



ACADEMICS that INSPIRE.
FAITH that LEADS.

Student Handbook

2024-25

Hillcrest Academy
1421 540th St. SW
Kalona, IA 52247
319-656-2073 (phone/fax)
contact@hillcrestravens.org (email)
hillcrestravens.org

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Mission Statement

Hillcrest Academy, in partnership with the family and the church, offers students an academically excellent, Christ-centered education rooted in an Anabaptist perspective. Within a caring community, Hillcrest Academy prepares students for lives of Christian discipleship, peacemaking and service.

The policies and guidelines which govern Hillcrest Academy are set by the *Operating Board* of the school. They are listed on the following pages, and are under the direction of the principal. All questions concerning any material on these pages should be directed to the administration.

Admissions Requirements

Application for admission must be filed with the administration. Any student desiring an education from a Christian perspective is welcome regardless of race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry. Successful completion of the eighth grade is the minimum requirement for admission to the freshman class.

Graduation Requirements

Students are to plan their courses of study to meet the prescribed requirements for graduation from Hillcrest Academy and the *Iowa Department of Education*. Minimum graduation requirements include 210 units.

The minimum course requirements are as follows:

Bible	5 units for each year of attendance
English	40 units*
Mathematics	30 units
Science	30 units
PE	1.25 units for each semester of attendance
Health	5 units
Intro Art/Music	5 units**
Social Studies	30 units
Electives	40 units

Minimum graduation requirements 210 units

* The Applied Writing course does not complete the English requirements.

** Students entering Hillcrest Academy after grade 9 may satisfy the Art/Music requirement by taking one semester of art or music.

The following courses are typically taken in this sequence:

Grade 9

New/Old Testament Survey
English I
Physical Education
Math
Biology
World History
Intro to Art/Music
Health*

Grade 10

New/Old Testament Survey
English II
Physical Education
Math
Science
American History

Grade 11

Church/Anabaptist History
English III
Physical Education
Math**
Science**
Social Science elective

Grade 12

Christian Family Living
English IV
Physical Education
American Government
Personal Finance
Social Science elective***

* Health may also be taken during one's sophomore year.

** The third year of Science or Math may also be taken during one's senior year.

*** The Social Science elective may also be taken during one's junior year.

To receive a diploma, all course requirements must be met prior to graduation. Students who are five (5) units or less short of meeting graduation requirements may participate in graduation exercises. If exceptional circumstances prevent a student from completing the graduation requirements, and the student wishes to participate in graduation ceremonies, he/she may appeal in writing to the Principal. The administration shall determine if the student may participate in graduation exercises.

Transfer Credit

The following criteria applies to homeschool credit toward a Hillcrest Academy diploma.

- Up to two semesters of homeschool credit may be granted provided the student demonstrates proficiency according to Iowa Academic Code IAC 12.5(15), the "local assessment" option. The principal and guidance counselor have sole discretion in credit determinations.
- No more than two semesters of credit shall be granted in any one subject area (e.g., Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Spanish, etc.)
- The satisfactory completion of courses from other schools accredited by the state of Iowa or any other state or country will be accepted as viable transfer credit.
- Only Hillcrest Academy courses or those taught through a Hillcrest Academy proxy, e.g., Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa or Kirkwood, and those transferred in from an accredited high school, count toward GPA. Students must be enrolled as a full-time student for their last four consecutive semesters to be considered for graduation and class rank honors.

Early Graduation

Students desiring early graduation must: 1) apply for early graduation permission through the guidance counselor; 2) prepare a comprehensive plan for their future and indicate how early graduation plays a part of this plan; 3) discuss early graduation in a meeting with the guidance counselor and parents; 4) complete 210 units of credit for graduation.

Individualized Education Program

Hillcrest Academy has a Directed Studies program designed to help students who need extra guidance and/or various forms of assistance to engage fully in academic and social programs. For families that desire an Individual Education Plan, a dual enrollment option is available with Hillcrest Academy and local public schools in consultation with Grant Wood Area Education Agency.

Course Withdrawal Policy

During the first two weeks of a new semester, a student may make schedule changes with no penalty. From the third week on, a student may withdraw from a course under the following conditions:

- If the student, teacher and guidance counselor agree to the withdrawal, a 'W' or the current grade for that grading period will be recorded on the grade card.
- A student who drops a course during the semester without teacher and guidance counselor approval will receive an automatic 'F' grade for the semester.

Grading

Grades are symbols of achievement; they are teachers' professional judgment of students' work. The following scale is to be used for grades:

A+ (97-100)	A (93-96)	A- (90-92)
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)
C+ (77-79)	C (73-76)	C- (70-72)
D+ (67-69)	D (63-66)	D- 60-62
F 59 or below		

Grade reports are distributed every nine weeks. Parents and students may access grades at any time by logging on to Powerschool at hillcrest.powerschool.com/public/home.html. A login and password is given out at registration or by contacting the office. Progress reports for students who are struggling are emailed to the parents at the midpoint of each quarter. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year to evaluate students' progress..

Honor rolls are posted each quarter. First honor roll includes all students with 3.5 - 4.0 grade point averages. Second honor roll includes students with 3.2 - 3.499 grade point averages. Honor rolls and class ranks are computed for students who are half-time or more and are earning a diploma.

Grade points are awarded as follows:*

A (4.00)	A- (3.67)	B+ (3.33)	B (3.00)	B- (2.67)	C+ (2.33)
C (2.00)	C- (1.67)	D+ (1.33)	D (1.00)	D- (0.67)	F (0.00)

* For each *Advanced Placement* course, an additional 0.5 value will be added to the grade-point. The .5 boost also applies to concurrent courses through Kirkwood Community College and to the Personal Finance course if receiving credit through the University of Northern Iowa.

Incomplete Assignments:

Students unable to turn in assignments on time due to absences will be granted the same number of days to make up the assignment as days missed unless otherwise specified by the teacher. Incompletes will be allowed only with the approval of the teacher and guidance counselor.

Academic Honors Policy

Hillcrest Academy recognizes students who distinguish themselves academically by performing at a high level while taking a rigorous academic course load. Students who complete the following academic program with grades of B or higher in each course will receive the honors distinction at graduation:

- 4 years of language arts
- 4 years of mathematics*
- 3 years or more of science

- 3 years or more of social studies
- 2 years or more of the same foreign language
- * High school mathematics courses (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Statistics, Pre-Calculus) completed prior to 9th-grade may be counted toward the fulfillment of the mathematics requirement.

Academic/Music Letter Policy

An *Academic Letter* and/or a *Music Letter* will be awarded at the Academic and Fine Arts Awards Night, with a letter and pin given for the first year of eligibility. A pin will be given in each succeeding year. The requirements to earn such a letter are as follows:

Academic Letter

- 3.5 GPA for both first semester and third quarter grades
- Full-time students must take a minimum of 28.75 credits per semester

Music Letter

- Instructor approval
- Must participate in Choir or Symphonic Band for four years, or participate in Choir or Symphonic Band for two full years *and* two of the following music activities for the year awarded:

Praise Band	Senior Recital	Special teacher-nominated ensemble
School Musical	Jazz Ensemble	Pep Band
Chamber Singers	State Music Event (All-State audition, etc.)	

National Honor Society

To be eligible for induction into this organization, a student must be classified as a senior, junior or sophomore, and must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.3 on a standard 4.0 scale. In addition, potential members must meet high standards of leadership, service and character.

- *Leadership*-based on effective leadership in community or school activities
- *Service*-must have been active in projects at Hillcrest Academy and the larger community
- *Character*-measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics and cooperation with both students and faculty at Hillcrest Academy, as well as the larger community

A student wishing to be considered will be asked to complete a *Student Activity Information Form*, which assists the faculty council in the evaluation process. The five-member council then votes on whether the leadership, service and character traits have been shown by the candidate. To be inducted, a student must have three (3) positive votes in each category. The student is expected to maintain the high standards in each of the categories on which each of his/her selection was originally based. The selection process for inductees begins in February, with induction during the *Academic and Fine Arts Awards Night* in the spring.

Homeschooled students who are enrolled part-time at Hillcrest Academy may be eligible for consideration for NHS membership if they meet all other eligibility requirements and take at least 15 credits (including at least one core course) at Hillcrest per semester. Core courses include English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Foreign Language.

International exchange students may be considered for NHS membership if eligibility requirements are met. Third quarter grades may be used, if needed to make the best determination possible.

Extracurricular Activities

All students are encouraged to take part in activities sponsored by the school: FFA, dramas/musicals, athletics, music, journalism, Y-Co (student government), Compassion Club, etc.

Students are offered a wide range of interscholastic sports: cross country, volleyball, basketball, golf, track and softball for girls; and cross country, soccer, basketball, golf, track and baseball for boys.

Sharing programs with area schools are also options: sharing programs include dance (Highland); football (Williamsburg); girls soccer (Mid-Prairie); swimming (Iowa City West); wrestling (Mid-Prairie) and tennis (Iowa City West). We also offer the opportunity for students in grades 6-12 to participate in Archery.

The music department offers courses in vocal and instrumental music. Students may become involved in small ensembles, Concert Choir, Touring Choir and/or Symphonic Band.

Students may gain experience in writing and publishing their own compositions by working on the yearbook, *The Reverie*.

Y-Co works to promote harmony and communication throughout the school. Members plan school social activities and function as a liaison between the student body and the faculty and administration. Officers and class representatives are elected each year.

Extracurricular Eligibility

A student must maintain passing grades in all classes in order to participate in interscholastic athletics, pep band, and school dramas/musicals. A student who receives a failing grade at the end of a nine-week grading period will be ineligible for 10 calendar days and until the grade in the subject failed is brought up to passing. A student who fails a course which does not continue into the next quarter must be passing all subjects at the end of 10 days of the next quarter or the student will remain ineligible for another 10 day period (and subsequent 10 day periods until the student is passing all classes).

A student who receives a failing grade at the end of the semester will be ineligible for 20 calendar days and until the grade in the subject failed is brought up to passing. If a student continues to fail a course at the end of 20 calendar days, he/she will remain ineligible for a 10 day period (and subsequent 10 day periods until the student is passing all classes). The period of ineligibility for failing a class at the quarter begins the day after grades are released.

The ineligibility period for a student failing a class for the semester begins the day after grades are released. If a student is not involved in interscholastic athletics when semester grades are released, the period of ineligibility begins the first day competition legally begins for the next sport in which the student participates. If a student is participating in drama and athletics, they must serve the required period of ineligibility for both activities. An ineligible student may be allowed to practice with the team or cast for up to 20 calendar days.

If a student receives an incomplete due to illness, the student will be granted the same number of days to make up the assignment as days missed, unless otherwise specified by the teacher (upon consultation with the principal and guidance counselor). The student will not be penalized unless the arrangement is not honored, in which case the student will be ineligible.

Students are to be in school at least one-half day to participate in an extracurricular practice or contest/performance. Any exceptions need to be made by the principal in consultation with the guidance counselor and activities director.

Participation in extracurricular activities is considered a privilege. Use or possession of tobacco, nicotine, alcohol or any other controlled substances by students involved in extracurricular activities is prohibited. Possession is considered to exist if a student: a) is aware of the presence of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or any other controlled substance, and b) is in the proximity or has access to the tobacco, nicotine, alcohol or any other controlled substances, and c) fails to remove himself/herself from the premises immediately.

The use and possession of tobacco, nicotine, alcohol, or any other controlled substances, as well as participation or involvement in other activities deemed inappropriate by the coach, sponsor or the administration will result in a minimum suspension of two events. A **second offense** will result in a minimum suspension for the remainder of the current season or activity if the student is involved in a sport or activity at the time the offense is discovered; plus the next athletic season and activity if the discovered offense is in the last part of the season. If the student is not in a sport or activity at the time the offense is discovered, the student will be ineligible for the next season and/or activity. The length of the suspension is not to exceed 365 days. A **third offense** and any subsequent offense will result in suspension from participation in all extracurricular activities for one year (365 days) from the date of the infraction.

Students involved with alcohol, tobacco, nicotine and any other controlled substances who have not been found in violation of this policy but who willingly seek help and follow through with corrective actions may be exempt from the sanctions of this policy, at the discretion of Hillcrest Academy administration. Hillcrest Academy reserves the right to take additional disciplinary action, and to apply more or less severe penalties than the ones described in these guidelines, at its discretion.

Student Conduct Code

As a faith-based school rooted in the Anabaptist tradition, students must be willing to conduct themselves in a way that is compatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Each student is encouraged to develop honest, respectful and caring relationships with other students, faculty, parents and people in the community. Discourse on personal faith issues should be conducted in a spirit of humility that may lead to a deeper understanding of one another.

Hillcrest Academy is committed to using restorative discipline in which counsel, support and encouragement are given to those students who may develop a problem and who sincerely want to overcome the problem. Students are asked to abstain from behavior that is harmful to themselves and to others. The use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, any other controlled substances, profanity, dishonesty and malicious and disrespectful conduct is unacceptable behavior.

Students who continue to engage in behavior that disrupts the educational mission of the school may face permanent expulsion.

Academic Integrity¹

Integrity is an essential component of the mission and goals of Hillcrest Academy, including homework and project completion, test taking, and research and writing practices.

1. Expected behaviors

- a. Homework and project completion
- b. It is expected that each student will carefully complete his or her own homework and projects in the manner directed by the teacher.
- c. Students are not to use any method of cheating, such as copying others' work, sharing work for others to copy, having someone else complete the work, or inappropriately using technology to complete work.

2. Test taking

- a. It is expected that each student will carefully complete all tests and assessments to the best of his or her ability. This includes careful study and preparation, and focused attention on one's own work during the test.
- b. Students are not to use any method of cheating, such as obtaining unauthorized information about the test, bringing unauthorized materials to the test period, or looking at other students' materials.

3. Research techniques and writing practices

- a. It is expected that each student will carefully research, take notes, and present his or her findings in a way that respects the original authors and copyrights.
- b. Students must give credit for:
 - i. another person's idea, opinion, or theory
 - ii. any facts, statistics, graphs, pictures or drawings that are not 'common knowledge'
 - iii. quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words
 - iv. a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words

4. Acceptable Use of Technology

- a. Technology will be used for academic purposes only within the school's mission, curriculum, and the letter and intent of the board policy including the Technology Respectful Use Policy.

Plagiarism²

Since the arrival of personal computers, the internet, and the "cut and paste" feature, issues of plagiarism have become more common. Students are not to use any form of plagiarism.

Direct Plagiarism: This is the direct, intentional copying of material from a source without giving credit. This ranges from copying short sections of text to copying whole papers. This also includes purchasing papers from "Paper Mills," using another student's paper, or having someone else write the required paper. This is the most serious level of plagiarism.

¹ Used with permission from "Academic Integrity." *Dock Mennonite Academy*.
<https://www.dock.org/campus-life/expectations-of-students/academic-integrity>.

² Used with permission from "Academic Integrity." *Dock Mennonite Academy*.
<https://www.dock.org/campus-life/expectations-of-students/academic-integrity>.

Sloppy Citation: This involves any paper with inaccurate or incomplete citations in the text or on the Works Cited page. This includes the use of phrases or a few lines of text without giving proper credit.

Patchwork Writing: Patchwork writing involves patching together someone else's ideas into a paragraph. This includes their organization, order of information, ideas, phrases, and/or sentences. Merely changing a few words around is not considered adequate; it is still essential to give credit to the source. Patchwork writing also lacks the synthesis of source materials, including one's own ideas, into the paragraph.

Resources for Avoiding Plagiarism:

1. The course teacher
2. Any English teacher
3. Web resources
4. Library

Consequences for Violations of Academic Integrity Policy

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be reported to the Principal. Consequences will be handled by the classroom teacher and administrator in a manner that values integrity, accountability, and education. Possible consequences include, but are not limited to:

1. Reduction in credit, if the student is given the opportunity to redo the assignment.
2. A failing grade or a zero for the assignment.
3. A failing grade for the course.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Hillcrest Academy is committed to providing all students, employees, and volunteers with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and/or harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed.

Bullying and/or harassment of or by students, employees, and volunteers is against federal, state, and local policy and is not tolerated by the Board.

Accordingly, school employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in bullying or harassing behavior while on school property, while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles, while attending or participating in school-sponsored or sanctioned activities, and while away from school grounds if the conduct materially interferes with the orderly operation of the educational environment or is likely to do so.

Complaints may be filed with the Principal or Principal's designee pursuant to the regulation accompanying this policy. Complaints will be investigated within a reasonable time frame.

A school employee, volunteer, or student, or a student's parent or guardian who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment, in compliance with the procedures in the regulation, to the appropriate school official designated by the Principal, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to participation in any administrative or judicial proceeding resulting from or relating to the report.

Retaliation Prohibited

Individuals who knowingly file false bullying or harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation may be subject to discipline by appropriate measures. Any student found

to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, removal from service and exclusion from school grounds.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the defined words shall have the following meaning:

- “Electronic” means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optic cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.
- “Harassment” and “bullying” mean any repeated or potentially repeated electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or other ongoing conduct toward an individual based on any trait or characteristic of the individual which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
 - (1) Places the individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual’s person or property.
 - (2) Has a substantial detrimental effect on the individual’s physical or mental health.
 - (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the individual’s academic or career performance. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the individual’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- “Trait or characteristic of the individual” includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.
- “Volunteer” means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

Alcohol and Controlled Substance Use Policy

The possession, use, delivery, transfer, or sale of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine (e-cigarettes), or any other controlled substances while on school property, including school owned and operated vehicles, or while attending any school function is expressly forbidden. We expect, furthermore, that students will not purchase, supply, or use harmful or illegal substances at any time during their years at Hillcrest Academy. Any student in violation of this policy shall be suspended and/or expelled from school and reported to their parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency for possible legal action.

For any student arrested in possession of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine or any other controlled substance, driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, or found with/ admitting use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine or any other controlled substance while enrolled at Hillcrest Academy, the principal is authorized to take any or all of the following actions:

- impose an in-school suspension of one (1) day
- require the student to meet with a counselor from an approved treatment center and participate in a substance abuse evaluation at the expense of the student
- notify the parents

For any student involved in a second offense, the principal is authorized to:

- impose an in-school suspension of three (3) days
- require participation in a substance abuse program for the number of sessions recommended
- require student participation in a meeting with the principal and parents to discuss the student's future at Hillcrest Academy

For any student involved in a third offense, the principal is authorized to:

- impose a suspension of five (5) days (in or out of school)
- require participation in a substance abuse program for the number of sessions recommended
- require student participation in a meeting with the principal and parents to discuss the student's future at Hillcrest Academy

Possession is considered to exist if a student: a) is aware of the presence of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine or any other controlled substance; b) is in the proximity or has access to alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or any other controlled substances; and c) fails to remove him/herself from the premises immediately.

School officials will report to the local sheriff's office any use or possession of alcohol or any other controlled substances on school premises as required by law. Hillcrest Academy reserves the right to use law enforcement, including drug dogs, to check the school and vehicles on the school grounds for illegal substances.

Weapons-Free School

Any student who brings a weapon to Hillcrest Academy or knowingly possesses a weapon at Hillcrest Academy will be suspended for a period of not less than one year (the principal may modify the expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis). The sheriff's office will be notified if a student brings a weapon to school.

Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device Policy (draft Summer 2024)

Technology will be utilized in instruction and curriculum when it is appropriate and enhances the student's learning. Students will receive instruction about appropriate and safe use of technology. In order to provide a focused, effective and healthy learning environment, phones, smart watches, or other personal electronic devices, with the exception of laptops and chromebooks, will not be accessible to students during the school day. Medical exceptions may be requested.

Students will turn in their phones and any other personal electronic devices they have when they arrive at homeroom at the beginning of the school day. The devices should be off or completely silenced. The devices will be stored in the main office for the day. Students will return to their homeroom at the end of the day to pick up their phone and personal electronic devices. **Any updates to this plan will be shared as needed, through the school year.*

If a student is found to be violating these expectations by having a phone or other personal electronic device with them during the school day, it will be confiscated and taken to the office to be stored for the remainder of the day. A parent or guardian will be required to come pick up the phone/device. Multiple violations may result in a conference with the student and parents/guardians as well as additional consequences as appropriate.

Hall Conduct

The hallway is to be treated as an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately in these spaces. Running, excessive noise, and jumping out/shouting at others in an effort to try and startle them are to be avoided. Students may be verbally warned, and if the behavior continues, will be referred to Administration. Students should not slide down the banister/railing of any stairs.

Passes

Students shall carry a pass if late to class for an excused reason or if dismissed from class/study hall to go to another area of the building. It is the responsibility of the student to ask for a pass. Teachers shall assist if it's obvious the student was held back. Students not carrying a pass may be sent back to their original room or counted as tardy.

Lockers

All Hillcrest Academy students will be assigned a locker at the start of the school year, or on the student's first day. Students are responsible for the condition of their locker and, therefore, we ask that they be kept clean. Lockers may be decorated with school appropriate themes, but we ask that stickers not be used directly on the locker. Lockers are the property of Hillcrest Academy and therefore Hillcrest Academy reserves the right to have periodic unannounced inspections to check for cleanliness, vandalism, and proper use. If any illegal item is discovered during inspection, it will be immediately turned over to the proper authorities.

Practice Room Policy

The practice rooms are to be used appropriately. Students taking private lessons have the first priority for using these rooms. Students who wish to use a practice room must get permission from the study hall supervisor EACH TIME they use the room. Students are responsible to ask for a note from their private teacher to give to the study hall monitor to keep on file for the semester. Students will get a new permission slip for each semester. Students not taking private lessons who wish to use the practice rooms must get a special permission slip from the music instructor.

No other students should be in the practice room unless a signed permission slip is granted; i.e., accompanist. Students are expected to clean up after themselves, and are asked to pick up and discard any trash. NO FOOD OR DRINK is allowed in the practice room. Students shall remove all personal possessions and turn off lights when leaving. Students shall inform their music instructor at the beginning of their session if there are any concerns regarding the condition of the practice room.

Attendance Policy

Hillcrest Academy maintains that attendance and punctuality are an essential part of any school and are important qualities for student success. In order for learning to take place, students must be in class to participate in discussions and interact with teachers and students. Students are responsible to follow prescribed procedures regarding absences and tardiness. Exceptions to any of the following procedures must be cleared with the principal.

Parents shall notify Hillcrest Academy concerning the reason for a student's absence. Notification should be made on the day of the absence or before, if the absence is known ahead of time. Notifications can be made via a phone call to the main office or email sent to office staff.

Tardiness

Tardiness to school and class periods is a concern, as it impacts the learning for all students and teachers. Any student who arrives late to school without parental notification, or to class without a proper pass, will be marked as unexcused tardy.

- Students are given two unexcused tardies without penalty per quarter.
- A third unexcused tardy will result in a before or after school detention to be served on a designated day (Thursdays at 7:15 AM, or on Wednesday at 3:15 PM, for example).
- Parents will be notified via email of the third tardy, and any subsequent tardies.
- All tardies return to zero at the start of the next quarter.

Excused Absences

Student absences will be excused for the following reasons, provided there is parental notification to the school:

- personal illness
- medical appointments (schedule outside of school when possible)
- bereavement
- pre-arranged absences for family trips/activities
- college visits approved by the guidance office and cleared with the front office (arrangements must be made one week in advance; exceptions determined at the discretion of the school counselor)
- school-sponsored trips
- administrative-approved absences

Unexcused Absence/Skipping Class

Students are expected to be in school, on time, for the entire day. In the event that a student does not arrive, and a parent does not inform the school of the absence, they will be marked as Unexcused. If a student is more than 20 minutes late to class without a pass, they will be marked as an Unexcused Absence. The accumulation of two or more Unexcused Absences per quarter will result in either a before or after school detention. After a third Unexcused Absence, a parent meeting will take place with Administration. Students who choose not to attend their scheduled class and do not have a valid note/excuse will be marked as an Unexcused Absence.

Family Vacations

We strongly encourage families to plan their vacations outside of school time, but we are supportive of family vacations and try to work with family plans. Students going on vacation with their families must receive permission at least one (1) week in advance by written request. Hillcrest Academy may excuse students' friends to accompany that family *provided all parents involved send written permission requests at least one (1) week in advance.*

Students are responsible to make sure all homework, tests and projects are up to date in each course by the beginning of the third day after returning from a vacation. Teachers/administrators reserve the right to make amendments by requiring some work to be completed in advance of the vacation. If the student does not take the initiative to get assignments and do the work, he/she will face the usual penalty for undone homework/projects/tests.

Leaving Campus

To leave campus during the school day, students must have parental permission verified by the office. Students are expected to sign in and out at the front office.

Sick Room

Students needing to use the sick room are to report to the office both before and after using the sick room. Students shall not have electronic devices in the sick room.

Student Driving/Parking Policy

Driving and parking on campus is a privilege. Students who abuse it by driving recklessly may lose the privilege. Students may be fined up to \$25 per incident for speeding or reckless driving. Teachers and administrators are given the authority to determine if driving is unsafe. Reckless driving on school grounds or driving reported by community persons for students going or coming from school will result in parent notification.

Students should park vehicles in designated areas in an appropriate manner. Students may be fined up to \$5 per incidence for parking inappropriately.

School Property

Care and respect should be shown towards school property (buildings, grounds, buses, vans). Any damage to school property is to be reported to the office at once by the person responsible. Any student who damages or destroys school property due to carelessness or recklessness will be expected to make a payment in the amount of loss to the school for any repair or replacement. Any student who willfully vandalizes school property, or who illegally enters the school will face disciplinary action.

School Counseling Office

Each year, freshmen, sophomores and juniors take the *Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)*. Tests for vocational preference are available to help students make vocational decisions. The *Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)*, available for juniors and interested underclassmen, is administered each year.

Students are encouraged to use the school counselor's office for the following:

- receive help in selecting courses
- discuss reasons for not getting along satisfactorily in a subject
- receive help in improving study habits
- check progress toward graduation requirements
- discuss future career plans
- plan for college admission
- discuss capabilities as directed by standardized test results
- ask for remedial or tutorial help
- receive help in applying for college financial aid
- apply for taking college entrance tests
- discuss problems
- seek counsel on spiritual concerns

Student Dress Code

The goals of the student dress expectations are to create a healthy educational atmosphere and to teach self care and care for others. As a Christian school we want to teach modesty and avoid divisive or inappropriate messaging. The following are requirements:

Modesty

- Chest, stomach, shoulders, back, waist, and bottom must be covered whether standing, sitting, stretching, bending over, etc (e.g., tank tops or crop tops may not be worn).
- Dresses and skirts must reach at least mid thigh.
- Undergarments must not be visible when standing, sitting, stretching, or bending over, etc, including when seated in a dress or skirt.
- Shorts must have a minimum inseam of 5 inches or reach at least mid thigh.
- Students may not wear torn or ragged clothing, sleepwear, or ripped/holey pants. Slightly distressed jeans or shorts may be worn.
- If leggings are worn, the top must be long enough to completely cover the bottom while standing, sitting, stretching, or bending over etc.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.

Messaging

- Clothing with inappropriate or divisive messaging may not be worn (e.g., clothing that promotes illegal substances or behaviors, violence, the military, political agendas, etc).
- Digitized/military style camouflage is not permitted.

Accessories

- Hats, hoods, sunglasses, and other similar items may not be worn without administrator approval.
- Earbuds and headphones are only allowed by teacher permission in their classroom, otherwise they are not allowed during school hours.

Exceptions to any of the above requirements need to be approved by the administration.

Consequences per semester

- 1st offense: Homeroom teacher will communicate with student, parent/guardian, and office.
- 2nd offense: \$5 fine paid to the office as a donation to Compassion Club. Administration will communicate with student and parent/guardian.
- 3rd and subsequent offenses: \$10 fine paid to the office as a donation to Compassion Club and detention. Communication with student and parent. Additional consequences may apply at the discretion of the administration.

For all offenses students may be required to replace, remove, or cover clothing item(s) in violation of dress code. T-shirts and sweatpants will be made available by the office.

**Examples of Student Dress Code Requirements are on the following page.*

Dresses, and skirts must reach at least mid thigh.



Shorts must have a minimum inseam of 5 inches or reach at least mid thigh.



Clothing should not be torn or ragged, sleepwear, or ripped/holey pants. Slightly distressed jeans or shorts may be worn.



If leggings are worn, the top must be long enough to completely cover your bottom while standing, sitting, stretching, or bending over.



Digitized (military style) camouflage is not permitted.



Student Records

Hillcrest Academy maintains records on each student in order to facilitate the instruction, guidance and educational progress of the student. The records contain information about the student and his/her education and may include, but are not limited to, the following types of records: identification data, attendance data, record of achievement, family background data, aptitude tests, educational and vocational plans, honors and activities, discipline data, objective counselor or teacher ratings and observations and external agency reports. The principal and school counselor are primarily responsible for the maintenance of students' records. Other office personnel have access to records as needs dictate.

The following persons, agencies and organizations may have restricted access to student records without prior written consent of the parent or student over the age of 18 years:

- school officials, teachers and *Area Education Association* (AEA) personnel with a legitimate educational interest
- officials of other schools in which the student proposes to enroll
- representatives of state/local government when auditing/evaluating federal education programs
- officials connected with a student's financial aid applications
- organizations which process and evaluate standardized tests
- accrediting organizations for accreditation purposes
- parents of dependent children, regardless of the child's age
- appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency

All other access to records shall only be upon written consent, a court order or legally issued subpoena.

Disabled students age 18 and over and parents of disabled students under age 18 will be informed when personally identifiable information in the records is no longer needed to provide educational services, and before the information is destroyed.

Students age 18 and over and parents of students under age 18 may exercise the right to review educational records of the student; obtain copies of the records; write a response to material in the record; challenge the content of the record on grounds of inappropriateness, inaccuracy or an invasion of privacy; or have the records explained.

The procedure to be followed in exercising any of the rights under school policies or rules may be obtained from the persons responsible for maintaining student records. The principal may release the following types of information to the public, where appropriate, keeping in mind the privacy of the student and the student's family and the totality of the surrounding circumstances: name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent school or institution attended by the student and other similar information.

To prevent the public release of such information, a parent must file a written objection with one of the aforementioned persons responsible for maintaining student records.

Students and parents may file complaints with the *Department of Education* concerning alleged failures of the school district to comply with federal legislation dealing with student records. Correspondence should be addressed to:

*The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office
Department of Education, Switzer Building
330 C St. SW
Washington, DC 21201*

Boarding Students

Students from outside the community unable to commute may contact the school for assistance in finding a boarding home. Such students reside with area families and are expected to become actively involved in the lives of the host family. Host parents assume the responsibility of serving as substitute parents while the boarding students are in the Hillcrest Academy community. There are boarding costs involved in such arrangements, either arranged directly with the host family or at an established fee determined by Hillcrest Academy.

Financial Information

The finance plan for Hillcrest Academy reflects a Mennonite tradition of Christian community. Income from student entry fees (see *Fees*) covers only a portion of the budgeted income. The remainder is received from individual contributions, the *Congregational Support Plan (CSP)* and fund-raising events. Most students have a portion of the cost of education subsidized. Financial assistance applications are available from the school.

Fees

Each family is to make arrangements with the school office for the payment of school fees, including the entry fee. Fees may be paid in full by September 15, or on a semester or monthly payment plan. Accounts must be paid in full before a diploma is granted. Transcripts will be issued only after full payment of all bills.

Announcements

Announcements are made twice each day (morning and afternoon) by the teacher reading from PowerSchool. Groups wishing to make announcements are to submit them in writing to the office by 8:30 am and 2:30 pm. Student groups must have the approval of a sponsor.

Lunch

A hot lunch is available every day. Lunch tickets may be purchased in the office for 20 days, one semester or the entire school year.

Chapel

Chapel is considered an integral component to the educational mission of the school. As such, it is expected that students attend. The chapel period is approximately 20 minutes. A faculty-supervised student chapel committee develops most of the chapel program. Students are selected for the chapel committee through an application process.

Chapel Conduct

It is expected that students engage with the presenters during chapel to show respect and interest in the message that is being shared. Students are expected to sit in their assigned rows, unless otherwise noted, and show appropriate body language (i.e., sitting up straight, not slouching). Chapel is a device-free zone, unless specifically stated otherwise. The Hillcrest Academy Chapel Committee and Administration reserve the right to create appropriate rules for chapel, including asking students to place devices in phone pockets or on the stage at the onset of chapel.

Library

The library is provided as a quiet place to study. Hours are 8:00 am - 3:15 pm Monday-Friday, depending on the availability of faculty. Many resource materials are available for student use. Proper checkout procedures must be used when borrowing books.

Communication

The school is serviced by two phone lines (both 319-656-2073); a fax machine (319-656-2073); and an email address of contact@hillcrestravens.org. The school's website is hillcrestravens.org where alerts will be posted along with on our social media accounts, @hillcrestravens on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Communication to the office from the family should be through the office phone (319-656-2073) or office email (office@hillcrestravens.org). In the case of an emergency, if a student can't be reached on their personal device, they will be notified by the office.

Junior/Senior Banquet

The Junior/Senior Banquet takes place in the spring each year. Banquet is our school's version of prom. Juniors are in charge of planning the banquet in regards to theme, location, food and entertainment. Parents are asked to help with set up and take down. Juniors and seniors dress up to share an elegant meal together and participate in some form of entertainment. Afterwards, they attend the After Banquet Party planned and hosted by senior parents. It is also Hillcrest tradition for sophomore students to serve at Banquet. This is a way to honor the juniors and seniors, but can also be a fun bonding experience for the sophomore class.

Banquet Guidelines:

- Hillcrest students in attendance must be juniors or seniors.
- After party guests may be underclassmen (sophs or frosh) from Hillcrest Academy or other high schools if in an extended dating relationship with a junior/senior (i.e 6 months).
- Juniors and seniors from other high schools may attend as a guest with the form signed.
- Persons attending as a guest must be under age 21.

Suggested:

- Juniors and seniors are encouraged to invite someone from within Hillcrest to attend the banquet. We do understand that sometimes students want to invite outside guests. A permission form must be signed by the guest's principal and Hillcrest student's parent.

Fire/Tornado Drills

Periodic unannounced fire and tornado drills are held during the year. Instructions are posted in each classroom. In the event of a fire or fire drill, students must exit the building quickly, quietly and in single file. In the event of a tornado or tornado drill, students are to move to designated areas of each building.

School Closings

Notices of emergency closings or delayed starts due to weather conditions are broadcast via the following media:

- 1) Text message via Hillcrest Academy's Remind app
- 2) Hillcrest Facebook page: @hillcrestravens
- 3) Hillcrest Academy website: hillcrestravens.org
- 4) Radio station KCII (AM-1380, FM-106.1)
- 5) Television station KCRG (Channel 9)

Please note that we will generally follow Mid-Prairie School District when it comes to weather-related delays or closings, though there may be exceptions.

Transportation

The Mid-Prairie school system provides busing for students living within the district. Hillcrest Academy also provides shuttle service to Iowa City and Washington for a fee and can fill up quickly. Families are expected to arrange their own transportation.

Asbestos Management Plan

Hillcrest Academy is inspected regularly for asbestos according to the *Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act*. An asbestos management plan is available in the custodian's office for examination by parents or students at any time. Please contact the school office if interested in seeing the plan.

Student Abuse Investigators

The *Operating Board* has appointed school counselor (**Tom Carey**), as investigator; and **Marcus Miller** as alternate investigator of student abuse cases. Any allegation of abuse of students by school employees should be reported to one of these persons at 319-656-2073.

Mandatory Reporting

Any person meeting the criteria of a mandatory reporter is required to make an oral report of the child abuse to DHS within 24 hours of becoming aware of the abusive incident and make a written report to DHS within 48 hours following the oral report.

Anti-Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of Hillcrest Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, socioeconomic status or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs and activities as required by Iowa Code.

Handling of Grievances

It is recognized that from time to time concerns, disagreements, and/or misunderstandings (collectively, grievances) may arise that involve employees, including the principal, and patrons. An honest attempt shall be made by the parties to settle the grievance before involving the Board. A formal grievance policy can be made available upon request from Principal Dwight Gingerich or Board President Allison Goertz.

Appendix A - Technology Policies & Forms

Technology Respectful Use Policy

The following policy is intended to cover all electronic accounts for students, those issued by Hillcrest Academy (email) and non-Hillcrest Academy accounts such as email/Facebook/Twitter.

Respect Yourself. I will show respect for myself through my actions. I will consider with care the information and images that I post online. I will not visit or share information about sites that are degrading, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate.

Protect Yourself. I will ensure that the information I post online will not put myself at risk. I will report any inappropriate behavior directed at me and will protect passwords, accounts and resources.

Respect Others. I will show respect to others. I will not flame, troll, bully, harass or stalk other people. I will not access, or attempt to access, or otherwise misuse other people's accounts.

Protect Others. I will protect others by reporting abuse and by not creating or forwarding inappropriate or unwanted materials or communications.

Respect our School. I will respect computers and other equipment entrusted to me and protect them from damage or loss. I will follow the rules that have been established at our school whether or not I agree with them.

Protect our school. I will protect school equipment, networks and property from damage. I promise to report vandalism if I witness or hear of it.

Act with Integrity. I will cite sources for media and information that I use. I will protect intellectual property by purchasing, licensing and registering software, music, movies and other media and will not distribute these in a manner that violates their licenses.

Consequences for violations. Violations of this policy will result in consequences ranging from the restriction or loss of network privileges to formal disciplinary procedures as outlined in the student handbook.

Student Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Website Permission Form

In the process of publicizing happenings and events at Hillcrest Academy, permission is granted to use

_____ my name

_____ pictures of me

On the Hillcrest Academy website or social media channels from the date stated below until I notify you in writing that I do not want my name and/or pictures to be used.

Name of Student (printed)

Parent or Guardian (signed)

Date

One to One Technology Use Agreement Student Responsible Use Policy

Hillcrest Academy may provide and assign students a device for use both at school and at home as a means to promote achievement and provide flexible learning opportunities. This policy provides guidelines and information about expectations for students and families who are being issued these one-to-one (1:1) computing devices. Additional rules may be added as necessary and will become a part of this policy.

Our expectation and belief is that students will responsibly use district technology and that they understand the appropriate and acceptable use of both the technology and district network resources. We also expect that students will make a good faith effort to keep their district-issued devices safe, secure and in good working order. Our policies and procedures include the following specific responsibilities and restrictions.

RESPONSIBILITIES *The student will:*

1. Adhere to these guidelines each time the device is used at home and school.
2. **Charge their 1:1 device at home nightly, bringing it to school each day with a full charge. Middle school students shall leave their 1:1 device at school.**
3. Use appropriate language in all communications refraining from use of profanity, obscenity and offensive or inflammatory speech. Cyber bullying, including personal attacks or threats toward anyone made while using either the district owned or personally owned technology, is to be reported to responsible school personnel. Communication should be conducted in a responsible and ethical manner.
4. Respect the Internet filtering and security measures included on the device. All students on 1:1 computing devices are configured so that the Internet content is filtered both when the student is at school and when on any other public or private network.
5. Only use technology for school-related purposes during the instructional day while refraining from use related to commercial or political purposes.
6. Follow copyright laws and fair use guidelines and only download or import music, video or other content that students are authorized or legally permitted to reproduce or use for school related work.
7. Make available for inspection by an administrator or teacher any messages or files sent or received to or from any Internet location using district technology. Files stored and information accessed, downloaded or transferred on district-owned technology are not private insofar as they may be viewed, monitored, or archived by the district at any time.
8. Transport computer in sleep mode, with screen closed, and in their protective case.
9. Provide their own headphones and/or ear buds as needed for school related work.
10. Only clean the screen with a soft, dry microfiber cloth or anti-static cloth.
11. Return (including the charger) the device and protective shell upon transferring out of school or at the end of the year.

RESTRICTIONS *The student will not:*

1. Mark, deface or place stickers on the device. School issued cases may also not be personalized.
2. Reveal or post identifying personal information, files or communications to unknown persons through email or other means through the Internet.
3. Attempt to override, bypass, or otherwise change the Internet filtering software, device settings or network configurations.
4. Attempt access to networks and other technologies beyond their authorized access. This includes attempts to use another person's account and/or password or access secured wireless networks.
5. Share passwords or attempt to discover passwords. Sharing a password is not permitted and could make you subject to disciplinary action and liable for the actions of others if problems arise with unauthorized use.
6. Download and/or install any programs, files or games from the internet or other sources onto any district-owned technology. This includes the intentional introduction of computer viruses and other malicious software.
7. Tamper with computer hardware or software, attempt unauthorized entry into computers, and/or vandalize or destroy the computer or computer files. Intentional or negligent damage to computers or software may result in criminal charges.
8. Attempt to locate, view, share or store any materials that are unacceptable in a school setting. This includes but is not limited to pornographic, obscene, graphically violent or vulgar images, sounds, music, language, video or other materials. The criteria for acceptability is demonstrated in the types of material made available to students by administrators, teachers and the school media center.
9. Modify or remove the Hillcrest Academy sticker or the manufacturer serial number and model number tag.

In addition to the specific requirements and restrictions detailed above, it is expected that students and families will apply **common sense** to the care and maintenance of district-provided 1:1 technology. Ignorance is not an excuse. In order to keep devices secure and damage free, please follow these additional guidelines.

- You are responsible for the device, charger, cords, school-owned case, etc. Do not loan any of these items to anyone else.
- While a properly designed case affords some protection, there are still many fragile components that can easily be damaged by dropping, twisting, throwing bookbags, or crushing the device.
- Do not eat or drink while using the 1:1 device or have food or drinks in close proximity. Any liquid spilled on the device may very well cause damage (often irreparable) to the device.
- Keep your 1:1 device away from precarious locations like table edges, floors, seats, or around pets.
- Do not stack objects on top of your 1:1 device; leave outside or use near water such as a pool.
- Devices should not be left in vehicles.
- Devices should not be exposed to extreme temperatures (hot or cold) or inclement weather (rain, snow).
- Do not store or transport papers between the screen and keyboard.

COMPUTER DAMAGES

If a computer is damaged, the school must be notified immediately. If a student damages a computer, the student/student's family is responsible for paying repair costs according to the repair costs determined by Hillcrest Academy up to the full cost of a replacement device. **The student's device will not be returned until the fee has been paid.**

Hillcrest Academy reserves the right to charge the Student and Guardian the full cost for repair or replacement when damage occurs as determined by the administration. Examples of negligence include, but are not limited to:

1. Leaving equipment unattended and unsecured. This includes damage or loss resulting from an unattended and unsecured device at school.
 2. Lending equipment to others other than one's parents/guardians.
 3. Using equipment in an unsafe environment.
 4. Using equipment in an unsafe manner.
 5. Ignoring common sense guidelines delineated above.
- A student who does not have a computer due to a computer being damaged may be allowed to use a computer from the school depending on availability and reason for loss. Students whose computer has been damaged due to negligence will not be allowed to take the loaner computer home.
 - If the device charger or carrying case is damaged or lost, the student is responsible for replacing it.
 - Access to a Hillcrest Academy provided 1:1 device and network should be considered a privilege that must be earned and kept. A student's technology privileges may be suspended due to negligent damage to the device, or inappropriate use of the device that fails to comply with the Hillcrest Academy technology agreements outlined in this document.

COMMON REPLACEMENT PART COSTS

Back cover: \$40.00	Hinges: \$30.00	Bezel: \$40.00	Palm rest: \$65.00
LCD panel: \$40.00	Other components: \$20.00	Full replacement cost: \$300	

I have received, read, and agree to abide by these Acceptable Use Policy Rules.

Student Name _____ Student Name _____ Date _____
(printed) (signed)

Parent Name _____ Parent Name _____ Date _____
(printed) (signed)

Appendix B - School Lunch Policies & Payment Information

School Lunch Policy

In accordance with state and federal law, Hillcrest Academy adopts the following policy to ensure school employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

Payment of Meals

Students use a meal account. When the balance reaches \$0.00, a student may charge no more than 5 meals to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until a negative balance is paid. Payment can be made in person via check or cash.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from the previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

Every student shall be fed during the lunch period.

Employees who reach a \$0.00 balance will have wages reduced to cover the cost of the meals that they purchase thereafter.

Negative Account Balances

Hillcrest Academy will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, Hillcrest Academy will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Hillcrest Academy will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the account reaches \$0.00. Families will be notified by email and or phone call from the business office. Negative balances of more than \$10.00 not paid prior to the end of the month will be turned over to the Principal for collection.

Appendix C - Student Dress Code Requirements

Student Dress Code Requirements Form

The goals of the student dress expectations are to create a healthy educational atmosphere and to teach self care and care for others. As a Christian school we want to teach modesty and avoid divisive or inappropriate messaging. The following are requirements:

While we do not require uniforms or a specific type of dress clothes, research shows that what we wear does affect our behaviors, attitudes, how we feel about ourselves, and how others feel about us. Therefore, we encourage students to dress nicely and neatly. Slacks, jeans, dresses, blouses, collared shirts, etc. are examples of this. When wearing more casual clothing, please take care to look nice and neat as one part of helping yourself do your best.

We have received, read, and agree to abide by these Student Dress Code Requirements (pages 15-16).

Student Name _____ Student Name _____ Date _____
(printed) (signed)

Parent Name _____ Parent Name _____ Date _____
(printed) (signed)