Hillcrest Elementary School

Parent Handbook

2016-2017

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Please contact the main office for any general information, including registration and withdrawal of students. The *school office phone* number is 410-887-0820.
The *Nurse's office phone* is 410-869-0162.

EMAIL

When communicating dismissal information or any time-sensitive message to teachers or the office, a phone call is preferred. Should you use email, make sure that the staff member CONFIRMS the email so that you know it has been read. Staff cannot monitor email messages at all times during the day. In addition, it is possible that the staff member to whom the message is addressed is absent that day.

SCHOOL DAY

The hours for our students are from 8:55 AM until 3:25 PM. Walkers & car riders are dismissed at 3:25 PM. Daycare students are dismissed at 3:40 PM.

ARRIVAL TIME OF STUDENTS

Students are allowed to enter the building at 8:40 AM. No student should arrive to school earlier than this time. Arriving before teachers are on duty leaves the student unsupervised, a situation unacceptable to the school and the parents. After the first week of school, we encourage independence. Parents should allow their students to walk to their classroom alone.

TRANSPORTATION

Safe travel to and from school is essential. All bus riders are expected to follow the transportation regulations. A copy of the bus regulations for the Baltimore County Public Schools is included in this handbook. Thank you for reviewing these rules with your child. Students who disobey the rules may be denied the privilege of riding the bus, making it necessary for parents to provide transportation to and from school.

All students are expected to go directly home from school. Walkers and bus riders should be aware that all school rules are in effect on their way to and from school.

PARKING LOT

Parents who drop off or pick up students in the parking lot are expected to follow the directional arrows on the parking lot and to obey the school personnel directing traffic. Students should only be dropped off at the east door of the school, where a staff member is posted for supervision and safety. Please do not park in the STAFF parking places, as these are reserved for our dedicated staff members. If the VISITOR parking places are full, parking is available on Frederick Rd., Beechwood Ave., and Summit Ave.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

For safety reasons all entrances to the building are locked after the start of the school day. All parents and visitors to the school should ring the front doorbell to gain entry to the building. Everyone must obtain a VISITOR PASS with stated destination before going anywhere in the building. The VISITOR PASS does not permit full access to the school, but must state a specific destination. This is for your child's protection and to help reduce interruptions to the classroom. Your cooperation is appreciated.

CONFERENCES and CONCERNS

Parent/teacher conferences are essential. At Hillcrest, we encourage home/school communication on a regular basis. When concerns and questions arise, please contact the teacher of record first. When needed, next contact the administrator for your child's grade level: K,1,2 – Ms. Shaw is the primary grades' administrator; 3,4,5 – Ms. Kelley is the intermediate administrator.

All conferences **should be arranged in advance**. Please write a note to your child's teacher to schedule a mutually convenient time. If you need to cancel an appointment, please call the school office or notify the teacher.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is extremely important. If your child is absent, a written excuse stating the name of the child, date of the absence, and reason for the absence is required. This note should be sent to school the first day your child returns. In case of an extended excused absence, please contact your child's teacher to request make-up assignments.

The following are legal excuses for absences: Death in the immediate family, illness of the child, quarantine, court summons, violent storms, and observation of religious holidays. In accordance with state attendance laws, the following are unexcused absences: indifference of parents, indifference of students, uncertified illness in family, lack of authorized transportation, inclement weather, and student travel.

The attendance of each of our students is monitored by the teacher, the office, our school nurse, and our pupil personnel worker. When your child is marked absent you will receive an automated call from our office informing you of the absence, unless you call the office by 9:30 a.m. When your child has accumulated three absences in the same quarter, you will receive an email from your child's homeroom teacher. On the fourth absence you will be contacted by the school nurse. Continued absences will be addressed by the administration and, if necessary, the BCPS pupil personnel worker.

According to Baltimore County Public Schools attendance policy, students present for at least two hours will be marked present for a half day. Students present at least four hours will be marked present a full day. Students present for less than two hours will be marked absent for a full day.

LATE ARRIVALS

Students arriving after 8:55 AM, the start of the school day, are required to report to the office with a *written explanation* from the parent or with an adult who can sign them in. A late pass will be issued by the office. Students will be marked tardy or absent for 1/2 day, if they arrive after 11:25 AM.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Continued school instruction, clarification of home assignments, and important information to prepare your child for his/her next day at school occur within those last fifteen minutes of the school day. Our school day ends at 3:25 PM and you are requested to allow your child to be dismissed with his/her class at the scheduled dismissal time each and every day. If you are picking up a walker, please wait outside as students are still transitioning in the halls**. Please make every effort to avoid picking up students between 3:15 and 3:25 in order to ensure a safe dismissal for all students.**

If it is necessary for a child to leave before dismissal time, he/she must have a note from home stating the reason, time of departure, and who will be picking up your child (if other than a parent or guardian). Please report to the office to pick up and sign out your child. Proper identification may be requested by an office or staff member.

SCHEDULED EARLY CLOSINGS

When the school calendar indicates school will be dismissed 3 hours early, Hillcrest school will close at 12:25 PM. Parents should expect their children to arrive home approximately 3 hours earlier than on a normal day.

DELAYED OPENINGS or EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

During severe weather, please listen to the local radio or television stations for information regarding closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals. Baltimore County Public Schools also operates an Inclement Weather Information Line which you may access by calling 410-887-5555 to hear up-to-date information on school closings. Parents who have computer access may wish to sign up for s**choolsout.com**, a web site which notifies parents when an individual school closing or county-wide closing occurs. Please do not call the Hillcrest office. This ties up our lines and prohibits us from receiving emergency communications and messages.

Prior to each school year, parents are sent an Emergency Contact Information sheet. Parents are requested to review the information for accuracy and update the information annually. Please check the appropriate dismissal method either walker, bus rider or parent pick up. In the event that schools close early due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, an automated phone call will be sent to the telephone number on record, announcements will be made by the local media, and buses will operate. The Emergency Contact Information sheet indicates the order in which contacts will be made for Connect Ed messages and calls from school staff. Additional emergency contacts may be listed on the back of the form.

If Hillcrest Elementary should close separately from the rest of the system, your child will be sent home according to the directions on the Emergency Contact information sheet, unless we have spoken directly to you or your designee or we have received AND CONFIRMED an email from you directing us to utilize specific dismissal procedures.

Please discuss the information you provide to the school with your child so that he/she knows what to do in case of an emergency. It is imperative that you keep this information current and, periodically throughout the year, we will remind you to inform us if your information has changed.

The data provided on the Student Contact Information Sheet applies to all school dismissals. This information is essential to timely contact by the school nurse should a medical emergency arise at school. It is critical that work and home telephone numbers are current so that the nurse may consult with parents regarding any student medical issue.

MEDICAL/HEALTH INFORMATION

Administration of medications to students while in school is the responsibility of the school nurse. All prescription and non-prescription medication needed on a regular basis must be accompanied by a written order, signed by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner. Parental consent must accompany the physician's order. The school nurse can supply the form to be completed. Medication orders may be accepted on a health care provider's letterhead or prescription blank. The student's name, medication,

dosage, and frequency of administration must be specified. Changes in dosage or time of administration must be written by the health care provider.

Orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Medication should be supplied in an original, labeled container. Two containers may be requested at the time the prescription is filled--one for home and one for school.

According to established Baltimore County Public Schools/Department of Health written protocols for the management of specific health-related problems, the registered school nurse may elect to administer specifically designated discretionary medications from an approved formulary. Parental consent for the administration of discretionary medications is required. This form needs to be renewed annually.

An order from the doctor is required to excuse your child from physical education classes. Parents are urged to speak to the nurse about any health problems their child may have.

Baltimore County Health Department requests that each child have a health appraisal and dental exam. Basic immunizations are required of all students in the system. Individual health folders are maintained for each child.

Parents should notify the school nurse whenever a child has a contagious disease. Parents should keep children at home if they have a fever, are vomiting, have diarrhea, or are generally sick.

CAFETERIA

A breakfast program is available in the morning. Due to our bus schedule, students only have 15 minutes to eat breakfast. Students may select from cold cereal, muffins or donuts. A beverage is included.

Students may also bring or buy a well-balanced lunch. Several selections will be offered at each meal. Other a la carte items will be offered periodically.

A menu listing lunch choices will be sent home each month. Meal prices and a la carte prices are listed on the menu. In keeping with nutritional needs, only one dessert can be purchased daily.

The use of the Lunch Prepayment System is encouraged for all students making any cafeteria purchases. Information about establishing an account is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

A free and reduced breakfast and lunch program is available through Baltimore County Public Schools for families who qualify. Application forms are sent home at the beginning of school and are available in the main office thereafter. All completed

applications are forwarded to the food services office where they are reviewed and processed.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

We expect our students to be well mannered and orderly in the cafeteria. Parents will be notified if their child exhibits unacceptable behavior. Below is a list of our current cafeteria guidelines.

1. Teachers will walk their students into the cafeteria.
2. Pick up everything you need when going through the lunch line.
3. Remain seated while eating lunch. Raise your hand for help.
4. Food should not be shared with friends.
5. Speak quietly. Remember to use your “inside voice.”
6. Show respect. Keep hands, feet, and all other objects to yourself.
7. Discard all trays, bags, and trash when asked to do so.
8. Do not leave the cafeteria without permission.
9. Stay seated until the teachers call your class to line up.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES

1. School begins at 8:55 AM for all students. Generally, children may not enter the building until 8:40 AM.

2. Upon entering the building, all students must go to their lockers, unpack quietly, and immediately report to their classrooms to prepare for class and morning announcements.

3. School ends at 3:25 PM. At this time, students should have packed their belongings and be listening for afternoon announcements.

4. After the announcements, students should walk to their assigned doors and quietly exit the building immediately.

Rules for Assemblies

1. Students will report to the cafeteria in an orderly manner.

2. Students will sit quietly with hands and feet to themselves.

3. Pencils, books, and other objects will be left in the classroom.

4. Appreciation should be properly demonstrated with applause when appropriate, and good manners at all times.

Rules for Hallways

1. Only walking is permitted in the hallways.

2. Groups of children should walk in quiet, straight lines.

3. When moving from one room to another, children may not make extra stops (bathroom, office, etc.) without prior permission from the teacher.

4. Individual students may not leave a classroom or the cafeteria without permission from the teacher or adult in charge.

5. Use of the telephone is prohibited unless permission is granted from the teacher and the office.

6. Children must keep their hands, feet, and all objects to themselves. Pushing and shoving other children and touching hallway displays is NOT permitted.

Bathroom Rules

1. No running is allowed in the bathroom.

2. Use a quiet voice in the bathroom.

3. Keep hands and feet to yourself.

4. Throw all paper towels in the trashcan.

5. Be responsible and help keep the bathroom clean.

Rules for Outside the School Building

1. Children may play only in designated areas under the direction of their teacher.

2. Children will not play in the snow outside the school building.

3. No snowballing is permitted on the school grounds.

4. For the safety of all children, *smoking is prohibited* in the building and on the school grounds.

5. Refrain from walking pets during arrival and dismissal time for the safety of all students.

Fire Drill & Emergency Evacuation Drill Rules

1. Students are expected to remain silent and follow directions for the entire drill.

2. Upon hearing the fire alarm, students will leave the building in a quick, quiet, and safe manner.

3. Once outside, students should report to their classroom teacher in the assigned area. Everyone should remain silent during the drill and while returning to the classroom.

4. Students should re-enter the building and return to their rooms in a quiet and orderly manner.

Rules for School Walkers

1. Students should walk directly to school in the morning and directly home in the afternoon.

2. Walkers will not be allowed to ride home with friends on school buses.

3. Students should always use sidewalks, whenever available. Students should not walk on neighboring lawns.

4. Students should not litter the area.

General Bus Rules

1. All bus children will sit silently until buses are called.

2. When buses are called, students will line up and walk silently to the bus.

3. Bus riders are only allowed to ride their assigned buses unless an emergency request from the parent has been approved by the school office.

4. Parents of children not following the rules will receive a phone call or email from an administrator.

Bus Rider Rules

1. Students should follow directions the first time they are given.

2. Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself.

3. Stay seated on the bus at all times.

3. Talk in a quiet voice.

4. No food or drinks should be consumed on the bus.

5. Walk in line to your bus.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

Every individual has the right to an appropriate learning climate. Each student at Hillcrest Elementary School is expected to display proper behavior on school property, on school buses, and at off-site school programs, such as field trips.

If a child's behavior interferes with the normal function of the school or if he/she disrupts or interferes with the academic process, parents will be notified. A student who is responsible for disruptive behavior is subject to consequences in accordance with procedures outlined in the Student Behavior Handbook, published by the Baltimore County Public Schools.

The Student Behavior Handbook, describing county discipline policies, will be discussed and shared with all students in the beginning of the year. You will be informed of this handbook in more detail at that time. When your child brings the handbook home you will be asked to sign a response slip which states that you have read and reviewed this information with your child.

HOMEWORK

The assignment of homework is encouraged as a means of reinforcing and enriching the instructional program to assist students in developing independent study skills. According to the new BCPS grading policy, homework will be ungraded, but should be scored to determine student understanding.

The type and length of homework assignments can vary from teacher to teacher and grade to grade. In September, your child's teacher will communicate to you the expectations related to homework assignments.

Parents are encouraged to support the school in seeing that homework assignments are completed. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's homework assignments, please contact your child's teacher.

MAKE-UP WORK DUE TO ABSENCES

In accordance with BCPS policy, students who are absent from school are allowed to make up work within the same amount of days missed from school.

Teachers are frequently asked to prepare work for students prior to the time when the lesson is taught because the student is going on a trip/vacation. Gathering work ahead of time is not feasible because teachers continually assess students and plan appropriate lessons on a daily basis to meet the particular needs of the class.

Students are encouraged to designate another student to pick up work for them when absent due to unforeseen circumstances. Parents may also request work for a sick child by calling the school, or emailing the teacher directly with the request. In this instance, work will be available for pick-up the next day. (The teacher has the option to send work home on the day the request is made if he/she has it ready.) Teachers cannot be interrupted during the day to provide work for a student.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

All books, furniture, materials, and equipment used by students should be handled with care and respect. Should books or materials become lost or damaged, fines will be determined by the assistant principal or librarian. Payment will be expected.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

You are urged to label your child's clothing and materials. Lost clothing, lunchboxes, backpacks, etc. can be returned easily to a child if the item is labeled.

Cell phones should be turned off and in bookbags or lockers unless otherwise directed by a teacher.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers represent a great asset to the school. At Hillcrest Elementary School, we feel that volunteers, working under the direction of teachers and the school staff, help increase the effectiveness of the instructional program for our students. We encourage you to become involved and value your dedication and time. Please contact your child's teacher, the PTA, or an administrator for details.

Volunteer training is mandatory and can be completed at www.bcps.org/community/volunteer_info. ***All volunteers must sign in on the BCPS Raptor System at the Front Office and obtain a volunteer badge. You will be asked to have your license scanned if you have not already done so. This will allow school personnel to know who is in the building at all times. Be sure to drop off your badge at the Front Office before you leave the building!***

The Raptor System keeps track of your volunteer hours. Not only does it provide school personnel information regarding the types of volunteer services in our building, but it enables us to recognize the many hours of service and commitment to our teachers and students.

VISITORS TO THE BUILDING

All visitors to the building (parents coming for a conference, or persons with school business, as well as volunteers) should enter through the front doors and must report to the Front Office to obtain a visitor badge with a specific destination within the school. Visitors should not wander the building and must report all desired destinations to the office.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are organized visits made by teachers and students which provide additional experiences related to Baltimore County's school curriculum. We encourage the participation of all students on field trips as these are an important part of the instructional program and planned carefully with an emphasis on safety.

When a field trip is planned, a permission slip will be sent home for your signature. This form must be signed and returned along with any money due if your child is to attend. Students must present a signed permission slip to their teacher in order to attend any field trips. The school is not obligated to refund the cost of any missed field trips, since the cost of the trip is carefully calculated and divided by the number of students attending.

TRANSFERS

If you are moving from the Hillcrest area, please notify the school office two or more days in advance so we can prepare the transfer forms. These forms contain the information which will help you register your child at his/her new school. Your child's records will be sent to the new school upon request from that school.

SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Discuss and reinforce the importance of all bus safety rules with your child. Your support of bus safety rules will increase your child's respect for bus drivers and their very important job.

- Visit the bus stop with your child. This will help you explain the safest route to take to the stop, the proper place to wait, the safest distance from the roadway for your child to stand, and the necessity to take notice of any unsafe situations. A young child (prekindergarten, kindergarten) or student with special needs should always be accompanied by a responsible person to and from the bus stop daily.

- Remind your child to avoid the DANGER ZONE. Children in the DANGER ZONE cannot be easily seen by the bus driver.

- Being at the bus stop on time will prevent your child from rushing and making careless decisions. All school buses service at least four schools each day and have schedules to keep.

- When driving on school grounds, always be alert, watch for children in every direction, and yield the right-of-way to school buses. **Always** use the designated drop-off and pick-up areas if you drive children to and from school.

EVERYBODY HAS A JOB IN SCHOOL BUS SAFETY!

Student's Job

- Leave home early enough to arrive at your bus stop on time.
- Wait for your bus in a safe place—well off the roadway.
- Enter your bus in an orderly manner and take your seat.
- Be courteous to your school bus driver and fellow passengers.
- Follow the instructions of your school bus driver.
- Remain quiet and orderly.
- Keep the aisle clear at all times.
- Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus

.

Parent's Job

- Have children at the bus stop on time.
- Know the rules for bus riders.
- Support the driver if behavior problems occur.
- Have a plan for emergencies.
- Accompany small children and students with special needs to bus stop.

Motorist's Job

- Know the school bus stop law and obey it.
  Be aware. STOP FOR FLASHING LIGHTS!
- Watch for children.

Adapted with permission from Commonwealth of Virginia, Dept of ED

Driver's Job

- Be in good physical condition.
- Check the bus before and after each trip
- Be on time at each stop.
- Drive safely at all times.
- Obey all laws.

Teacher's Job

- Instruct students in safe riding practices.
- Provide instructional time for demonstrations and practice of safe rules.

Administrator's Job

- Reinforce the importance of safe practices.
- Support the driver and hold the students responsible for their behavior.

Transportation Personnel's Job

- Provide safe routes.
- Provide safe vehicles
- Provide trained personnel.
- Provide support to each school administrator.