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Theme: **ANCHORED IN CHRIST**  
*Hebrews 6:19*

# HILLCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

# PARENT HANDBOOK



# WELCOME MESSAGE

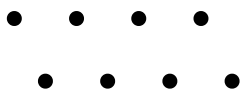
The Hillcrest Elementary School Team warmly welcomes you to the 2025-2026 school year! We're excited and thankful to have you with us. As we begin this new chapter, we are reminded of God's unfailing love and abundant grace, freely given to all.

It is our joy and honor to partner with you in supporting your child's growth—academically, socially, and spiritually. Together, we believe this year will be filled with meaningful learning, joyful moments, and deep growth.

If you ever have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Elementary School Principal. We are here to walk alongside you, always working in your child's best interest.

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**Dr. Micah Santiago**  
*Elementary School Principal*



# HILLCREST HISTORY

Hillcrest School was founded in **1942** by the Church of the Brethren Mission (CBM), to provide a Christian education for missionary children.

From the beginning, Hillcrest accepted students who were not part of mission organizations. Missions other than CBM started to show their interest in Hillcrest School. In 1955 CBM was joined by the Sudan United Mission, the Assemblies of God Mission and the United Missionary Society. They were joined by the Missouri Synod Lutheran Mission (1963), American Lutheran Mission (1964), the Nigerian Baptist Mission (1967), the Mambilla Baptist Mission (1967), the Sudan Interior Mission (1968), the Great Commission Movement (1982), United Methodist, the Wycliffe Bible Translators and Mission Africa. These Cooperating Bodies as they are called share in capital investments, second staff members and govern the school.. Today there are nine Cooperating Bodies.

Hillcrest began as an Elementary School, but from the early years some students studied high school courses by correspondence. Eight students graduated in the first senior class in 1965. Today there is a complete Kindergarten – Grade 12 program and students graduate with a diploma equivalent to that issued by any high school in the United States.

The Hillcrest student body population has included students from many corners of the world, sometimes from as many as 34 different nations represented on campus at one time and Pineview Hostel houses up to 36 students on campus.

# GOVERNANCE

The Cooperating Bodies jointly administer and operate the school. The school is governed by a Board of Governors made up of a representative of each of the Cooperating Bodies (Church/Mission), plus a member of the Parent-Teacher Association and an Alumni Representative. The Board meets four times a year at Hillcrest. The Superintendent and the Principals are advisory members to the Board. The responsibilities of the Board include such matters as the School's Mission and Vision, appointing the Superintendent, approving policies and staffing, and making arrangements regarding property and finance.

## VISION & MISSION

### VISION

Based on our Christian missionary roots, our vision is to be strategically used by God as a quality international Christian school, educating global disciples of Christ in all facets of society, and increasingly living out our Core Values.

### MISSION

Educating Global Disciples of Christ.

# CORE VALUES



As a diverse Christian community, which loves God and others, we respect and recognize everyone as an important part of the Hillcrest family. We encourage this community through prayer, grace, communication, cooperation, and shared experiences.

Hillcrest Student Expectations in **Community**: Like Barnabas, Mary and Martha, Hillcrest students will be active in service, using their gifts and working collaboratively in their family, school, church and local communities. **“I work with others!”**



Founded by Christian missionaries, Hillcrest continues to emphasize the Great Commission of making disciples. We invest in lives as a witness to Christ's love and our personal relationship with him.

Hillcrest Student Expectations in **Discipleship**: Like Paul and Naomi, Hillcrest students will demonstrate growth in faith, and display Christian love to others. **“I follow Jesus!”**



We maintain a continuous pursuit of excellence in education by working hard to accomplish goals, preserve standards, practice stewardship, nurture lifelong learning, and achieve quality outcomes in all areas.

Hillcrest Student Expectations in **Excellence**: Like Joseph and Deborah, Hillcrest students will do their best in all circumstances, as working for God. **“I do my best!”**

# CORE VALUES



As God's image bearers, we pursue integrity to reflect His holiness. We seek to demonstrate justice, honor, and character that is above reproach.

Hillcrest Student Expectations in **Integrity**: Like Daniel and Ruth, Hillcrest students will demonstrate respect, be true to their word, and will follow words through with godly actions. **"I do what I say!"**



As an international school community, we are blessed by God to be a blessing here and around the world. We use a U.S. curriculum and emphasize learning about our world through a biblical perspective.

Hillcrest **International** Student Expectations: Like Abraham and Esther, Hillcrest students will experience and learn about other people's cultures, will grow as friends, and will be open to serving around the world. **"I learn how others live!"**



We emulate Christ by setting an example and demonstrating servant leadership.

Hillcrest Student Expectations in **Servant Leadership**: Like Moses and Abigail, Hillcrest students will show responsibility and leadership, being both humble and bold in their actions without being self-seeking. **"I lead by serving others!"**

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

- I.** I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
- II.** And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;
- III.** Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;
- IV.** Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
- V.** The third day He rose again from the dead;
- VI.** He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
- VII.** From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- VIII.** I believe in the Holy Spirit.
- IX.** I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints;
- X.** The forgiveness of sins;
- XI.** The resurrection of the body;
- XII.** And the life everlasting. Amen.



# SPECIFIC BELIEFS

- (i)** The Unity of the Godhead and the Trinity of persons therein.
- (ii)** The incarnation of the Son of God, His atoning blood, His bodily resurrection, His mediatorial intercession and reign and personal return. The total depravity of human nature in consequence of the Fall.
- (iii)** The justification of the sinner by faith in Christ alone.
- (iv)** The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner
- (v)** The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal bliss of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.
- (vi)** The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
- (viii)** The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper



# PERSONNEL

## SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent is responsible for the operation of the entire school. The Superintendent maintains an “open door policy” to all students, staff, parents, and visitors; though an appointment in advance is helpful. Routine concerns ought to be directed to the School Principals.

## ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

The Elementary Principal is responsible for the administration of the Elementary School program, teachers, and students on a day-by-day basis. The Principal keeps the Superintendent informed of significant developments. The Principal's responsibilities include supervising/encouraging teachers, scheduling classes, coordinating extra-curricular activities, organizing assemblies, being aware of each student's progress, and coordinating daily activities.

**If any questions and/or concerns arise about your child, please first consult his or her Homeroom Teacher about the issue, then the Elementary Principal, before approaching the Superintendent.**

## SPIRITUAL LIFE COORDINATOR

The Spiritual Life Coordinator (SLC) is appointed by the Board of Governors on an annual basis to be responsible for the over-all spiritual program at Hillcrest, working alongside the Spiritual Life Committee. The SLC relates to the Elementary School through assisting the principal and staff in coordinating regular student chapel services each Friday. The SLC is also available to Elementary School families and teachers who may seek help whenever the need arises for assistance in spiritual care.

## NURSE

The Nurse supervises the dispensary during the school day. Children are sent to the nurse with a note from the teacher stating the problem. However, a child should not come to school feeling unwell. If your child has had a fever, do not send them to school until they have been without a fever for 12 or more hours. A child may be treated in the dispensary and sent back to class, sent home, or the nurse may arrange transportation to Bingham University Teaching Hospital (Evangel) for emergency treatment. Attempts will be made to notify parents or hostel parents by telephone as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. In the event medications need to be administered during the school day, the medications will be kept with the Nurse and the child will be sent to the dispensary for their administration.

## LIBRARIAN

The Librarian maintains the library for use by students and faculty. Elementary classes have a scheduled visit to the library each week. Kindergarten and Grade 1 may borrow two books and grades 2-5 can borrow three books. The librarian gives help on general use of the library. The children also listen to a story read to them by the librarian or a library volunteer. Books are due after two weeks but can be returned sooner. If a book is lost or stolen, the student will be charged the replacement cost in US dollars or the equivalent in Naira.

## COUNSELOR

Hillcrest has a School Counselor. In relation to Elementary School, the Counselor is responsible for coordinating Standardized Tests, giving assistance to teachers, and providing personal counseling for students.

# ACADEMICS

## **ADMISSIONS**

All children are required to pass an admissions examination and are interviewed by their prospective Homeroom Teacher. Parental interviews are conducted and application forms are distributed in December-January each year, however admission testing takes place on a rolling basis throughout the whole year. New families are encouraged to apply in December for the following school year. For entry into Kindergarten, a child must be 5 years old before October 1st of the year the child is applying for admission. Each subsequent grade level follows accordingly. Fees are set each year by the Hillcrest Board.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Most supplies are included in the annual school fees. Hillcrest makes available all textbooks, workbooks, and testing materials. Textbooks are assigned to individual children. If a textbook is lost or damaged, parents will be required to pay the replacement cost in dollars or Naira equivalent.



## **CURRICULUM AND METHODS**

Hillcrest students come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, along with unique academic achievements. We focus on loving, patient Christ-centered teaching, understanding and positive encouragement in our student-centered instruction.

Hillcrest Elementary School seeks to provide a well-rounded education for all children from Kindergarten to Grade 5. Class size is generally limited to 24 from grades 2-5 and 22 in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

As a Christian school we deliberately seek to develop the child spiritually. Each school day begins with devotions and ends with prayer. There are daily Bible lessons. The school follows an American curriculum which is taught from a Biblical perspective. Reading is taught with a balanced approach using phonics, word recognition, and literature. Reading time decreases after Grade 3, while English Grammar, Writing, and Mathematics times increase. Basic computational skills, number theory, and elementary geometry are taught from Kindergarten, with such areas continuing to be developed through Grade 5. Of greatest importance in Mathematics is the understanding of concepts and development of number sense. Access to the school library begins in Kindergarten. Computer skills are taught in Grades K-5. In all subjects teachers show how God is ruler over all and His Word has implications for every subject as they begin to understand how to follow God and walk in His Spirit.

**G.R.O.W.PROGRAM** (Growth, Realization, Organization & Wonder)  
Our Educational Support Services coordinator runs the ES G.R.O.W., which is included in the campus-wide services for additional support for children with learning challenges. This is a program for children who have a **minor learning exceptionality**. Children are referred to G.R.O.W. by their homeroom teacher for observation and possible testing. Any testing is done after consultation with parents. After testing, a conference with parents and the teacher is scheduled to go over results and to discuss possible actions to be taken. A child may receive accommodations in his or her normal classroom, or assistance from an Educational Assistant either in-class or in a special session. We are not educational testing specialists. For more complex exceptionalities, and in all cases where Hillcrest may modify a child's educational program, we require parents to schedule a professional educational assessment at their cost.



### **SPECIALIST TEACHERS/CLASSES**

**Physical Education, Music, Computer, and Art** classes are taught by teachers who are specialists in these areas. Children move to special classrooms or areas for such instruction. Specialist teachers cooperate very closely with classroom teachers, especially in matters of progress, discipline, and absence.

If there is illness requiring a child to sit out of PE, a note from the parent with such a request is required. Proper dress for PE, including black shorts, red t-shirts, and athletic shoes, is mandatory.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a means of **reinforcement of class teaching**. It also enables parents to see what is being taught in the classroom. The expectation and the amount of homework will be communicated to the parents by the child's Homeroom Teacher.



## **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Elementary school is not too early to learn about the harmful effects and consequences of cheating and plagiarism.

1 - Definitions:

Cheating is the act of deceiving. It includes but is not limited to: copying another student's work, using prohibited materials for a test or quiz, getting someone else to do the student's work.

Plagiarism is the passing off as one's own, the ideas or words of another. Plagiarism has become more common with the use of the internet even on the elementary level. Copying and pasting is so easy, but it is not the student's own work. It is dishonest and unacceptable; it is plagiarism.

2 - Hillcrest School recognizes that AI can be a source of information and can be used as a study tool, but all written work must be in a student's own words. Therefore, copying of AI-generated work, including results from ChatGPT, either in part or in full, is plagiarism and is unacceptable to be included in any student's work. Furthermore, AI should never be cited as a source.

3 - In the event of cheating or plagiarism, the teacher should quietly call attention to the fact by withdrawing the assignment from the student without antagonizing or humiliating the student, but with all effort to stop the violation immediately. Each classroom teacher will have their own consequences after a discussion is had with the student in violation.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Hillcrest is using the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test for grades 1 through 7. Over 1,000 international schools in more than 145 countries rely on NWEA assessment tools and professional learning strategies. We feel that MAP is an ideal tool to provide data on growth in each student's learning. Our 8th - 12th grade students take the PSAT and SAT tests

During the last week of August or first week of September, your child will take a computerized MAP Growth test from NWEA. Kindergarten students will participate in this testing second semester. This MAP Growth test will show your student's current instructional level so that we will be able to measure academic growth throughout the school year (and from year to year) in reading, language usage, and mathematics.

MAP Growth tests are unique in that they adapt to your child's level of learning. If your child answers a question correctly, the next question is more challenging. If they answer incorrectly, the next one is easier. This results in a detailed picture of what your child knows and is ready to learn—whether it is on, above, or below their grade level.

Since MAP Growth tests provide immediate and accurate information about your child's learning, it's easy for teachers to identify students with similar scores that are generally ready for instruction in similar skills and topics, and then plan instruction accordingly.

MAP Growth reports also provide typical growth data for students who are in the same grade, subject, and have the same starting performance level. Each school year, Hillcrest students in grades 1 through 10 will take MAP tests in August and January. Along with the first and third quarter reports, you will receive a report showing your child's growth, which you then can review with your child's teacher for greater insight.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report Cards are completed at the end of each nine-week-term (four times a year). This evaluation involves assessing a child's progress in our Student Expectations, and skills considered significant to the subject, and the subject itself. Letter grades are introduced in Grade Four. Subject semester grades (marks) are also given. The final reports are recorded in the student's permanent record. **After the first and third marking periods, a mandatory Student/Parent/Teacher conference is held to discuss the student's progress.** Additional conferences during the year are encouraged at the discretion of the parents and/or teachers.

<b>GRADING SCALE FOR GRADES 4&amp;5</b>		<b>GRADING SCALE FOR K - GRADE 3</b>	
<b>A</b>	90 - 100%	<b>O</b>	Outstanding
<b>B</b>	80 - 89%	<b>S+</b>	Satisfactory, above level
<b>C</b>	70 - 70%	<b>S</b>	Satisfactory
<b>D</b>	60 - 69%	<b>S-</b>	Satisfactory, below level
<b>F</b>	50 - 59%	<b>U</b>	Unsatisfactory

### **Elementary Category Skills Scale (a combination of assessment data and teacher professional judgment)**

<b>5</b>	<b>Exemplary.</b> With relative ease the student grasps, applies, and extends processes and skills for the grade level. Mastering grade level standards/expectations.
<b>4</b>	<b>Proficient.</b> The student demonstrates understanding of the grade level standards and can apply concepts in a variety of contexts. Meeting grade level standards/expectations.
<b>3</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient.</b> Student is beginning to grasp and apply key processes and skills for their grade level, but produces work that contains errors. Is approaching, and occasionally meets, achievement of grade level standards/expectations.
<b>2</b>	<b>Not yet proficient:</b> The student is not meeting grade level standards and is working one or more years below grade level. Limited achievement of the grade level standards/expectations.
<b>1</b>	<b>Far Below Proficiency or Insufficient Evidence:</b> The student is far below meeting grade level standards / expectations. Or proficiency cannot be determined due to missing assignments, and/or length of time in school.

### **SCHOOL TRANSFER / RETURN TO HOME COUNTRY**

The school establishes a file for each student upon entry into Hillcrest School, and maintains electronic records on RenWeb, Hillcrest's electronic learning management system. At the end of each school year, reports are entered into the records. Results of Standardized Tests given are also recorded. When a child leaves, a copy of this Record is made available to the parents. A Transfer Letter is also completed and sent with the child. Please inform the Counselor of such plans well ahead of time and notify the Superintendent's office so that the transfer letter can be supplied.



# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

## **PARENT /TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

PTA Membership fees are included with school fees. Parents, Hostel parents, and teachers are encouraged to be participating members of the Hillcrest PTA and attend all meetings. The PTA seeks to bring parents and teachers together both formally and informally for the benefit of the children and the school.

## **PARENT INFORMATION FORM / HOME VISITS**

Each year, parents are asked to complete a Parent Information Form to help the teacher to get better acquainted with your family. We also try to visit all families at home during the first quarter - you are asked to choose a convenient date and draw a map showing directions from the school to your house. This will be helpful for the teacher for home visits!

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parents will be asked to become Parent Volunteers. As they are available, they may be asked to assist in any one of the various elementary events, or as chaperones during Field Trips. In order to participate, Parent Volunteers must attend a student safety workshop to maintain the Hillcrest Student Protection Policy. Please refer to both the "Student Protection Policy" as well as the "Chaperone Guidelines" at the end of this booklet for further information regarding volunteering.

## **COVENANT AGREEMENT**

Research has proven that there are comprehensive benefits for students, families, and schools when parents become involved in their child(ren)'s education. A child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and the family, and in some cases the hostel. Therefore, upon admission, parents/house parents, child, teacher, and principal sign a formal agreement called the Covenant Agreement by which each commits to do all that is possible to meet and achieve goals and objectives set out for the education of the child. The teacher will try to visit each home/hostel once per school year. It is expected that parents will commit to visiting the classroom and communicating regularly with their child's teacher. If a driver picks up your child, please remember to also visit yourself on a regular basis!

## **HOME FOLDERS / PLANNERS**

Each Elementary class makes use of a home folder or planner on a daily basis. This is specifically designated to be taken home daily with a message, homework assignment, or both in order to enhance communication between the school and the parents. Sometimes last minute announcements are included, as well as other vital information relevant to school life and activities. Be mindful that the home folder will include important notes from the teacher, principal, or others concerning various Hillcrest events. Each evening a parent is expected to go through the home folder messages, discuss them with the child, sign off if requested, and ensure that it is returned the next day. The teachers will check home folders daily. The home folder is an important, daily facilitator of communication.

# ROUTINE AND POLICIES

## SCHOOL HOURS

At Hillcrest we work together across all schools. ES Recess and lunch are scheduled separately from MS and HS in order to allow ES full use of the courts.

<b>Grade 5</b>	Preparing for transition to Middle School, school begins at 8:10.
<b>Grades K - 4</b>	Before-school playground opens at 8:10. School begins at 8:30.
<b>Morning Recess</b>	10:00 am - 10:20am: children eat snacks first.
<b>Kindergarten Recess</b>	10:20 am - 10:50 am.
<b>Lunch Time</b>	11:45 am - 12:00: children eat with their classmates, no playground play.
<b>Lunch Recess</b>	12:00 - 12:25 pm: playground and courts are open.
<b>Closing</b>	3:25 pm: pick up.

**Half days:** on days with special events such as Independence Day, home visits or Field Day, school ends at lunch time at 11:45.

**Compressed days:** on days with evening events, school ends early at 2:30.

**Wednesday:** same opening and closing times, different timetable for classes throughout the day.

### **DROP-OFF AND ARRIVAL**

**Children may not be dropped off earlier than 7:55am.** There is no adult supervision before 7:55am; your child's safety and security are of utmost concern to us. **Students who are dropped off earlier than 7:55 will be brought to the main office** to wait until the ES Principal collects them. The secretaries will keep a record of who is brought to them. The third time a child is brought to the main office will result in an administrative fee of N25,000.

Those who are dropped off at 7:55am **before the 8:10 am bell wait in their designated picnic table area.** At the 8:10 am bell, the classrooms are open and students can unpack their backpacks to get ready for the start of school.

**Getting your children to school on time at least a few minutes before the 8:30am bell (before 8:10am for grade 5 students) is of utmost importance.** The first 15 minutes of each day is an important time during which teachers typically do devotions and pray, setting a positive tone for the day. Late-comers disrupt this special time by causing a distraction amongst the rest of the students and teacher. We recognize that there are unforeseeable and unavoidable situations that a family might occasionally have to deal with at home or on their way to school. If this is the case, please send a Whatsapp message informing us of the situation. Typical, everyday traffic hold-ups will not be marked as an excused tardy. However, abnormal hold-ups that cause numerous elementary children to be tardy on the same day, will be excused.

## **SNACKS / LUNCH**

**Carbonated beverages or drinks in glass containers are not allowed for Elementary students.** Children eat their snacks and lunches on verandas and at picnic tables by their classroom (**not on the courts or other areas on campus**). Children usually bring snacks for morning recess. They may bring lunch from home. Children are expected to eat their lunch before the lunch playtime. Grades 2-5 may purchase snacks and / or lunch from the vendors who are on campus. The menu is usually kosai, fried potato, plantain, puff-puff, suya, and masa. **Kindergarten and Grade 1 may not go unaccompanied to buy food.** Please do not send large sums of money with children. Determine a reasonable amount of food required by a child and send cash accordingly. Elementary children are not allowed to purchase food items from the High School Canteen which is operated by the High School Junior class.

There is a **Hot Lunch program** provided by the Pineview Hostel each week throughout the school year, servicing students and teachers in Kindergarten through Grade 5. Quarterly menus are sent out ahead of time and parents make a bank transfer and forward the order form to the main office (through homeroom teachers). Please note that an order made in the morning of school will be effective beginning the next day.



### **PICK-UP / SUPERVISION**

**Parents of students in *Kindergarten – Grade 3* will be required to collect their children directly from the classroom!** This means that you, your driver, or the specially designated **adult** “pick-up person”, **with proper ID**, must wait outside of your child’s classroom at 3:20, promptly, each day to collect your son or daughter. In the event that you have more than one child, please go to your youngest child’s classroom first.

**Parents of students in *Grade 4 and 5*** have a choice to either collect their child at the classroom or sign a form indicating permission to dismiss the child and allow him/her to go, unaccompanied, to his / her vehicle. The form will come home with your child the first days of school.

**Please note that no students are permitted on campus after Dismissal at 3:25**, unless a parent or recognized guardian is right with them or within their sight. If a child has a pre-arranged Hillcrest practice or other activity, they are to have a parent alert the classroom teacher ahead of time and the child goes directly there at dismissal. **Students are NOT to be “hanging out” or “wandering around”**. Students may play on the adventure playground only with a supervising adult also in the playground area. Those waiting for a ride may do so from the huts by the pick-up area only. **Their ride MUST collect them by 3:45.**

For security and safety reasons, **Elementary School children may not attend any school events (outside of the normal school hours) unless supervised by a parent**, or designated responsible adult. The adult would oversee any activity of the child during the event.

**Students who have not been picked up by 3:40 will be taken to the main office** to wait until a parent/driver comes. The secretaries will keep a record of who is brought to them. The third time a child is brought to the main office will result in an administrative fee of N25,000.

We realize that some situations might be unique or require you to send a different person to pick up your child. Please ensure timely and detailed communication with your child's teacher.

### **PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS**

Different grade levels have their own designated soccer fields. Everyone may utilize the Adventure Playground. Grades 3-5 may also play on the basketball courts. Teachers and Parent Volunteers rotate supervisory duty on the playground. Balls and other playground equipment are provided. The school Nurse attends to injuries during this time.

There is an approved set of general rules covering children's behavior in and around the Elementary School premises, found at the end of the handbook. It is advisable for parents to go over these rules with their children. Teachers also explain them to the children during the first week of school. In addition, teachers develop classroom rules with their children which parents should know about. It is our goal that children should become more and more self-disciplined as they are disciplined to follow the example of Christ and learn to serve one another.

## **CLASS MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE**

Our classroom management practices reflect both the teacher's role in guiding and in direct instruction, as well as a grace-filled community of learners who are called to work together. Grace is cultivated by practices such as classroom devotions and chapel worship. Grace is also cultivated in regular departmental staff devotions and prayers.

Classroom management practices aim to foster responsibility and relationships. Promoting student recognition and ownership of their own behavior choices, some classes retain our current Assertive Discipline practices of using color bands for behavior. We are also incorporating elements of Responsive Classroom, which is a set of school-wide practices which integrate academic, social and emotional skills. These practices emphasize that:

- Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
- HOW we teach is as important as WHAT we teach.
- Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
- What we know and believe about our students—individually, culturally, developmentally, etc.—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.
- Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Please discuss the child's classroom Discipline Plan with the teacher and be ready to support it. More serious incidents will be dealt with by the Principal along with parents, and may include appropriate restitution ("you break it, you fix it"), loss of privileges, or in-school or at-home suspensions if necessary. A copy of our Discipline Report is found at the end of this handbook.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Children not present when school begins (8:10 for Grade 5, 8:30 for other classes) are tardy. Please ensure that children are on time for school. When children are absent due to sickness the school should be called in the morning, and the teacher should be informed of the reason by a note upon the child's return. The teacher also informs the school nurse, so that she is aware of any possible contagious illnesses. The school's main office number is **0803 719 0351**. Auntie Tittle may be reached on WhatsApp at **0703 770 9486**.

The number of absences and tardies is recorded in the attendance register, and the student's report card. Too many unexcused absences during the school year may result in failing grades and/or retention. However, we ask that students who are ill not be sent to school. **Students with any fever, vomiting, chills, sore throat, cough, or rash should stay home.**

### **A. Excused Absences:**

1. Absences in the Elementary School will be excused for the following reasons: illness, medical appointments, legal paperwork, standardized exams, and a crisis or death in the family.
2. When a student is absent for an excused reason, the student will be given the same number of days that were missed to make up missed work. The parent is responsible to send a note to school on the day the student returns, indicating the reason for the absence. If no note is sent, the absence will be recorded in the student's permanent file as an unexcused absence.
3. For excused absences planned ahead of time, the parents are to write a request to, and consult with, the Principal and classroom teacher at least one (1) week in advance and possibly obtain assignments which will be due the day the student returns to school. In addition, all tests that are missed during a planned or unplanned unexcused absence must be made up within one (1) week of returning to school.

## B. Unexcused Absences:

1. Attendance is expected for all students on the first and the last day of the school year and on the day before and after a holiday. Absences at these times are considered unexcused.
2. Any other unexcused absences in the Elementary School should be planned unexcused absences. In planned unexcused absences, the parents are to write a request to, and consult with, the Principal and classroom teacher at least one (1) week in advance and possibly obtain assignments which will be due the day the student returns to school. In addition, all tests that are missed during a planned or unplanned unexcused absence must be made up within one (1) week of returning to school.

Please be aware that prolonged absences of 14 school days or more will affect students' progress and be reflected in their grade report, unless all missed work is satisfactorily completed.

## **SECURITY**

Hillcrest has a Security Policy and a set of procedures to follow if the need should arise. We will do periodic drills throughout the year in case of fire or lockdown. The overall security principles we adhere to are:

- We believe that we live under the constant care and protection of the God we serve. We commit our lives daily to God, seeking his guidance and protection.
- We value human life above all material possessions. In every situation of insecurity, it is a higher priority to protect and preserve people rather than things.
- We understand that wherever we live we accept a set of risks and threats to our security. We try to understand the risks we face, and take appropriate steps to reduce our vulnerability to them.
- We recognize the responsibility Hillcrest School has to keep the students safe and secure while they are under our care and supervision.

- We recognize that the image we project of ourselves and our organization impacts our security. Through our lifestyle, attitudes, behavior, written materials and programs, we take active steps to communicate a clear picture of who we are and what we stand for. We aim to live simply and wisely and to treat others with dignity and respect.

*For further information concerning this policy and procedures, contact the main office.*

### **DAILY DEVOTIONS / WEEKLY CHAPEL**

Each Elementary classroom begins the day with devotion and prayer. Meal prayers are said prior to lunch. Each day ends with prayer. Children are encouraged to present concerns and blessings for prayer times and are encouraged to take a turn at prayer.

On Friday, a special flag raising ceremony is held prior to the weekly chapel service. The bell for this activity rings at 8:25 a.m. for all grades to assemble by the flagpoles on the Elementary playground. Chapel begins immediately after the flag raising ceremony, and lasts until 9:15. During the semester each class takes full responsibility for one Friday chapel service. The class plans the service, participates in it, or presents a message through singing, drama, etc. **Parents are welcome at all chapels, especially those at which your child's class is leading!**

There are also Opening and Closing Assemblies for each Semester. These are held on the opening and closing days of each Semester. All children attend, and parents and visitors are welcome to also participate.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

In light of God's word, we are all members of one body, one family in Christ. As a result we will care for, support, encourage and nurture each other in love. We are committed to providing a caring, respectful, friendly, and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. People to tell about bullying or any inappropriate behavior are: Classroom teacher, ES principal or Mrs. Miner, Student Protection Office and school counselor. All classes complete a unit on bullying prevention at the beginning of each year. For more information see the "Student Protection Policy" included at the end of this booklet.

## **DRESS CODE**

The Hillcrest Dress Code for Elementary School children seeks to uphold and maintain the philosophy of the school and to ensure that the educational process is not affected in any way. Cleanliness, neatness, style, general acceptability, good grooming of hair, and avoidance of extremes are general principles upon which students should learn to make decisions about themselves. The Dress Code is meant to provide guidelines of neatness and modesty for dressing and grooming at Hillcrest. A copy of the Elementary Dress Code is included for information.

Elementary students are required to wear the appropriate Hillcrest School uniform for classes and school activities. Students who are on campus after school must wear either their school uniform or their PE uniform until 6 pm. Uniforms should be clean and in good condition.

**Any student arriving in a non-compliant uniform will be taken to the Uniform Office, issued the proper attire, and the cost will be added to the child's school fees.**

<b>GIRLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaid / Navy Blue / Khaki (tan) Jumper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ no shorter than the top of the knee, must wear shorts under jumper</li> <li>◦ girls may choose to wear leggings under their jumpers; in that case the jumper must be 2 inches longer than her finger tips hanging down at her side.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• White cotton shirt (for under jumper <b>only</b>)</li> <li>• Navy Blue/Khaki trousers.</li> <li>• Red/Navy Blue/Grey/Light Blue Polo shirt (no visible logo allowed)</li> <li>• Red/Navy Blue/Grey/Light Blue sweater, sweater vest or jacket <b>without any writing or design.</b></li> <li>• <b>Grade 5</b> is allowed to start wearing the Middle School skirt.</li> </ul>
<b>BOYS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue/Khaki (tan) shorts or trousers (can be cargo/combat style)</li> <li>• Red/Navy Blue/Grey/Light Blue Polo shirt (no visible logo allowed)</li> <li>• Red/Navy Blue/Grey/Light Blue sweater, sweater vest or jacket without any writing or design.</li> </ul>
<b>PE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black mesh shorts</li> <li>• Red t-shirt, no design (except Hillcrest t-shirts)</li> <li>• Both are available from the school store.</li> <li>• Regular trainers/tennis shoes.</li> </ul>
<b>FOOTWEAR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no set uniform shoe but shoes must have a back strap. Flip flops/slippers/Crocs are not allowed. Avoid wearing shoes with an elevated heel.</li> </ul>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in class.</li> </ul>
<b>CONCERTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girl's dresses must be knee length and straps should be 3 fingers in width.</li> <li>• Boys should wear nice trousers and a collared shirt.</li> <li>• No jeans.</li> </ul>

**For full details on uniforms — including where and how to purchase them — please visit our [website](#).**

# ACTIVITIES

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

ES students are allowed to wear “mufti” (street clothing) instead of uniform (standards should be similar to the dress code please) to celebrate their birthdays on the actual date, or on the nearest school day. Elementary School parents and children often wish to recognize their birthdays by bringing a treat to share with the class. This is encouraged, in cooperation with the class teacher, and should be a maximum of a 15-minute celebration.

Some teachers prefer using time immediately before dismissal and students will be ready for dismissal at 3:20. Lunchtime parties should be finished before children go to play at 12:00 (or 12:15 on Wednesdays). Parents need to inform the class teacher ahead of time when they plan such an event. Parents must provide any cutlery or paper items that would be needed. Please be aware that it is expected that parents will help with the serving and clean-up due to the fact that the teachers are still on supervisory/teaching responsibility for the class.

## **INTRAMURAL SPORTS**

Grade 5 children may participate in the Middle School intramural sports program. This program is usually held after school once a week.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Occasionally teachers schedule Field Trips outside Hillcrest. School vehicles and approved drivers are used for transport. Parents are requested to volunteer as chaperones. Information regarding a Field Trip is sent to parents ahead of the date planned. Children will not be allowed to accompany the class unless a parent has signed the permission slip.

# ACTIVITIES

## FIRST QUARTER

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY**

The day before Nigerian Independence Day is celebrated at Hillcrest. Elementary children are encouraged to wear Nigerian dress. At 8:30, we gather with the whole school at the flag ceremony, then we move to the chapel to celebrate in worship. Elementary students are dismissed to classes by 9:30. Parents are asked to bring in a Nigerian dish to share, and we will gather in the space between the Maxwell and Computer buildings to eat at lunchtime. Please make sure that you bring enough for 20 to have a small taste! Specific information is sent home concerning the events and schedule of the day.

### **BOOK FAIR**

ES holds a Book Fair along with the end of first quarter parent-student-teacher conferences. Each of the Elementary classes has a designated time to visit the Book Fair, and make wish lists for parents. Purchases happen on the day of parent-student-teacher conferences.



## SECOND QUARTER

### **CREATIVE ARTS AND SCIENCE FAIR**

This is a whole-school, at-home project, presented at school after October Break. In the spirit of Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings,” the project seeks to foster originality, creativity, and imagination, discovering and displaying an aspect of God’s world! The fair also provides an authentic task allowing all students to grow in the speaking and listening components of our Language Arts curriculum.

All students must submit an age-appropriate creative project to their teacher. Students within the same grade may work together on a project but we want original work. Presentations are a maximum of 2 minutes (less for K-2). Projects may be done in the following areas:

- Science & Technology
- Writing/L.A.
- Music & Art
- Drama & Dance
- Other/Combination.

Students come up with an interesting question, “How does...?”, “What effect does \_\_\_ have?”, “How can I display \_\_\_?” ... and let their imagination fly!



## SECOND QUARTER

### CONCERTS / ART SHOW

Musical concerts are held twice each year in the months of December and May. These are under the direction of the Music teacher. All children are required to participate in these programs. Some programs require the assistance of parents for costumes, props, etc. Programs are held in the evening in the Chapel/Auditorium.

After each of the concerts there is an art exhibit in the Art Room displaying samples of all the work done by the Elementary School students during each semester. Parents are encouraged to visit the exhibition to enjoy the efforts and creativity of the children.

### CHRISTMAS PROJECTS

The children usually participate in a Community Service Project each year. These projects assist a need in the community at large and to give Hillcrest children **another opportunity for service.** Sometimes money is raised and other times gifts in kind are sought. Students have participated in Walkathons, Color Runs, car washes, and other fundraiser activities. Children have supported orphanages and schools, bought wheelchairs, given funds for IDP camps, assisted with clinic needs, supported work with street children, etc., etc.

## THIRD QUARTER

### **MULTICULTURAL DAY**

A day in the second semester may be selected by the teachers to celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages at Hillcrest. Elementary children participate in a program that includes a National Costume Parade and performances emphasizing and highlighting the culture of their country. An international lunch for the children, parents, and teachers is often planned for that day. Specific information is sent home concerning the events and schedule of the day.

### **FIELD DAY**

This activity is organized jointly by the PE teacher and elementary principal and is usually held in February or March. The teams participate in events in which all members from Kindergarten to Grade Five can be involved. The events have been designed to encourage the development of team spirit and leadership, the opportunity to practice fairness, and accept winning and losing in the right spirit. There are relay events as well as games and a water slide. It is a fun-filled day for children to glorify God through their unique athletic skills and talents. The day concludes with an early dismissal at lunch.



## THIRD QUARTER

### **SPELLING BEE**

Grades Four and Five have participated in a Spelling Bee with Kent Academy, usually after March Break. Parents are notified of such an event beforehand. There have been times when the Spelling Bee was an internal competition because of security concerns or during the worldwide pandemic. There have also been suggestions to open it to more schools for wider participation and exposure.

### **READING CELEBRATION DAY**

This is a day set aside to celebrate students' favorite book characters by dressing like them and bringing the book to school. The classes parade on the courts and the Principal reads aloud to each class throughout the day. Each classroom teacher also celebrates in age-appropriate ways in their classroom for students to become even more aware of the importance of literature and reading and simply enjoy reading.



# APPENDICES

(For more details on school policies, the complete Board and Administration policy manuals may be read at the Main Office.)

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND RULES

Include but are not limited to:

- 1. We will treat each other as we want to be treated.**
- 2. We will demonstrate RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT, and SAFETY!**
- 3. We will not chew gum in school.**
- 4. We will not shout when we are on the veranda, close to any school building or an office.**
- 5. We will not bounce balls, play games, and run on the veranda or in front of entrances to classrooms.**
- 6. We will not take playground balls or other playground equipment out of the classroom before 10:00 or after 3:20.**
- 7. We will not play ball, touch, or any other tag games or chase games on the Adventure or other playground equipment.**
- 8. We will climb up the steps of the slide and slide down the slide, sitting down.**
- 9. We will sit on the seesaw and avoid rough motion and bouncing.**
- 10. We will always swing sitting down. We will not twist or do sideways swinging. One child will be on a swing at a time.**
- 11. We will not push or pull others on the climbing bars. We are considerate of others who are climbing on the bars.**
- 12. We do not play behind the Computer Lab building.**



## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND RULES

**Include but are not limited to:**

- 13.**We will not run in and around the Maintenance workshop and the hedges around it, for any reason.
- 14.**We will play well away from the Music building. We will not run behind it.
- 15.**On MS/HS school chapel days, we will play well away from the Chapel.
- 16.**We divide the soccer fields as follows: Grades K, 1, and 2 beside their classrooms; Grade 3 on the sand pitch, Grades 4 and 5 on the courts. No soccer is played behind the Grades 4/5 classrooms.
- 17.**We will not climb the trees in the compound or pick the fruit from them.
- 18.**If we are in Grades 2-5, we are allowed to buy food from the huts on the compound. If we are in Kindergarten or Grade 1, someone else has to buy for us.
- 19.**We will eat our lunch in the places designated for each class, before the 12:00 bell.
- 20.**We will put all our trash into the trash bins.
- 21.**If we are in grades Kindergarten through Grade 3 we will wait at our classrooms until one of our parents picks us up at the end of school. If we are in Grade 4 or 5 we will either wait at the classroom or with written permission be dismissed from our classroom to our vehicle or other activity.
- 22.**We may be in the parking lot only when arriving or leaving the school campus.
- 23.**We will enter the Staff Room to collect or distribute items only if we have a teacher's permission. We will knock politely on the door if we need a teacher's help.
- 24.**We will not bring guns/toy-guns/knives to school. We will not play with sticks or use them for imaginary guns or swords.

## ELEMENTARY PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

*These expectations include examples in each category as a means to get students thinking and making good choices.*

### **Appropriate Playground Behaviors**

#### **1. Respect & Encouragement**

- Physical respect
  - Smiling and giving high fives and friendly pats on the back
  - Helping someone if they fall down or hurt themselves
  - Standing patiently in line for the drinking fountain
- Verbal respect
  - Telling someone they did a good job
  - Using polite words like 'please', 'thank you', 'I'm sorry', 'excuse me'
  - Kindly reminding someone of the rules and expectations
- Self respect
  - Saying "NO" or "STOP THAT" firmly if someone is bothering or hurting you
  - Getting help from the adults on duty if you need it
  - Sticking up for your friends, making new friends

#### **2. Safety**

- Going down the slide in a seated position with feet first
- Maintain safe bodily actions and movement, i.e. especially during competitive games like football or tag
- Sitting properly on the seesaws and swings and avoiding rough motions
- Allowing someone to go across the monkey bars without pulling on them or pushing them in any way
- Walking on the veranda



## ELEMENTARY PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

### 3. Responsibility

- Eating snacks or lunches at designated picnic tables
- Throwing trash into the bins
- Reporting playground behavior issues to the adult on duty
- Reporting signs of broken or abused equipment to the adult on duty
- Returning the balls and other classroom equipment (jump ropes, hula-hoops etc.) to the classroom
- Returning to the classroom after hearing the first bell and being ready for class before the second bell
- Using a nurses pass only when you really need to
- Telling the truth even when it is difficult



## ELEMENTARY PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

### Inappropriate Playground Behaviors

#### 1. Disrespect

- Physical aggression – unwanted or hurtful physical contact with another student
  - Tripping or kicking another person, hitting or pushing
- Verbal aggression – unwanted or hurtful use of language
  - Yelling at someone or shaming them for messing up
  - Name-calling, verbal threats, or swearing

#### 2. Unsafe Actions

- Demonstrating physical aggression as defined above
- Using the playground equipment inappropriately
  - Standing on, showing rough motion, or jumping off the seesaws or swings
  - Standing on the slide, walking up it, or going down backwards
  - Pushing or pulling on someone who is going across the monkey bars
  - Running on the veranda
- Not maintaining safe bodily actions and movement

#### 3. Irresponsibility

- Eating outside your designated area (except with special permission from a teacher)
- Throwing trash on the ground
- Damaging (writing on, breaking, or ruining) playground equipment or any school property
- Staying quiet or lying when you know you should report that you or someone else did something wrong
- Leaving balls or other classroom equipment (jump ropes, hula-hoops etc.) outside
- Returning late to class after the bell rings
- Asking to use a nurses pass when you do not really have to go

## PARENT VOLUNTEER GUIDE TO RECESS DUTY

Welcome to a very unique ministry! We pray that God will give you wisdom as you choose how to assist, making an important contribution to the care of Hillcrest students. Below are some important things that will help you as you carry out your duty. My cell phone (WhatsApp) number is 814 723 7724. **If for any reason you are not able to come at your designated day and time, please message or call me to let me know as soon as possible.** Also, if while administering your duties you need assistance for an emergency, please feel free to call me or ask any teacher in the staff room.

1. For morning recess, please be on the premises before 10:00 so that you can be in place when the children begin their recess time. You will help us ensure that there is no eating or drinking on the playground or courts.
2. For lunchtimes, Please be on the premises before the 12:00 bell rings so that you can be in place when the children begin their recess time.
3. At 12:00, a bell will ring to allow children who have finished eating their lunch to leave their designated areas and head to play. Those who have not finished, should continue eating. Please see that there is no eating or drinking on the playground or courts. Fourth and fifth grade students who have bought potatoes or suya may eat on the court steps or at the cement structure near the courts. They may not walk around with their food and must clean up after themselves.
4. It's important to have more than 1 adult on duty – one can handle a problem while the other continues watching the kids; the area is large; lots of hiding places etc.
5. For both really good and poor behaviors, use the **playground slip** (will be located in the same folder as the sign-in sheet). The only way this will all work is if it's actually utilized and enforced.
6. We are absolutely giving you permission to be **firm**. Our students need to know they have boundaries out there on the playground even though their physical boundaries feel pretty free!
7. Initial "mishaps" can warrant a warning but if you give a child a warning then they need to know that if it happens a second time they will receive a slip.

## PARENT VOLUNTEER GUIDE TO RECESS DUTY

### **Examples:**

- If two children are quarreling about something///have them take a “time out”. Sit one at the picnic table and another on the steps. Assist them in “working it out” but give them the warning that if it continues you’ll write out slips.
- If you see a child deliberately hit another child///then that would warrant an immediate slip and sending that child to the principal’s office.
- Throwing trash on the ground /// immediate slip
- Going down the slide in a rough manner /// it depends – one instance might warrant a warning, while another might warrant an immediate slip
- A deliberate push from one student to the next /// immediate slip
- Throwing sand /// it depends – a kindergartener who is playing and doesn’t know better vs. a 5<sup>th</sup> grader trying to provoke another student...one might warrant a warning while another might warrant an immediate slip

**\*Any other examples / questions? If so, please see the Elementary Principal/Teacher.**



## CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

When planning an event that requires chaperones or supervisors, the following guidelines are to be followed:

**1.**Chaperones for any event must consist of a minimum of two unrelated adults and meet the appropriate ratio of chaperones to students:

- a.** *All On-campus events: 1:10*
- b.** *Elementary School Off-campus events: 1:5*
- c.** *All events involving water (e.g. swimming): 1:5*

**2.**Chaperones must have completed yearly Student Protection training.

**3.**Chaperones for all events must also meet the appropriate gender ratio of chaperones to students. The ratios of female chaperones to female students and of male chaperones to male students should be the same as the ratios indicated above, plus or minus two.

**4.**Chaperones should consist primarily and predominantly of Hillcrest School staff members.

**5.**Staff members should come from the relevant school for which the event is taking place.

**6.**If parents are needed to help chaperone an event, ministry parents who need to complete service hours should be of first choice.

**7.**All parent chaperones will need to complete the following steps prior to chaperoning an event:

- a.** Attend Student Protection training (a minimum of Training Course B)
- b.** Sign and turn in the Code of Conduct within the Hillcrest School Covenant Agreement
- c.** Complete and turn in the Hillcrest School Casual Staff & Volunteer Information Form

## CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

- 8.** Staff members should avoid chaperoning an event with their spouses, unless given expressed permission by the School Principal and Student Protection Officer.\*
- 9.** The individual in charge of the event will be responsible for selecting approved chaperones, maintaining the appropriate ratio and composition of chaperones, and ensuring that chaperones remain vigilant and complete all necessary tasks throughout the event.

A list of approved chaperones will be maintained by each School Principal. When selecting chaperones for an event who are not staff members, please see the School Principal for a list of additional, approved chaperones. Expressed permission will need to be granted by both the School Principal and Student Protection Officer for chaperones who are neither staff members nor on the approved chaperone list, with additional steps required for approval.



# STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

## Introduction

### **Intent**

Hillcrest School takes seriously its responsibility to protect students and to create a safe and positive environment for them to grow. We believe that it is never acceptable for any child to experience abuse of any kind, in agreement with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 19 and 34. Protection of students is the responsibility of every person within our school community. Hillcrest School, called by God, recognizes:

- each student's unique value.
- our responsibility to shepherd and love those who are precious to God.
- our duty, through good administrative process, to provide protection and justice to all parties.
- our role to help bring healing to those who are vulnerable and have been hurt.

### **Commitment**

As an organization, we are committed to:

- valuing and respecting each individual Hillcrest School student.
- seeking to establish and maintain a safe environment for all students emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- providing regular and adequate Student Protection Training for all staff and volunteers.
- maintaining an established framework and clear procedures for dealing with concerns about possible abuse of or inappropriate behavior towards students.

### **Responsibility**

The Board of Governors gives the Administration the task of managing student protection in fulfillment of Board and Administrative policy. The administration will appoint on an annual basis a Student Protection Officer. Often, this role will be fulfilled by the Guidance Counselor. In the absence of an appointed Student Protection Officer, the Superintendent will fulfil this role.

## STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

### **Screening**

The Board of Governors will screen the Superintendent, School Principals, Financial Administrative Officer, and the Youth Pastor for suitability for employment. The Administration will screen all other staff and volunteers according to their responsibilities. The Administration will screen students and families to determine their capacity for being good community members.

### **Eligibility for Service**

Anyone who has been convicted of any offense related to child abuse is not eligible for service or work with Hillcrest School. Any other criminal convictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Training and Education**

All staff and volunteers will be required to successfully complete annual Student Protection Training according to their job description. All students will receive age-appropriate instruction that will educate them on how to be part of a healthy school community and how to protect themselves and others. All parents will receive information about the Hillcrest School Student Protection Policy through the school handbooks.

### **Code of Conduct**

Hillcrest School expects moral and ethical conduct towards all students in all circumstances. Hillcrest School requires that all staff and volunteers be informed of our Student Protection Policy, complete annual Student Protection Training, and sign a Student Protection Code of Conduct.

Hillcrest School requires that all parents and students be informed of our Student Protection Policy and sign a Student Protection Code of Conduct included in the School Covenant Agreement.

Campus visitors will be informed of Hillcrest School's Student Protection Code of Conduct for Campus Visitors, which will be available to all visitors at the front gate and in the Main Office, and will be informed of the School's right to refuse entry, to remove an individual from the campus, and to deny future entry.

## STANDARD DEFINITIONS OF STUDENT ABUSE AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The following definitions of abuse and inappropriate behavior will be applied to reports involving any Hillcrest School staff, volunteers, parents, guardians, family members, campus visitors, students, and others regarding incidents affecting Hillcrest students that occur on Hillcrest School campus and/or at Hillcrest School sanctioned events, or that have a significant negative impact on the educational environment of Hillcrest School.

Definitions of student-to-student incidents are also included.

It is recognized that local and/or national definitions of student abuse and inappropriate behavior may vary, and that there are cultural, religious, and ethnic differences in student rearing. These definitions have been written with an awareness of the various cultures represented in Hillcrest School.

These standard definitions will be applied to all Hillcrest School staff, volunteers, parents, guardians, family members, campus visitors, students, and others regardless of their individual culture. These standard definitions are designed to help people of differing cultures work together to prevent student abuse and inappropriate behavior.

### **Definition of Abuse**

Student abuse is the maltreatment of any student, often in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power, which harms the health or welfare of a student. This includes sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, as well as grooming.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a student in sexual activity by an adult or student, and can include, among other things, sexual remarks, visual exposure, physical touching of a student, or electronic communication of a sexual nature.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is any act that results in a non-accidental physical injury. Physical discipline by parents of their own student, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable, not done in inappropriate anger, and does not significantly injure the student.

## STANDARD DEFINITIONS OF STUDENT ABUSE AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another to harmful behavior that may result in significant psychological trauma, including isolation, anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It includes acts of commission and acts of omission.

### Grooming

Grooming is a pattern of behavior consistent with drawing a student into a sexual relationship. Indicators of grooming behavior may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Developing an inappropriate special relationship with a student or group of students
- Inappropriately allowing a student to overstep rules
- Crossing boundaries of appropriate behavior with a student, either physically, verbally<sup>1</sup>, or emotionally
- Inappropriately extending a relationship with a student outside of the assigned environment
- Sexualizing the relationship with a student, either physically, verbally<sup>2</sup>, or emotionally
- Isolating the student from other relationships
- Deliberately using strategies to maintain the secrecy of the relationship or part of the relationship

Grooming behavior may be present when some, but not necessarily all, of these indicators are met. The determination of when grooming has occurred will be made at the discretion of the Student Protection Inquiry Team. If the team determines that grooming has occurred, then it will be found that abuse of a student has occurred.

### Definition of Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior is the maltreatment of any student, sometimes in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power, which harms, or has a high probability of harming, the health or welfare of a student, but does not meet the Hillcrest School definition of abuse. This may be of a sexual, physical, or emotional nature. This may also lead to a more specific conclusion of bullying or neglect.

[1],[2] Verbal communication includes, but is not limited to, spoken word, written word, or electronic communication

## STANDARD DEFINITIONS OF STUDENT ABUSE AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

### **Bullying**

Bullying is any action that significantly hurts or threatens another person, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be the use of position to dominate, intimidate, or harass another person or group. Bullying may include any hostile or offensive word or action against another person because of skin color, cultural or religious background, ethnic origin, or other reasons. Bullying is a form of inappropriate behavior, but bullying may meet the definition of abuse if it is severe and/or becomes prolonged.

School Principals will handle reports of bullying and will ensure that the Student Protection Officer is kept fully informed of all reports of bullying.<sup>3</sup> Discipline for bullying will be handled through the school discipline policies. However, if the School Principal and/or Student Protection Officer suspect that the bullying meets the standards of abuse, a Student Protection Inquiry Team will be formed. The determination of when bullying meets the definition of abuse will be made at the discretion of the Student Protection Inquiry Team.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is maltreatment by significant and unreasonable failure to provide a student with basic needs of, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, warmth and shelter, safe living conditions, emotional and physical security and protection, medical and dental care, cleanliness, education, and appropriate supervision reasonably available to the family or caretakers. To be considered neglect, the failure to provide these needs must also cause, or have a high probability of causing, significant harm to the student's health or welfare. Neglect is a form of inappropriate behavior, but neglect may meet the definition of abuse if it is severe and/or becomes prolonged. The determination of when neglect meets the definition of abuse will be made at the discretion of the Student Protection Inquiry Team.

### **Student-to-Student Incidents**

Student-to-student abuse and inappropriate behavior can include all the types of abuse and inappropriate behavior defined above. Cases of a sexual nature between students will be considered on a case-by-case basis with a focus on trying to understand the motivation of the behavior.

[1],[2] Verbal communication includes, but is not limited to, spoken word, written word, or electronic communication

[3] Anti-Bullying Policy (Policy 8.3)

## SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

*\*Summary*

### **Purpose**

To protect the health and well-being of students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to self-harm and suicide.

Hillcrest school recognizes that parents, staff, students, and volunteers play a key role in the prevention of self-harm and suicide. Knowing the warning signs and risk factors will enable all members of the school community to prevent, assess, intervene in and respond to self-harm and suicide. All statements related to self-harm and suicide will be taken seriously and will be investigated.

Hillcrest will provide annual training to educate the Hillcrest community on this important issue.

When a student is identified as being **at risk** for or engaging in self-harm and/or suicide, the student will be brought to the counselor.

### **Procedure for students at risk**

- Staff will supervise the student to ensure their safety, render first aid if necessary, and remove others from the situation if needed.
- Counselor will be made aware of the situation as soon as reasonably possible
- Counselor will contact the family/guardian
- Counselor will gain permission to discuss the student's health with outside care if appropriate.
- Counselor will determine if any after care is needed for other staff and/or students with assistance from other staff members who are trained in after care.

### **Re-Entry Procedure**

For a student's return to school after a self-harm crisis, the counselor and the principal will meet with the student and their parents/guardian to discuss the readiness of the students to return to school. Documentation from a mental health provider that the student is no longer a danger to themselves or to others will be required. A list of potential triggers and warning signs will be provided to staff that interact with the student. There will be periodic check-ins with the student by the counselor to see how the re-entry is going.

## SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

*\*Summary*

### **Parental Notification and Involvement**

In a situation where a student has been deemed to be at risk, parental involvement is key to the healing process. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible in this situation.

***\*A more detailed policy, including definitions and risk factors, is available for parents upon request.***

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

*(Policy: 1.3.9)*

Hillcrest School admits students of any race, color, gender, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Hillcrest School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its policies, financial aid program, athletics, or any other school-administered programs.

As a religious institution, Hillcrest School reserves the right to prefer employees on the basis of religion or Cooperating Body affiliation. Hillcrest School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, color, or national or ethnic origin in its employment of personnel.

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