

**Hillcrest Elementary School
Home of the Cowboys**

Message from the Principal

Welcome to Hillcrest Elementary School, home of the Cowboys! Hillcrest is an amazing place to be, and I am incredibly honored to serve our school community as principal. I look forward to working alongside our students, families, and staff to make sure we have an incredible school year and achieve great things together!

Our mission here at Hillcrest is to see success and high levels of learning for ALL Cowboys. Everyone in our building is collectively committed to ensuring that each child has access to rigorous, on-grade level instruction every day. We strive to provide every child with the resources and support needed to achieve these goals. At Hillcrest, we believe in high expectations for all Cowboys, collaboration, student first decision-making, research-based practices, and celebrating diversity.

We value each parent as an integral partner in the learning process and are always open to communication about our school. Please reach out at 423-586-7472 anytime you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lindsey Cochran



Mission & Vision

MISSION

To see success and high levels of learning for ALL Cowboys

VISION

Rigorous, on-grade level instruction for every student every day, considering both academic and social-emotional needs

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ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

Teachers and administrators at HES adhere to the philosophy that students have the right to learn in a safe and structured environment, and teachers have the right to teach without behavioral disruptions. Tennessee law mandates that school administrators protect the safety and educational environment of their students. Therefore, the administration reserves the right and authority to declare Level I and Level II null and void should a severely disruptive behavioral problem occur that mandates immediate action. For severe clause referrals, school board policies will be followed in administering disciplinary action.

School and Classroom Rules:

Follow teacher directions the first time given.

Be in your seat ready to work with all materials.

Keep hands, feet, objects, gestures, and inappropriate comments to yourself.

Raise your hand to be recognized.

Students who choose to break the above rules will receive the following consequences:

1st Offense-Classroom consequence and review rules and procedures

2nd Offense-Classroom consequence and reteach skill

3rd Offense-Classroom Consequence, Parent Contact, Restorative Conversation

4th Offense-Classroom Consequence, Parent Contact

5th Offense-Referral to Principal/Assistant Principal

Principal/Assistant Principal Referrals:

1st Referral: Warning and Parent Contact

2nd Referral: 1 Day ALP

3rd Referral: 1 Day ALP

4th Referral: 1 Day ALP

5th Referral: 2 Days ALP

6th Referral: 1 Day Out of School Suspension, Mandatory Orientation at Miller Boyd ALternative School

7th Referral: Alternative School Placement

HAMBLLEN COUNTY HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON POSSESSION OF FIRE ARMS, ASSAULT ON STAFF, AND DRUGS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS. Punishment for these offenses will be expulsion from school for one calendar year.

USE OR POSSESSION OF ANY TOBACCO PRODUCT IS PROHIBITED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY OR BUSES.

SCHOOL HOURS

Hillcrest Elementary provides a 7-hour instructional day for our students.

- Our school office is open from 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- The first bus riders arrive at 7:00 a.m. and go immediately to the cafeteria for breakfast or early morning supervision.
- Car riders begin entering the building at 7:10 a.m. and go to the cafeteria for breakfast or supervision.
 - Grades K-2 enter at the back
 - Grades 3-5 enter at the front through the cafeteria door

- The students remain in the cafeteria until 7:20 a.m. when they are picked up by one of their grade level teachers. By 7:45 a.m., all students should be seated in their classroom and ready to work.
- Classroom instructional time is from 7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

VISITORS

Parents, guardians, grandparents, and friends of the school are always welcome to visit our school. For the protection and safety of your children and the Hillcrest staff, we must insist on the following:

1. School Board policy requires all persons, including parents and others, who visit staff or students between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. to report to the office and obtain a visitor's badge. No one is permitted inside the building unless they have received permission from the office and have obtained a visitor's pass.
2. Anyone who picks up a student during the school day for early dismissal must be a parent, guardian, or a person listed on the student's registration information as an approved contact. **For your child's safety, a photo ID must be presented each time a student is picked up early from school.**
3. Conferences between parents and teachers are encouraged; however, they must be scheduled by an appointment. Please contact the teacher or call the school office at 423-586-7472 for an appointment with your child's teacher.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We always appreciate parent volunteers who assist our staff with special projects and work with our students in reading or other skills. Please plan on attending special parent meetings, events, and Cowboy Connection Nights scheduled throughout the school year. We invite all parents, grandparents, other relatives, and friends to join us as members of Hillcrest's PTO.

PARKING

All parents and visitors may park in front of the building in the far left lane next to the grass until 1:15 p.m. We request that you do not block the front entrance of the building. After 1:15 p.m., only five-minute parking for student pickup is allowed at the front entrance of the school. Due to fire codes, no parking is allowed in front of the classroom portables at any time during the school day.

MORNING DROP-OFF

Cars should enter the front parking area from Oak Street and form two lines. Please do not block two-way traffic or driveways on Oak Street while you wait in line. Stay in your car, and a staff member will assist your child. **Please do not park in front of the school and leave your car during the morning drop-off.** If you need to park your car and go into the school office, please park on the far left side beside the grass. Do not block the drive-through lanes. All vehicles must exit onto South Liberty Hill Road at the four-way stop. Parking is also available in the Hillcrest Baptist Church parking lot; you may park and walk your child across the street. A crossing guard is posted at the crosswalk to assist parents and children.

PreK Morning Drop-Off & Pickup

All PreK students will enter through the back gate on Baker Street. PreK students should be dropped off between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. and picked up between 3:00 and 3:15 p.m.

AFTERNOON CAR RIDERS

These procedures are for the safety of our children. Please be courteous to our staff and other drivers and follow these guidelines.

Please do not pick your child up before 2:45 to avoid traffic. All car riders will be dismissed through the cafeteria doors or from Halls 1 and 3 depending on the grade level of the child. Please stay in your car

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until a staff member delivers your child to you. You will be provided a car rider sign with your child's name for you to place in your windshield. **You must have the correct colored car rider tag to be allowed to pick up a child in the car rider line. Anyone wishing to pick up a child without the car rider tag must come to the school office, show a photo ID, and be approved by the administration. If someone else will be picking up your child, please call the office before 2:00 p.m.** Remember to give the car rider sign to your designated family member or friend for faster student pickup.

All car riders must be picked up by 3:00 p.m. If students cannot be picked up by 3:00 p.m., the parent must enroll them in ESP (Extended School Program).

WALKERS

Walkers are defined as students walking home. Walkers must have a parent note on file verifying that they are allowed to walk home alone. Walkers must leave the building through the cafeteria entrance and cross the street at the crosswalk under the care of our crossing guard, Mr. Cutshall.

ESP

- **Begins on August 2, 2024**
- **Registration for the 2024-25 school year will not open until July 1, 2024.**
- **Please see attachment below for tuition prices. Plans are paid weekly based on the number of days childcare is needed.**
- **All children must be pre-registered to attend. Please allow for the processing window when picking a start date for your child to begin. If your child is in 2nd grade at Manley or Russellville, you will register for ESP at the Intermediate buildings. 2nd grade students at Alpha Primary will register for after school care at Alpha Primary.**
- **Children are provided a snack every afternoon. Please make your site director aware of any allergies your child may have.**
- **Afternoon operating hours are 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. and each ESP school site closes promptly at 6 p.m.. Late fees will be assessed for late pick-ups.**
- **ESP for Pre-K children is only offered at the following locations: Russellville Primary, Manley Primary, and Union Heights**
- **All past due balances from summer or the previous school year must be paid before your child may attend after-school for the new school year.**
- **6th grade children are eligible to attend ESP at their elementary feeder school, if a bus route already exists to accommodate transportation.**

SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS & SCHEDULES

All bus students must follow policies of the Hamblen County School Transportation System. Our buses provide services only for students in the Hillcrest School zone. We have five buses: #29, #34, #39, #19, and #54 that leave Hillcrest at approximately 2:40 p.m. each day. The Girls Inc. bus picks up members at 2:40 p.m.

CHANGES IN TRANSPORTATION

Students are sent home from school by the same means of transportation every afternoon, either by car, bus, or walking. If there is a change for any reason, a note to the teacher or a phone call to the office is

required. A verbal message from a child is not allowed. If you plan to pick up a child other than your own, that child's parent/guardian must call the school or send a note before 2:00 p.m. to verify the change in transportation. **A car tag is required for anyone picking up a child.**

SCHOOL PROPERTY DAMAGES

Any student who is responsible for defacing, destroying, or damaging school/staff property (books, laptops, equipment, bus seats, etc.) will be expected to pay the cost of replacing or repairing such materials according to the correct value of this property.

TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks issued to students are the property of Hamblen County Board of Education. Library books borrowed by the students are the property of Hillcrest School Library. All books should be used with care and returned in good condition. Students are responsible for paying for books that are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond use.

TELEPHONE USAGE

Students and staff will not be called to the telephone except for an emergency. If a parent wishes to contact a teacher, they should leave a telephone number with the secretary or leave a voice message on the teacher's telephone. The teacher will return the call at the earliest time possible. Only in extreme cases will a student be allowed to use the telephone. **This does not include calling for a band instrument, cheerleading or basketball shoes, uniforms, practice attire, etc.**

Cell Phones

In accordance with school board policy, students are not allowed to bring cell phones to school.

FEES/FIELD TRIPS/ YEARBOOKS/OTHER PURCHASES

Textbooks are furnished to your child by the school. However, consumable materials and general supplies for classroom use must be purchased. In order to secure these expendable items, students are assessed an instructional materials fee of \$12.00 at the beginning of the school year. Hillcrest Elementary will accept CASH ONLY for all fees, field trips, yearbooks, and special purchases costing less than \$25. Checks will be accepted for anything over \$25.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students are encouraged to have appropriate school supplies and materials. We ask parents to be responsible for purchasing necessary classroom supplies. School supply lists are placed in the end-of-year grade cards and are located on the Hamblen County website (hcboe.net). If you are unable to purchase the supplies, please let your child's teacher or the office know.

LUNCH PRICES

For the following 4 school years, breakfast and lunch will be provided for free through the Community Eligibility Provision grant.

FOOD POLICY

School board policy prohibits food from outside food service establishments from being brought into the school cafeteria. We ask you to abide by this policy at all times. The food in our cafeteria is excellent; students may serve themselves from choices in each food group. Depending on the COVID case number, parents may come occasionally and have lunch with their child. If possible, please call ahead or send a note so that sufficient food will be prepared.

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MEDICATIONS

Students whose daily prescription medication is to be administered during school hours must have a form on file in the office. The parent/guardian is responsible for obtaining the form in the office and returning it to the school. Also, any other prescription and non-prescription medications must be given to the office with written instructions for dispensing it. Teachers will not give any medication to students. **ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE KEPT IN THE NURSE'S OFFICE AND ADMINISTERED BY THE SCHOOL NURSE.**

- **Parents are asked to notify the school and the school nurse of any known allergies, as well as putting the medical information on the registration forms.**

ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

In the event of an injury or illness of a student, we will make every effort to follow the procedures as listed on the emergency information section of the student's registration information. **Please keep telephone numbers up-to-date in our files so that someone can be easily reached should an emergency with your child arise.**

STUDENT INSURANCE

An insurance program designed to cover students who receive injuries while participating in school activities, who are traveling to and from school, or who are involved in accidents while engaged in supervised activities on the school premises will be available through the school. A 24-hour policy is also available. See our front office for information.

STUDENT BELONGINGS

All student belongings should be marked with the student's name. Valuable items such as jewelry, cash, cell phones, electronic games, and other electronics should not be brought to school. The school will NOT be responsible for theft or loss. Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. The Lost & Found area for clothing is located outside the cafeteria. Parents are encouraged to have their children search the Lost & Found area for any missing clothing items.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is an essential part of our school's instructional program. All children need to participate in a developmentally appropriate physical education program. Every child is required to participate in physical education unless excused in writing by a physician. Children should dress in play clothes and wear rubber-soled shoes that tie or velcro.

PARTIES

There will be three (3) scheduled school parties during the year. All parties will be scheduled for the last hour of the school day. **Per school board policy, we cannot accept homemade food items. Information about parties will be shared by your child's teacher.**

FIELD TRIPS

Classroom teachers may schedule educational field trips. Permission forms are required for participation. **Student behavior throughout the year will be a factor in determining whether or not a student is permitted to participate. Students receiving a disciplinary office referral may NOT be allowed to participate in field trips for that nine weeks. This decision will be made by the principal and the teacher(s).**

Please note: If 90% of the cost for the trip or activity is not collected, the school reserves the right to cancel the trip or activity.

HOMEWORK

Teachers may assign homework as an extension of class work or for a student who has been absent or fallen behind in a subject.

Homework for students who are absent because of illness for more than three (3) days must be requested by 10:00 a.m. and can be picked up between 2:30-3:00 p.m. at the school office. For shorter periods of absence, the students will be able to make up any assignments when they return to school.

Make-up work due for excused absences will be given an assigned date to complete.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Students' progress will be reported to parents through mid-term (halfway through the nine weeks), report cards (end of every nine weeks), and parent-teacher conferences. Parents may request a conference at any time during the school year by calling the school at 586-7472 or by emailing the student's teacher. Information about Parent/Teacher Conferences will be sent home with students. If these dates and times are not convenient, parents/guardians may contact the teacher and make an appointment.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

The Hamblen County Board of Education recognizes that absenteeism is a hindrance to the efficient education of students. Realizing that punctuality and regularity of attendance is necessary for progress of a student at school, the Board has adopted the following attendance policy. The parents, guardians, or other persons having charge and control of a child are held responsible for the child's school attendance.

The Board's intent is to clearly establish teaching and learning tasks as the priority activity in Hamblen County Schools. This emphasis shall mean that class interruptions must be limited to emergencies only. Any outside interference with the continuous progress of teaching and learning shall be considered an interruption. Emergencies exist when conditions arise that make it impossible or impractical to delay class interruptions until the next change of classes.

Furthermore, in order for students to benefit from the strong emphasis on instruction, they must attend class regularly and be on time. The attendance policy is as follows.

Sign-out Procedures

Grades K-5. Students are to be checked out by the parent/guardian through the school office.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Grades K-5. Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or designee in charge of attendance. When a student is absent, the school shall be contacted by the parent/guardian. Upon return to school, the student must present a note signed by the parent/guardian. (Notes should be valid in the judgment of the principal or designee.)

A student is excused for the day or days absent, but not from the responsibility for the material covered in class. It is therefore the responsibility of the student, not the teacher, for make-up work in all subject matters covered during the absence. Absences shall be excused for:3

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1. Personal illness; parent/guardian signed note shall be accepted for five (5) days for each semester; after five (5) days a physician's statement shall be required
2. Death in the immediate family; not to exceed three (3) days
3. Illness of parent/guardian requiring temporary help; physician's statement shall be required
4. Recognized religious holidays⁴
5. Court summons; only time actually in court shall be excused
6. Doctor or dentist appointment; medical statement shall be required
7. Military
8. Injury
9. Hospitalization
10. Homebound
11. Subpoena
12. Court order
13. School-endorsed activities
14. Extenuating circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis by the school principal (family vacations are discouraged during the regular school year)

Absences for any reason other than those listed above shall be unexcused.

Unexcused absences. Following are listed the absences which are unexcused, along with the code letter which shall be used in processing the absence. Unexcused absences are those which are not considered appropriate absences under the attendance laws and policies. Most of these absences are also unlawful (those absences marked with a "U" are, with some exception, always unlawful). Unlawful absences may result in the student being denied credit due to excessive absences. **IMPORTANT:** Unlawful absences may also result in placement in an alternate learning program (ALP), out-of-school suspension (OSS), or referral to the juvenile court for judicial enforcement of the attendance laws.

- a. Truancy (U)
- b. Cutting class (U)
- c. Out of town
- d. No excuse submitted (U)
- e. Out-of-school suspension

- f. Not checking out in office (U)
- g. Missed the bus (unexcused because bus transportation is provided)
- h. Trouble with automobile (unexcused because bus transportation is provided)
- i. Unexcused tardy
- j. Check in (unexcused)
- k. Check out (unexcused)
- l. Day missed due to enrolling after first day of school (U)
- m. Absent with parent's permission (in some cases may be "U")
- n. Not checking in at office (U)

Grades K-5 student absences. Excessive absences may limit progress to the point that promotion is questionable. If parents choose to appeal this decision, a written request must be made to the school attendance committee.

PROCEDURES FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Tennessee has adopted a new policy (TCA 49-6-3007) for absenteeism in school with progressive truancy interventions for students who violate compulsory attendance requirements. There are 3 tiers.

Tier I is triggered by **three (3) unexcused** absences within a school year.

- 1) A conference with the student and parent/guardian
- 2) An attendance contract to include penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court
- 3) Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss student progress

Tier II is generated with **five (5) unexcused absences** within the school year

- 1) A release is signed by the parent for communication between the school and the medical community to determine illnesses, etc.
- 2) Progressive Truancy Intervention Assessment (medical excuses addressed, transportation addressed, counseling addressed)
- 3) Parent contact/home visit
- 4) Follow-up meetings to track attendance progress

Tier III is started when there are **ten (10) unexcused absences**.

- 1) There is a referral to the Attendance Review Committee
- 2) School-based services
- 3) Diversions for the student which have been assigned by the committee are documented and a copy is provided to parents.

TRUANCY

General

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Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/ guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.¹

A student who is absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of Schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the student's absence. If a parent does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy intervention plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Tier 1: Tier of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to, parent information meetings, parent nights, school counselor classes on attendance and truancy, and parent-teacher conferences.

Tier 2: Tier 2 will be implemented upon a student's accumulation of 5 unexcused absences and include, at a minimum:

- A conference with the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having custodial rights of the student;
- A resulting attendance contract to be signed by the student, the parent, guardian, or other person having custodial rights of the student, and a school administrator or designee. The contract must include a specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student, the period for which the contract is in effect, and penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses to include disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court;
- Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings, which may be with the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having custodial rights of the student to discuss the student's progress;
- An individualized assessment by a school employee of the reasons a student has been absent from school; and
- If necessary, referral of the child to counseling, community-based services, or other in-school or out-of-school services aimed at addressing the student's attendance problems.

Tier 3: Tier 3 is implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier 2 are unsuccessful. Tier 3 may consist of one or more of the following:

- School-based community services

- Participation in a school-based restorative justice program
- Referral to an Attendance Review Committee (ARC)
- Saturday or after-school courses designed to improve behavior and attendance

EARLY DISMISSAL

WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT PICK UP YOUR CHILD EARLY FROM SCHOOL. Our school day includes teaching activities until 2:45 p.m. each day. Parents are asked to schedule all medical appointments after 3:00 p.m. We want all children to be successful in school, and in order to do so your child needs to be here. We realize that there will be times you may get your child early. If so, please present a photo ID and sign for your child's dismissal. A photo ID must be presented before a student may be released. **If you plan to pick up a child other than your own, that child's parent must call the school or send a note before 2:00 p.m. to verify the change in transportation.** This is for the safety of all children. All doors remain locked for the safety of our students. Students will not be dismissed through the back or side doors of the building or from the learning cottages.

INCLEMENT/BAD WEATHER PROCEDURES

School may operate on a snow schedule because of inclement weather during the year. This means that buses will run one or two hours later, and the school building will open one or two hours later.

Inclement weather may cause early dismissal. Parents are encouraged to make plans in case of an early dismissal. An inclement weather form will be sent home. Forms must be returned to school indicating how the student should go home in the event of an early dismissal due to weather or other emergency. Listen to local radio (105.7 FM) and television stations during times of inclement weather. The Central Office will send a robo call in the event of early dismissal.

OUT-OF-ZONE STUDENTS

According to Hamblen County School Board Policy, students that are zoned to another school other than Hillcrest will be allowed to attend Hillcrest on a space-available basis. If classes become overcrowded, out-of-zone students will be asked to attend the school for which they are zoned. The board policy states that the last student to enroll would be the first student to return to the school in their zone.

Parents/Guardians of currently enrolled students may sign the out-of-zone list for the next school year the first 5 days of the second semester. **For the 2024-2025 school year, the dates will be January 4-6; 9-10). New students may sign up January 11-13; 16-17).**

PARENT PORTAL

Parents can access information about their child's grades, discipline, and attendance through the Parent Portal. The Parent Portal is available at: <http://connect.hcboe.net> If you have more than one child in the Hamblen County School System, you may link all your children to one account. If you need assistance with this process, please contact Melissa Gibson or Raina Dixon in our front office.

SPORTS

Basketball is offered to third, fourth, and fifth grade boys and girls. Tryouts are scheduled in September, and teams begin practicing on October 1. Cheerleader tryouts for rising third, fourth, and fifth grade students are conducted in the spring for the following school year.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A variety of student activities are offered both during the school day and after school. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students may participate in cheerleading or basketball. Fourth and fifth grade students may belong to 4-H. Fifth grade students have the opportunity to participate in Beta Club. Fifth Grade may qualify for

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Scholastic Bowl, Safety Patrol, and Recycling Team. Participation may be based on teacher recommendations and/or grades and TCAP test performance (Beta Club).

*Parents may request non-participation for their children from participating in these clubs and organizations by providing written notification to the school.

DRESS CODE

The appearance of the student is the responsibility of the student and the parent.

1. Pants will be hemmed and worn at the waist. No baggy or sagging pants will be allowed.
2. Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be a minimum length of mid-thigh. Have your child put his/her hands down at the side and check to see if fingertips are touching skin. If so, the garment is too short.
3. Tank tops, halter tops, or tops with spaghetti straps are not permitted.
4. No headwear of any type will be worn inside the buildings. Hair bows and barrettes will be permitted, provided they are of reasonable size and subtle color.
5. Shirts should cover the stomach area including when the child raises her arms.
6. Safe shoes should be worn for outside play and physical education. Flip-flops can cause children to fall, especially when running and playing.
7. Clothing must be neat with no holes or tears. Jeans with the knees ripped or torn are not allowed.
8. Hair will be a natural hair color and worn in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process and does not call attention to the individual.
9. The Hamblen County School Board prohibits the display of any symbol on school property or any object (such as a book bag) that promotes racial discord or is related to gang activity.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Gum is not allowed in school or on buses.
2. Students are not permitted to bring toys, collectibles, candy, or soft drinks to school unless instructed by the teacher.
3. Balloons or stuffed animals are not to be sent to school as gifts. There is nowhere in the classroom to store these items during the day.
4. Any items that might appear as a weapon are not allowed at school!
5. No bullying will be tolerated. An anti-bullying program is taught in guidance classes and by classroom teachers.

McKinney-Vento: Homeless Students

Hillcrest Elementary School will abide by Hamblen County Board Policy 6.503 in regards to students experiencing homelessness. A homeless student shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

Student Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Intimidation

The Hamblen County Board of Education has determined that a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. In order to maintain that environment, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, hazing or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.¹

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents. This policy shall cover employees, employees' behaviors, students and students' behaviors while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

Building administrators are responsible for educating and training their respective staff and students as to the definition and recognition of discrimination/harassment.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment - An act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and the act has the effect of:

- Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student

or damage to the student's property;

- Causing emotional distress to a student or students; or
- Creating a hostile educational environment.

Bullying, intimidation, or harassment may also be unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, nationality, origin, color, gender, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

Cyber-bullying - A form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless telecommunication devices, text messaging, emails, social networking sites, instant messaging, videos, web sites or fake profiles.

Hazing - An intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities.³

"Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or similar contest or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Alleged victims of the above-referenced offenses shall report these incidents immediately to a teacher, counselor or building administrator.² All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this

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policy to the principal/designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy.

While reports may be made anonymously, an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation or to take necessary actions to resolve a complaint, and the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

The principal/designee at each school shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. Once a complaint is received, the principal/designee shall initiate an investigation within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the report.⁴ If a report is not initiated within forty-eight (48) hours, the principal/designee shall provide the director of schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframe.⁴

The principal/designee shall notify the parent/legal guardian when a student is involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. The principal/designee shall provide information on district counseling and support services. Students involved in an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying shall be referred to the appropriate school counselor by the principal/designee when deemed necessary.^{1, 4}

The principal/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy, and such act shall be held to violate this policy when it meets one of the following conditions:

- It places the student in reasonable fear or harm for the student's person or property;
- It has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- It has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Upon the determination of a violation, the principal/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. All investigations shall be completed and appropriate intervention taken within twenty (20) calendar days from the receipt of the initial report.⁴ If the investigation is not complete or intervention has not taken place within twenty (20) calendar days, the principal/designee shall provide the director of schools with appropriate documentation detailing the reasons why the investigation has not been completed or the appropriate intervention has not taken place.⁴ Within the parameters of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, a written report on the investigation will be delivered to the parents of the complainant, parents of the accused students and to the Director of Schools.

RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

School administrators shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of the violator, the degree of harm, previous incidences or patterns of behavior, or any other factors, as appropriate to properly respond to each situation.

A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

An employee disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator or the director of schools. Any student disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision in accordance with disciplinary policies and procedures.

REPORTS

When a complaint is filed alleging a violation of this policy where there is physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or a student's property, the principal/designee of each middle school, junior high school, or high school shall report the findings and any disciplinary actions taken to the director of schools and the chair of the board of education.

By July 1 of each year, the director of schools/designee shall prepare a report of all of the bullying cases brought to the attention of school officials during the prior academic year. The report shall also indicate how the cases were resolved and/or the reasons they are still pending. This report shall be presented to the board of education at its regular July meeting, and it shall be submitted to the state department of education by August 1.

The director of schools shall develop forms and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy and TCA 49-6-4503.

RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Retaliation against any person who reports or assists in any investigation of an act alleged in this policy is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

False accusations accusing another person of having committed an act prohibited under this policy are prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and expulsion.