

Highcrest Middle School

Student Handbook

2007-2008

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Wilmette, IL 60091
847.853.2900

www.wilmette39.org

Introduction

Student conduct should reflect consideration and respect for the rights and privileges of others. Students are expected to cooperate with all members of the school community. High personal standards of courtesy, honesty, and respect for property are expected of all students.

This handbook is designed to acquaint students and parents with the rules, regulations, and other relevant information necessary for the orderly functioning of our school. No handbook can be all inclusive, thus additional rules and regulations may be adopted as the need arises. The rules and regulations covered in this handbook pertain to all school sponsored events whether they occur during the normal school day, off school grounds, on school transportation, or outside normal school hours.

Students are responsible for adhering to the rules, procedures, and explanations identified in this handbook. Students' homeroom teachers will review this information with students during the first weeks of school and help identify changes that have occurred since last year. In addition, the homeroom teacher, principal or assistant principal are available to clarify any part of this handbook. Students and parents will be asked to sign and return an acknowledgment that they received this handbook.

HMS Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct is the foundation for expected behavior. All students are expected to adhere to the following HMS Code of Conduct at all times.

- ◆ HMS students show **respect**.
- ◆ HMS students show **tolerance** for others and their differences.
- ◆ HMS students **behave appropriately**.
- ◆ HMS students are **responsible learners**.

General School Information

School Hours

School is in session from 8:49 a.m. until 3:40 p.m. daily. Unless participating in a before school activity (band, chorus, orchestra etc.), students are not expected to arrive at school before 8:15 a.m. when supervision begins. Students may enter the building beginning at 8:35 a.m. They are expected to wait outside, weather permitting. Sixth grade students will wait by the front doors and fifth grade students will wait near the west end of the front of the building. Once students have arrived at school, they may not leave school grounds unless accompanied by a parent/legal guardian.

Early Morning Music Program

Instrumental Music and Chorus begin at 8:00 a.m. Students are not expected to arrive before 7:45 a.m. The front doors will be unlocked from 7:45 to 8:05 a.m. for early morning entry.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills, tornado drills, and lock-down drills are conducted regularly throughout the year. When a fire drill is sounded, the teacher will lead the students out of the building in a quiet and orderly manner. No coats are worn during a fire drill. During a tornado (severe weather) drill, students are to follow their teacher in a quiet and orderly manner to the designated safety area and sit on the floor facing an inside wall. When a lock-down drill is called, teachers will lock classroom doors, turn out lights and maintain quiet, safe behavior in the classroom.

Media Recognition

Information about individual children, including photographs, may be used, provided that the information in no way reflects adversely upon a child, or reveals information privileged in school records. Information posted on the Internet will include first name only. During the annual online registration process, parents have the opportunity to restrict the use of their child's photograph in media publications. This request must be renewed annually.

Highcrest Daily Bulletin

Announcements of interest and importance to students are published daily in the Highcrest Bulletin, which is read during homeroom and posted on the HMS website. Student announcements may only be published with the written approval of a teacher sponsor and a building administrator.

Homework

Homework is defined as academically related work assignments (including study and preparation) given to students by classroom teachers that will require time outside of the regular classroom to be completed. It is our expectation that homework will be a priority in our students' educational program. It can reinforce learning, contribute to the student's success in school, and develop a better sense of responsibility, good study habits, and a desire for learning. It also can serve as a vital link between school and home. Homework is used as a part of ongoing student assessment.

Internet Access

HMS is connected to the Internet. Access to District 39's Internet must be for the purpose of education or research and must be consistent with the educational objectives of District 39. Internet use is a privilege, not a right. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the Internet. Each student's parent or guardian must provide authorization before being granted use. The failure of any student to follow proper Internet usage will result in the loss of privilege and/or disciplinary action, which may involve local authorities.

Student Records - Change of Address/Phone Numbers

Any change in home address, home or work telephone number, or emergency information should be reported to the school office in order to maintain accurate school records and facilitate communication with parents. Any information concerning family illness, death, or change of marital status which parents feel should be shared with the school in the best interest of their child will be held in professional confidence.

Student Records - Custody

In order to ensure the safety of your child, it is important that the school have up-to-date written legal documentation regarding custody and visitation rights. Without written legal documentation, it will be assumed that both parents have custodial rights. Non-custodial parents may provide contact information to receive copies of school mailings and student reports unless restricted by court order.

Textbooks and Materials

District 39 loans textbooks to students. Students are expected to take care of them. Books are returned to teachers at the end of the year. If books are lost or damaged, a fine is assessed up to the cost of replacing the book.

Use of Technology

Technology/computers are integrated throughout the curricula at HMS. Student use of these resources is encouraged. Misuse of technology/computers will not be tolerated. The following behaviors are strictly prohibited: tampering or destruction of computer system software and/or computer hardware, theft of computer programs, tampering or destruction of files. Consequences may include but are not limited to loss of computer privileges, detention, and/or suspension. Students who damage technology/computers will be held responsible for the cost of repairs and/or replacement.

Visitors

Adult visitors are welcome at HMS. In the interest of security and to keep interruptions to a minimum, visitors are required to report to the main office when they arrive at school. Visitors must enter through the front main entrance. They will have to push the entrance buzzer on the wall to gain admittance. Visitors are required to display a visitor's badge at all times. Student visitors from other schools are prohibited because of the disruptions that usually occur. They are only granted under extraordinary circumstances and with the advance approval of the principal.

Attendance

Regular attendance and promptness are essential for good performance. The school nurse and the building administration will monitor absences. Excessive absences or tardiness may be referred to the Cook County Truancy Officer.

Absence Procedure/Truancy

Parents are expected to call the absence line voice mail (847) 853-2900 before 9:00 a.m. to report their child's absence or late arrival, the child's name, grade, teacher, date of absence, and reason for the absence.

Appointments During the School Day

Parents are asked to make every effort to schedule appointments outside of the school day to minimize disruptions to the educational process. If it is necessary for students to leave school during the day, they will need to bring a written note to their teacher at the beginning of the day. Students will not be released unless signed out in the main office and accompanied by a parent/guardian or other designated adult. Students must sign in at the main office upon return.

Closed Campus

HMS is a closed campus. Students may not leave school grounds unless they have been signed out at the main office and are accompanied by a parent or guardian. Once students arrive at school in the morning, they may not leave school grounds at any time. At the end of the school day, students who leave the building/campus will not be readmitted except in case of an emergency.

Missed Work

It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed work. Teachers will work with the student to provide sufficient time to complete assignments. When a student is ill at home for three or more days, the parent may phone the school and homework assignments will be

provided within 24 hours. Students who are absent from school for fewer than 3 days should call a classmate for homework assignments.

Parents Absent From Home

If parents are planning to be away for an extended time while the student remains in school, the office staff and teachers should be advised in writing. The name and telephone number of the person who is in charge of the student during parental absence should be provided.

Pre-Planned Absence

Vacations taken during the school year are often detrimental to the student's progress in school. Parents who find that they must take their child from school should notify the nurse's office and the student's teachers in advance. Teachers may not be able to provide class assignments and homework in advance of the absence. The student is responsible for making up all missed work upon return.

Tardy to School

The school day begins during homeroom at which time students are expected to be present and on time. Any student who arrives after 8:49 a.m. will be considered tardy to school and will need to report to the office to sign in. Parents must write a note, call or stop in the main office to explain their child's tardiness in order for the tardy to be excused. Students may only be excused for the following reasons: illness, early morning doctor/dentist appointments, religious observances, or specified emergencies. Students who are frequently or excessively late to school may receive disciplinary consequences.

Cafeteria

Eating lunch in the cafeteria is a privilege not a right. Students are expected to adhere to the following rules when in the cafeteria. Misbehavior may result in loss of privilege to eat in the cafeteria.

- Show respect for and obey all parents, teachers, and supervisors in the cafeteria.
- Walk at all times in the cafeteria including to your place in line.
- Round tables should have no more than 8 chairs.
- When eating, sit on your chairs and put your legs under the table. Once you choose a place to sit, please stay there.
- There are no saved seats.
- Eat only your own lunch.
- Use a conversational tone and talk to students at your own table. Quiet and clean tables will be dismissed first.
- Please clean the table, chair, and floor area where you have eaten before taking your tray to the disposal line. Chairs should be pushed back under the tables.
- Students may not return to classrooms or lockers unless they have a pass from a teacher or supervisor. Be sure to bring your jacket or other items for recess.
- Students who have permission to eat or to spend recess in a classroom must have a pass from the supervising teacher.
- The cafeteria will be cleaned following each period. Students will be given this responsibility on a rotating basis by homeroom class. During a given day, 6 different groups of students will serve cafeteria cleanup.
- All students must use the hand wipes provided by the cafeteria supervisors upon exiting the cafeteria.

Conduct

District 39 Philosophy Statement Bullying & Teasing

The community of Wilmette Public Schools District 39, including students, their parents and staff, believes that every child in our school community is entitled to a safe school environment free from the harassment of bullying and hurtful teasing. We hold the following to be beliefs that we embrace together as a community united:

Bullying is the act of hurting, frightening, threatening, embarrassing, intimidating, excluding, controlling, or hurtfully teasing another by a student, or group of students, using physical, verbal or psychological harm.

Bullying and hurtful teasing, when not addressed, have short-term consequences and may have long-term emotional consequences for the bully and the victim.

Students should show tolerance for others and respect differences. Students should not bully, hurtfully tease, or exclude others.

District 39 is committed to prevention by supporting programs that teach children respect, tolerance, and empowerment.

District 39 will expect bystanders to take an active role in identifying, reporting, and/or directly intervening when bullying or hurtful teasing is observed.

District 39, through strong district-wide policies and practices, supports a safe school environment where bullying and teasing is not tolerated.

School administrators will put in place common proactive practices for identifying and intervening with bullying and teasing.

All staff are expected to take an active role in identifying, reporting, and/or directly intervening when bullying or hurtful teasing is observed.

Discipline Procedures

When a student does not **show respect, show tolerance, behave appropriately, or act as a responsible learner**, disciplinary consequences will apply. The following is a brief description of the types of possible consequences for misbehavior.

Warning: A verbal or written notice to a student that a specific behavior is unacceptable and may result in stronger action if the behavior is not corrected. Verbal or written notices may be issued for unacceptable behavior in school, on school grounds, or when using school transportation.

Natural Consequence: Natural consequences are determined by staff members as appropriate to the infraction and the age of the child. For example, if a student exhibits inappropriate behavior on the playground, the student may lose recess privileges for a period of time. If a student writes on a desk, the student may be asked to wash a classroom set of

desks. If a student acts inappropriately within the classroom setting, the student may be removed from the classroom for a short period of time.

Student Conference: A conference involving the student, teacher, and administrator for the purpose of discussing and solving behavioral problems.

Parent Conference: A conference that includes the parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher(s), and administrator for the purpose of discussing and solving behavioral problems.

Counseling: With parental permission, a social worker or psychologist may work on a regular basis with the child (individually or in a group) to help a student solve a behavioral problem.

Detention: A detention is the detaining of a student during lunch/recess or before or after school for a determined amount of time. Teachers may require students to serve detentions on the day they are given. A student will not be detained after school without parent notification. The individual teacher will decide the length of the detention, and the student will serve the detention with the teacher who has assigned it.

Suspension: Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from school or a class for a period of time not to exceed ten school days. A student may be suspended from riding the bus for more than 10 school days for safety reasons. Students suspended out-of-school may not appear on school property or any school sponsored activity during their suspension. The student will be required to make up all work and tests for full credit. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teachers for such work. Students will be afforded due process rights and the suspension procedure will follow the District 39 Board of Education Policies and Procedures.

Expulsion: Expulsion is the exclusion of a student from school for a period of time greater than ten days. Expulsion requires the action of the District 39 Board of Education. Students will be afforded due process rights and the expulsion proceedings will follow the District 68 Policies and Procedures.

Drug Policy

Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use are illegal and interfere with learning and health. Students are prohibited from possessing, transferring, or using any drug (not authorized by a doctor). Students violating this rule will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion. Police will be notified and referral for prosecution will be initiated when deemed necessary by the building administration.

Field Trips

In addition to educational benefits, field trips offer the students an opportunity for improvement in self-discipline, self-control, consideration of others, and the experience of learning appropriate behavior in a variety of new situations. Parents are notified by the teacher/sponsor of all field trip information including location, time, methods of transportation, and other trip details. The parent via the online registration process authorizes field trip permission annually. The administration may place a restriction upon a student's participation in a field trip when, in the staff's judgment, it is not in the best interest of the

student to participate. All guidelines pertaining to student behavior listed in this handbook apply to all field trips.

Gross Disobedience/Misconduct

Gross disobedience or misconduct is conduct, behavior, or activity, which cause or may reasonably lead school officials to foresee injury, disruption, or material interference with school activities, the rights of other students, or school personnel. Each discipline problem shall be considered on an individual basis. It will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher to handle all routine discipline problems. When a student's conduct interferes with the learning opportunities of others, the student will be referred to the building administration. It will then be the responsibility of the building administration to make a judgment according to the nature of the infraction and according to building or district policies.

Gross disobedience or misconduct may include but is not limited to:

- Insubordination to school personnel.
- Possession, use, distribution of (or any attempt to use or to distribute) any illegal or controlled substance including alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, look-alike drugs, or drug paraphernalia.
- Intimidation of or any attempt to intimidate other students or school personnel.
- Fighting with or any assault of other students or school personnel.
- Intentional damage to, destruction of, or any other attempt to damage or destroy property of other students or school personnel.
- Verbal or written expression that is abusive to school personnel or students, or use of profane words or gestures.
- Any endangering of the physical or psychological well being of other students or school personnel.
- Repeated incidents of misbehavior including repeated refusal to comply with school rules.
- Any other acts which directly or indirectly jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of other students or school personnel.
- Theft of personal property, school property, or school work of other students or school personnel.
- Students who knowingly withhold information (complicity) about an infraction or who intentionally mislead teachers or administrators in the investigation of an incident may be held responsible in part for the given incident.
- Forgery of a parent signature.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a manner that upholds acceptable standards for cleanliness, modesty, and safety during the school day and at all school events. Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems. Schools may restrict the wearing of clothing or adornment that is disruptive to school operation and discipline including that which is unusually distracting or unsafe. No clothing or jewelry with reference to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, obscenities, violence, ethnic slurs or gangs may be worn. Clothing that exposes midriffs and/or undergarments is not permitted. If a student is inappropriately dressed, a parent will be called to bring appropriate clothing to school, or the student will be issued "temporary clothing".

Wireless Phones

Students may possess cellular or wireless telephones for use outside of school, however, these items must be turned off and may not be carried by the student during the school day. Items will be confiscated and held until they can be returned to a parent/guardian. Use of a cellular telephone device to chat, cheat, signal others, or otherwise violate student conduct rules is prohibited. The school assumes no responsibility for the security of these items. The administration may require that any visitor discontinue use of such equipment if it is disruptive to school activities.

Vandalism

Parents/guardians are responsible for any damage to school property caused by their child. When a student damages school property or bus property, the superintendent shall invoke those provisions of the Illinois Parental Responsibility Laws (section 70-51), which are appropriate to recover financial losses.

Violence

Student violence and/or threat of student violence against any student, district staff member, and/or district property will not be tolerated. Types of violent/threatening conduct include (but are not limited to): any acts of physical violence other than what is reasonable for self-defense and protection of other persons and property; knowingly, willingly, or recklessly placing others in danger of imminent serious physical harm; threatening, planning, or conspiring with others to engage in violent activity; joking about engaging in violent acts against others, or otherwise making any statements, threats, or intimidating remarks which might reasonably be interpreted by others as indicating a threat or plan to engage in some type of violent activity. Students violating any provision of this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion. Additionally, cases may be referred to the police.

Health and Safety

Medications Administered at School

The School Nurse will not dispense prescription medication or over-the-counter medication of any type without written instructions from a physician and parents, which detail the name of the drug, dosage, and the time interval in which the medication is to be taken. All such physician orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year. In addition, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the school, which includes the above orders along with the telephone number of the physician. All medication (prescription **and** over-the-counter) shall be brought to school by a parent, and delivered to the health office in the original container labeled with the student's name, name of the drug, the dosage, and the time interval at which the medication is to be taken. School district policy does not allow the school to provide any medications for students.

The school nurse will store the medication in a safe and secure place and supervise the administration of all medication. The school nurse will keep a record of medication administered and parents will be notified by telephone if over-the-counter medicine has been administered. Student may not bring to school, store, carry, or consume any medication without the supervision of the school nurse. Students, who use inhalers for asthma, must have a written note from their physician on file in the health office in order to carry the inhaler with them.

Physical Education Excuses

A student must have a note from a doctor or parent in order to be excused from physical education classes. This note must be presented to the teacher at the beginning of class. A note from a parent will excuse a child for up to three (3) days. After that, a doctor's note will be necessary in order to be excused from physical activity.

Personal Property

Lockers

Locker facilities are furnished to students in order to provide safe and secure storage of outdoor clothing, lunches, school-related materials, and personal items which students are legally entitled to have in their possession. No other materials may be kept in student's lockers. District 39 maintains ownership of the lockers. The school reserves the right to open lockers, backpacks, and purses (with or without the student's knowledge) for general inspection or when there is a reasonable concern that the student has an illegal or harmful substance or article. Lockers must always have locks on them. In order to protect materials stored inside them, lock combination should be kept confidential and not be pre-set.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found rack is maintained by the technology room. The rack is emptied periodically and unclaimed items are donated to charity. Check with the main office for valuable items (calculators, watches, eyeglasses, etc.).

Physical Education Clothing

Students must have proper athletic shoes in order to participate in PE. During the fall and spring, outdoor physical activity is scheduled. Students should have sweat clothes for outdoor days. Generally, physical education classes will be held outside until November and then again in March, weather permitting.

Valuables

Students are advised not to bring valuables or sums of money larger than needed for school purposes to school. The school cannot be responsible for such items if they are lost or stolen.

Recess

Participation in recess is a privilege and not a right. Students are expected to behave appropriately and follow the recess rules listed below. Misbehavior during recess may result in the loss of recess privileges as well as other disciplinary consequences.

- Show respect for and obey all teachers and supervisors on the playground.
- Stay within the assigned boundaries.
- Play safely and have consideration for your classmates by not shoving or pushing.
- Fighting is forbidden and will result in a loss of recess privileges for an appropriate amount of time.
- The following activities are not allowed: snowballing, "Chicken fights" and/or riding on a person's shoulders, "King of the Mountain", climbing of trees or backstops, jumping from the tops of equipment, or throwing or locking balls against any of the outside walls.
- No closed games are allowed. A student who brings personal equipment to school should have his/her name on the equipment and understand that the school assumes no responsibility for the equipment.

- No hard balls, rubber-coated hard balls, golf balls, super balls, bats, hockey sticks, rollerblades, skateboards, bicycles, or roller skates are to be used on the playground. They will be confiscated.
- Remain outside the school the entire length of your recess time unless you have the permission of the teacher or supervisor to enter the school.
- When recess is over, line up at the door and wait for the supervisor to let you in.

Transportation

Bicycles/Skates/Scooters/Skateboards

Bike racks are located on the west side of the building. All bikes must be parked in the rack and properly locked during the school day. In-line skates, collapsible scooters and skateboards may be kept in the locked storage bin near the bike racks during the school day. Before being brought onto school property, in-line skates must be removed and scooters must be properly collapsed. Students may not ride skateboards on district property.

Bicycles, in-line skates, retractable skate shoes, and scooters are not to be ridden on school grounds. Students must follow all bicycle rules of the road when going to and from school. Wilmette ordinance require that students wear helmets. The school is not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Bus Transportation

District 39 offers fee-based bus service. Parents may pay the bus fee at the district office (847-256-2450). Only students who have paid transportation fees or had their fees waived will be allowed to ride the bus. Students must show their bus pass to the driver each time they ride the bus and may ride only their assigned bus. On a limited basis, with prior administrative approval, bus riders may ride a different bus. One-time requests must be made in writing to the school office by 9:00 a.m.

The purpose of having rules on the bus is to avoid the possibility of accident or injury. Riding the bus is a privilege, which may be revoked at any time if school and bus rules are not followed. Student riders, while in transit or on the bus, are under the jurisdiction of the bus driver and subsequently the school district. Students are expected to cooperate with the bus drivers and follow all of their directions.

Bus misbehavior may result in permanent seat assignment, detention, suspension, or removal from the bus. Repeated misbehavior and/or severe misbehavior that may jeopardize the safety of others or is grossly disrespectful to the driver may result in a multi-day suspension of all bus privileges in addition to regular school disciplinary consequences. If bus privileges are suspended, transportation to and from school and school activities becomes the sole responsibility of the parent.

Parent Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures

The south driveway is a parent pick-up/drop-off driveway. To ensure student safety entering or exiting the buses, cars are prohibited from entering the main bus driveway during the hours posted. Vehicles must be attended to at all times while in the driveway. If parents need to leave their vehicles, their cars should be parked in a parking space.