School (2:00 p.m. on Monday and 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday), all students who are not scheduled to remain in the building must leave the school grounds and check in at their destination as there is no supervision on school grounds. We want to ensure the safety of all students. Students may return to the playground after school hours and/or on the weekends. This will be done at the family's discretion, as our district playgrounds also function as community parks outside of school hours.



Bicycles ~ Bicycle riders must observe all traffic safety rules. While the school does not encourage students below grade 2 to ride bikes to school, the decision and responsibility rest with the family. Bike riding is not allowed on school property during school hours. Children must walk their bikes on the blacktop and sidewalks when going to and from school. Bikes are not permitted inside the school building. Roller blades, skates, scooters, etc. are not allowed. When bikes are used to transport students to school, they must be parked in the bike racks and locked. Bikes are not supervised during the school day and the school district is not responsible for the security of the bikes. Theft/damage should be reported to the police.



Building Security ~ All visitors are required to enter through the main office doors on Jefferson. SIGN IN with your ID and obtain a VISITOR LANYARD. Upon leaving the building, you must stop in the office and SIGN OUT/return the lanyard. All other building doors are locked at all times.



Birthdays ~ Hillcrest School recognizes birthdays in various ways including recognition during daily school-wide morning announcements. Edible classroom treats are not allowed. Non-edible items may be dropped off at the table in the vestibule and school staff will then deliver them to the student's classroom. Invitations to birthday parties or other private events are not to be handed out at school. School staff will not distribute parent contact information. Family contact information can be accessed through PTA membership via the Directory Spot app.



Calendar and Directory -A calendar of school and PTA dates, activities and programs is available throughout the year on the Hillcrest website at: www.dg58.org/hl. The Hillcrest PTA website is currently under construction. Your Hillcrest PTA membership includes access to the school directory via the Directory Spot app. Information on joining the PTA will be forthcoming.



Class Celebrations ~ There are two official class parties throughout the school year. These take place on or before Halloween and the last day before the winter vacation. Specific information will be sent home in advance regarding any food/beverages provided or allowed. Hillcrest Fest is a PTA sponsored, all school (parents included) event, usually

held after school hours just before the start of the school year, and Field Day (students only) is held at the end of the school year during the school day.



Classroom Interruptions ~ Please make every effort to discuss after school plans with your child while you are at home. Instruction will not be interrupted to remind your child that they have an after school activity such as Scouts, Chess, Spanish, etc. However, to help remind students about these activities, the office provides each teacher with a list of after school groups, and she/he will announce the end of the day activity. The office will not remind students about play dates.

To further support the safety and security of students and staff and to minimize classroom interruptions, items such as forgotten lunches, musical instruments, and homework should be left at the table in the vestibule. Please label the item(s) with your child's name and teacher. The items will be delivered to the students by school staff.



Cold Weather Guidelines ~ Children will be outdoors for recess when the wind chill is 0 degrees F or above. Dress students appropriately for weather conditions. Also see *School Closings*. Students must wear boots and snow pants in order to play on the equipment or in the field during recess. Students without appropriate snow gear will stay on the blacktop area. Weather is continually monitored and related decisions are made throughout the day.



Contacting Teachers ~ Teachers are generally available in the building from 8:00 A.M. until 3:45 P.M., Monday thru Thursday, and on Friday until 3:10 P.M. To reach a teacher, call the office after 8:00 A.M. and a message will be forwarded to the teacher. Written notes and Seesaw or e-mail are, of course, other options for communication. However, due to varied opportunities to check email, we ask that time-sensitive information be communicated to the office during the school day to ensure the message is received by the classroom teacher.



Crossing Guards ~ The Downers Grove Police Department provides Hillcrest TWO crossing guards; one is stationed at the corner of Jefferson and Dunham, and the other is stationed at the corner of Jefferson and Hillcrest. Students must cross via one of the crossing guards, which

completely eliminates children crossing in the middle of the block and in between cars.



Dogs ~ PLEASE do not bring dogs onto the school property during arrival/dismissal or school hours. Some students are truly afraid of dogs, and they should not be made to feel uncomfortable while walking in or out of their school on a daily basis.



Edible Treats ~ Due to the increased amount of students who suffer from allergies, as well as a general initiative to keep elementary school-aged children healthy and fit, edible treats (homemade or store purchased) are not allowed in celebration of birthdays or other events. Goodie Bags containing other non-edible items may be given or donating a book to the student's classroom library is another suggestion.



Emergencies ~ All schools within District 58 receive severe weather information. Regular bus service continues during a tornado watch, but all after-school activities are canceled. If a tornado warning has been issued, all regular school activities cease. Students go to designated areas until the warning is lifted. Students are not dismissed until a parent or designee arrives at the school to take the child home. The classroom teacher and principal must be advised before the student leaves the building. Severe weather, fire, active threat, and bus safety drills are scheduled throughout the school year. In the event that the school building would need to be evacuated, students will be moved to Indian Trail School at 6235 Stonewall. Drills are conducted with the collaboration of the Downers Grove Police and Fire Departments.



Fruit/Snack Break ~ This break is part of the classroom routine at which time students enjoy a healthy snack sent from home. The purpose is to provide mid-morning nourishment for students. Snack breaks should consist of nutritious food choices such as fruits, vegetables, and other portable snacks. Students should be able to eat items without using utensils. The health and safety of our students are our highest priorities. Therefore certain snacks or foods may be prohibited in your child's classroom due to food allergies. A daily snack can be provided for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.



Hillcrest Families~ This is a monthly activity involving nearly the entire school. During our "family time", each student will be grouped with a

teacher or support staff member who will serve as the head of the family, along with several other students in kindergarten through 6th grades. This is an extension of our school wide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons. We will be focusing on team building, character development, awareness, and acceptance, along with other positive social interactions. Staff and students will stay grouped with their assigned family from year to year, until the 6th graders move on to the middle school and new kindergarten students are added to the family at the start of each school year. We encourage students and staff to wear Hillcrest spirit wear on family meeting dates which are communicated throughout the year via the weekly Hillcrest Headlines newsletter.



Hound Dog of the Month~ Each month (September through May), every classroom will choose one student to recognize. A letter will be sent home with these students congratulating them on this recognition. Along with the letter, students will be invited to complete an “All About Me” page that will be posted on the bulletin board outside of the office throughout the month. Students will also be recognized with their names and pictures posted in the Hillcrest Headlines. Each month during the All School Meeting, the Hound Dogs of the Month will be recognized and have the opportunity to participate in a brief team competition.



Leaving School Grounds ~ No student shall be permitted to return home or leave the school grounds during the school day unless accompanied by their parent or guardian. The adult must follow sign-out procedures in the school office. School staff will then call the classroom informing the teacher to send the student to the office. If it is necessary for a student to leave school for emergency purposes, a parent, adult designee, or school designee must accompany the student. Please note, other than the accessible parking spaces, the school parking lot is reserved for staff.



Lost and Found ~ Any misplaced items are taken to the cubby area outside the gym. Labeling your child's belongings helps in their return. Valuable items that are found (glasses, jewelry, retainers, etc.) are kept in the office.



Lunch Time ~ If you wish to take your child from school for lunch, you must follow sign-out procedures in the school office. If your student forgets to bring lunch to school, you may drop a lunch off in the vestibule and it will be brought to your child by school staff. The office does not manage food deliveries for students such as Door Dash, Grub Hub, etc. Lunch and

recess times are part of the regular school day and all regular security procedures apply. These are not times for visitors or guests.



Medical/Illness/Health~ Please refer to the [District 58 Health Guide](#) or contact the School Nurse.



Medication~ If a student requires medicine to be given during the school day, the parents and the physician authorizing the school to administer the medication must complete a [Medication Authorization form](#). Only prescription medication may be administered to children by school staff. Students are not allowed to bring medication other than prescribed asthma medication or an epinephrine auto-injector to school to self-administer. A Medication Authorization form with parent consent to self-administer is required for this.



Parking and Traffic~ We ask for your cooperation during student drop-off and pick-up times. There is no parking on either side of Jefferson between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. For safety purposes, do not let your children in or out of vehicles on the north side of Jefferson or east side of Dunham, forcing them to cross the street in between other cars and in the middle of the block. As parent role models, please encourage them to cross with one of our two crossing guards. The goal for the smoothest traffic line in a residential school area such as ours is safety and consistency. Please think: **DRIVE UP ... DROP OFF ... DRIVE ON.**

Do not enter the school driveway, parking lot, or bus turn around in a vehicle or on foot during arrival or dismissal.



Parent Notification System ~ District 58 utilizes a parent notification and communication system that allows delivery of messages to parents and guardians via phone, text, and/or email, in any combination. The system is used to send emergency notifications, such as emergency school closings, as well as to notify parents of activities and events at the district and/or building level. Parents should promptly notify the Hillcrest office of any changes to their email address(es) and/or phone number(s) to ensure timely communication, especially in cases of emergency. Many of our families have requested to receive the annual Schools of 58 Handbook electronically. This handbook is posted on the District 58 website under Family Resources as well as the Back to School Toolkit and Homepage. This year's handbook is only available

electronically. If you need a print copy, please contact the school office, and they can print you a copy. It is important that all families review this handbook annually with their children. Occasionally, minor changes are made to the handbook, and in addition, there is a wealth of good information available within its pages.



Paw Slips~ Paw Slips are used throughout the year to recognize exceptional behavior, effort, growth, or used as a token reward as part of classroom management. Paw Slips can be awarded to any student by any staff member. When a Paw Slip is earned, students write their name on the slip and then place it in the corresponding primary or intermediate Paw Slip box (located near the office or next to the primary drinking fountain). During our monthly PAWSOME Lunch, several Paw Slips are drawn (raffle style) at which time students are invited to the stage to choose a prize.



Pawsome Lunch~ This celebratory assembly is held during lunch one time each month to highlight the character trait of the month, promote positive behavior and interactions amongst students and adults, and to recognize students for their ongoing efforts. Music is played and prizes are awarded to students during a raffle of Paw Slips as mentioned above. During this lunch, students are allowed to enjoy alternate seating outside of their regular assigned classroom tables.



Phone/Wearable Technology Use

While a student can bring personal electronic devices (including cell phones, AirPods, and smart watches) to school, all non-district-issued technologies should be turned off or silenced and out of sight throughout the school day unless a supervising staff member directs otherwise. The district-provided technology will be utilized for students to participate in lessons and complete assignments. Please be sure to go over the expectations with your student as the policy was recently amended.



Physical Education and Recess Excusals~ Physical Education and recess are part of the regular school day. In general, if the student is well enough to be in school, he/she is considered well enough to participate in all school activities. We honor a parent's request for a

student to be excused from PE/recess for two days. A written doctor's excuse is necessary for longer time periods. If your child has an injury or condition that requires a doctor's care, we ask that you provide a copy of any recommended/required restrictions and limitations to the school office upon return to school. A copy of the restrictions/limitations will be given to the health office, physical education teacher, and any other applicable school staff.



Physical Education Shoes~ To support safe participation in physical activities, all children are required to have athletic shoes for Physical Education unless otherwise communicated by the school. If desired, these shoes may stay at school in your child's cubby. In this case, we ask that you please write your child's name on/in the shoes.



Preschool Screening~ District 58 provides screening for children ages 2 years 10 months to 5 years old (not in kindergarten). The purpose of the screening is to identify all age 3-5 year old children who might have developmental delays, who would benefit from special education and who might be at risk for school failure due to environmental, cultural, or socio-economic factors. All parents are encouraged to bring their child to Preschool screening. Appointments for preschool screening can be made by calling 630-719-5800.



PTA Budget~ The PTA's budget for the school year is reviewed and approved at the first PTA meeting in September. Parents are welcome to attend this meeting and participate in the budget process. A copy of the approved budget may be obtained by contacting the PTA Treasurer.



PTA Membership~ PTA membership is open to any Hillcrest parent. Membership information will be sent out to all families and made available on the PTA website once it is up and running again.



Raptor Visitor Management System~ The Raptor system is part of our Districtwide commitment to keeping students and faculty safe. The system allows us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools and provides us information about who is in our buildings at all times.

Upon entering the office, visitors will be asked to present photo identification, such as a Driver's License, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason

does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our school campuses without our knowledge. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit.



Report Cards~ District 58 moved to trimesters several years ago. Report cards are sent home in December, March, and May/June. Parent-teacher conferences will be held in October and February.



Safety Patrol~ The sixth-grade safety patrol students are trained to assist other children while crossing the streets. These students volunteer their services in all types of weather. All students and adults are expected to cooperate fully with our student safety patrols. Student patrols will not be on duty during severe weather, such as thunderstorms, lightning, or sub-zero wind chill.



School Closings~ In hazardous weather or other emergency situations, the Superintendent of Schools may deem it necessary to close school. The district notifies many radio stations from which the official announcement is made including (among others): WBBM (780), WIND (560), and WGN (720). The District 58 website will also post any closing announcements. Parents will be contacted using District 58's automated emergency system. Students who walk to school are dismissed only after the parent or parent designee arrives in person to take the child home. Buses unable to reach their designated stops will return the students to school.



Visitors / Building Security~ All visitors are required to enter through the main office doors on Jefferson. SIGN IN with your photo ID and obtain a VISITOR LANYARD. Upon leaving the building, you must stop in the office and SIGN OUT/return the lanyard. The visitor badge and lanyard must be visible at all times while in the building. Upon leaving the building, visit the office again to sign out. All other building doors

are locked at all times. Parents and other adults are not to enter the school through any side doors. If parents need to see someone at school, they must enter through the main entrance, sign in at the office, and obtain a visitor badge and lanyard.

Items such as forgotten lunches, musical instruments, homework, and projects should be left at the table in the vestibule. Please label the item(s) with your child's name and grade. Students will retrieve the items or school staff will deliver them at a time that is least disruptive to learning.



Welcome~ The administration and staff at Hillcrest School welcome you as partners in your child's education. As we all know, this involves any number of situations, questions, or event details that need to be addressed. Please feel free to call, email, or visit the office. Communication is imperative, and we look forward to collaborating with you to provide educational experiences that will lead our students to be respectful, responsible, lifelong learners.

Hillcrest School is a PAWSOME place to learn and grow!

