

Student Handbook 2023-2024

Hilliard Middle-Senior High School

Our goal is to offer all of our students an education that will fully prepare them upon graduation to either enter the work force or continue their education at a college or technical institution. We will make every effort to provide the type of educational experiences that will enable students to be successful in whatever they pursue after graduation. However, the type of education gained through the experiences here depends, to a great extent, upon the individual effort of each student. We urge every student to study diligently in order that they may take full advantage of the instruction that is given.

Another goal of the school is to provide students with a broad range of educational experiences. Not all of these can be provided in the traditional classroom setting. As a result, the school offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities designed to promote the moral, physical, and emotional growth of our students. Students are urged to participate in a wide range of activities in order to achieve a balance and a variety of experiences that will contribute to their overall development as individuals.

In order to provide students with the quality education they deserve, we must provide an educational atmosphere that is orderly and conducive to learning. Included in this handbook are rules, regulations, and procedures that have been developed in order to ensure that a proper learning environment can be maintained. It is the responsibility of every student enrolled in Hilliard Middle-Senior High School to become familiar with the policies of this handbook and to follow them at all times.

ALMA MATER

Dear Hilliard High

Our Hearts are all for thee

Our song shall ever be

Dear Hilliard High.

Thy halls shall honored be

Throughout this great county

For all eternity...Fair Hilliard High.

Those days of youth which

All of us spent with thee

Form a dear history

Fair Hilliard High.

Could they renewed be

We'd live our days with thee

Through all eternity...Dear Hilliard

BELL SCHEDULE

School begins at 9:00 AM and ends at 3:45PM, with the exception of Wednesdays which are early release days. On Wednesdays, school will release is at 2:45PM.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is a necessary part of a student's education. Excessive absences impair a student's educational progress, impacts whether the student passes or fails a grade, and may result in court proceedings and/or the loss of driving privileges. Students will be considered absent when they miss 50% of their school day. Absences shall be classified and treated as follows:

Excused Absences

Students must be in school unless the absence has been excused for one of the reasons

listed below. Excused absences include the following:

- Personal Illness.
- Illness of an immediate family member.
- Death in the family.
- Religious holidays of the student's religious faith.
- Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency.
- Special events, including, but not limited to, important public functions, student conferences, student state/national competitions that are school-sponsored, administrative approved post-secondary educational institution visitation, as well as exceptional cases of family need.
- Doctor or dentist appointments.

- Students having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation that can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (Florida Statute 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) days excused absence for an infestation of head lice.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Shopping trips
- Pleasure/Vacation trips
- Truancy
- Other avoidable absences.

Reporting Absences

Any student who has been absent from school shall bring a note from a parent or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. However, the fact that the student brings in a note does not require the school administration to excuse the absence. The principal or designee will decide whether the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence, and that decision will be final. The administration may request additional documentation, such as a doctor's note. The excuse must state specific dates of absence, and must be signed by the treating, licensed physician. After fifteen (15) days of absence,

whether excused or unexcused, a student must present verification from a licensed doctor for all subsequent absences due to illness.

Make-Up Work

When a student is absent from school the student shall be responsible for all work and assignments missed during the student's absence. The student shall make arrangements with teachers for "make-up" work. The number of days allowed to make up the work shall be the same as the number of days the student was absent. This deadline may be extended with approval of the teacher or principal. Previously assigned projects or tests are due upon return from absence or as determined by the teacher's grading standards.

For assignments not completed for any other reason, there will be identified cut-off dates for students to receive credit for missing assignments.

Grading Policy: If a student turns in an assignment after the original due date, the student will be able to earn a maximum of 75% for that assignment. After the predetermined cut-off date, the grade will become a permanent zero.

The identified dates for the 2023-2024 school year are listed below:

Cut-off Dates:

1st 9 weeks:

Cut-off Date Prior to Progress Report: September 10th

Cut-off Date Prior to Report Card: October 10th

2nd 9 weeks:

Cut-off Date Prior to Progress Report: November 14th

Cut-off Date Prior to Report Card: December 18th

3rd 9 weeks:

Cut-off Date Prior to Progress Report: February 7th

Cut-off Date Prior to Report Card: March 8th

4th 9 weeks:

Cut-off Date Prior to Progress Report: April 22nd

Cut-off Date Prior to Report Card: May 17th

Truancy

A student may be deemed truant after (i) five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or (ii) ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period.

Students are subject to the following actions for preventing and correcting truancy:

- When a student may be exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance, the principal shall refer the student to the school's attendance team to determine if a pattern of truancy is developing.
- The school's attendance team shall meet with the student and parent or guardian to determine if a pattern of truancy is developing and to identify and implement potential remedies.

- If the school-based efforts to resolve non-attendance are unsuccessful, the student shall be referred to the Superintendent or his designee for truancy.
- The Superintendent or his designee will review the case and may refer the student to the District Truancy Prevention Task Force. The District Truancy Prevention Task Force is conducted with representation from law enforcement, school district, State Attorney's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families, Youth Crisis Center, the parent, and the student. A decision may be made to file a petition in court for truancy.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on student achievement. Disciplinary action for unexcused tardiness shall be progressive and will be specifically defined in each individual school's discipline plan.

Driver's License

Florida law requires that minors who fail to satisfy attendance requirements will be ineligible for driving privileges. The School District is required to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles of the following:

- Students ages 14-18 who accumulate fifteen (15) unexcused absences, not including out of school suspensions, in a ninety (90) calendar-day period.
- Students between the ages of 16-18 who have signed a declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.

- Students ages 14-18 who are expelled.
- Students ages 14-18 who did not enter school and for whom the school has received no indication of transfer to another educational setting.

These students may not be issued a driver's license or learner driver's license. Also, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall suspend any previously issued driver's license or learner driver's license of any such minor pursuant to Florida Statute 322.091. In order to have a driver's license reinstated, the student must attend school regularly for thirty (30) days with no unexcused absences and pay the appropriate reinstatement fee.

Granting Permission to Leave School Grounds

No student shall be sent off the school grounds to perform an errand or to act as a messenger except with the approval of the principal, provided that approval shall be granted only for urgent and necessary school business and with the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

Exemption from Regular School Attendance

A student of compulsory attendance age shall be required to attend school as provided by the law unless issued an exemption certificate by the Superintendent. Students who have reached age 16 must file a "Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment" if they wish to discontinue their education. Upon filing the intent, the student must allow the school to conduct an "Exit Interview" and "Exit Survey" to determine the reasons for the decision to terminate school enrollment and the actions that could be taken.

High School Attendance (9-12)

Academic Penalty for Excessive Unexcused Absences

ANNOUNCEMENTS

According to Nassau County Administrative rules, the Pledge of Allegiance and announcements are recited daily. Please know that House Bill 7029 authorizes student rights to not recite the Pledge of Allegiance should this be the desire of the student or family. Please contact the school should you desire to have your child opt out of the pledge or patriotic games.

ATHLETICS

For questions regarding athletics, please see the Athletic Director.

CAFETORIUM POLICIES

All students should adhere to the following rules. Students must eat lunch in the cafetorium. Only parents or guardians of students may join their child during lunch. No other visitors are permitted. New students must have a lunch number (school ID number) to eat. Students may not leave campus during lunch. **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO CHECK OUT FOR LUNCH.** If a parent brings lunch to their child during the school day, the parent must stay to eat lunch. No lunches will be delivered. Keep your lunch area clean.

CELL PHONES

For Grades 6-8 All cellphones need to be off, up, put away and secured in a backpack, purse, or bag during school hours unless directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

For Grades 9-12 All cellphones and other wireless devices (including air pods) need to be put away and secured in a backpack, purse, or bag (out of sight) while in the classroom during instructional time unless directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. High school students may use their devices during class transition and lunchtime.

1st offense: Verbal warning, teacher will take cell phone, ear buds, or smart watch and return at the end of class.

2nd offense: Verbal warning, teacher will take cell phone, ear buds, or smart watch and return at the end of class and a dentition will be issued.

3rd and 4th offense: Cell phone, ear buds, or smart watch will be taken and sent to the front office. A parent must come and pick up item. ISS will be assigned.

5th offense and on: Cell phone, ear buds, or smart watch will be taken and sent to the front office. A parent must come and pick up item. OSS will be assigned.

DRESS CODE

**Nassau County School District
Secondary Dress Code Guidelines**

Administrators and teachers of Nassau County Public Schools enforce dress and grooming guidelines that promote the successful operation of schools. On-site administrators determine apparel that is appropriate, disruptive, or in violation of safety rules outlined in the General Code of Appearance.

Each student has the responsibility to dress appropriately for the school environment. Any apparel, jewelry (such as body piercings, ornaments) and hairstyles shall not disrupt the classroom environment. These guidelines for dress and grooming apply to all students in secondary public schools of Nassau County.

- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Hats, head coverings and hoodies are not allowed on campus.
- Tops with thin or no straps, or tops that show midriff or expose the body are prohibited.
- See-through or mesh garments shall not be worn without appropriate undergarments.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses may be worn, provided they are an appropriate length (approximately fingertip in length).
- Clothing and accessories shall not be worn if they display violence, lewd and obscene messages, sexually suggestive phrases, or advertisements, or symbols of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Undergarments should not be visible. The waistband of shorts, slacks, skirts, and similar garments shall not be worn below the hips. Underwear, midriff and backs should not be exposed. Belts, suspenders, and straps should be worn in place and fastened.

- Any articles of clothing or jewelry that may cause injury to oneself or to others are prohibited.
- No holes allowed in jeans/pants that are bigger than a quarter size or fingertip length above the knee.

All students must adhere to these **minimal guidelines** for acceptable apparel and appearance. Repeated dress code corrections may be treated as defiance and subject to disciplinary action. In order to maximize instructional time, students will be given an opportunity to immediately correct dress code violations.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must have current immunization records on file in the Nassau County Health Department.

HALL PASSES

No student should be out of class without a hall pass. **STUDENTS MAY NOT GO TO THE PARKING LOT FOR ANY REASON UNLESS THEY HAVE PERMISSION FROM THE FRONT OFFICE.**

LIBRARY POLICY

The media center is open from 8:30AM-3:45PM, with extended hours a few days each week. The following library rules apply to all students.

- Books are checked out for a two-week period. Lost or overdue book fees must be paid before any other books are checked out.
- No food, drink, gum, or candy

- Internet permission forms must be signed and on file
- Inappropriate internet use will result in loss of privilege

LOST OR STOLEN PROPERTY

Lost or stolen property should be reported to the teacher immediately. Students are responsible for securing money and valuables in lockers during PE time. Large amounts of money and/or valuable items should not be brought to school. The school is NOT responsible for the theft of items that are not to be brought to school such as electronic devices, collectible cards, etc. No skateboards or skating allowed on campus. The school is NOT responsible for and will not investigate any lost or stolen items. Bicycles should be properly parked and secured with a bike lock.

PARKING POLICIES

All vehicles must be parked in the student parking area and must have a school parking permit displayed. Permits can be purchased in the front office. Parking regulations will be strictly enforced. Suspension of driving privileges, towing of vehicles, and/or suspension from school may result for repeated violations. Students are not permitted to loiter in the parking area before or after school. No student will be allowed in the parking lot during school hours without a parking lot pass.

PARKING REGULATIONS ARE:

- All vehicles must be registered with the school. Students must complete a parking application and display a current parking decal.

- All students must be licensed and covered by insurance. The school is not responsible for the vehicle or its contents.
- No driving over five (5) mph, or any other form of reckless driving.
- Drivers are expected to be considerate of community neighbors. Disturbing the peace with loud music or other noise-making activities is prohibited.
- Student vehicles may be subject to search if there are reasonable grounds to believe that drugs, alcohol, stolen property, or other contraband may be in the vehicle. THE NASSAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE WILL CONDUCT RANDOM DRUG CHECKS/SEARCHES

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks issued to students are the property of the School Board. Fees for lost, damaged, or missing books must be paid by the student to whom the book was issued. No other books may be issued until all fees are paid. This policy extends into the following school year.

REPORT CARDS

Students are issued two report cards during the year after each semester weeks grading period. Conferences for concerned students and parents may be scheduled through our guidance department.

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

As stated in House Bill 7029, parents have a right to a report card about the school grade, including a school financial report that indicates the average amount of money expended

per student in the school. Visit the following link for additional information: <https://www.nassau.k12.fl.us/Page/37>

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION CHOICE OPTIONS

Our school personnel work hard to keep open lines of school/family communication. Should any concerns arise, parents should contact the classroom teacher first to seek resolution. Parent/Teacher communication is vital to student success. Requests for class transfers can be made to the school principal. HMSHS follows the Nassau County policy of two conferences with administrative involvement to attempt resolution. Following this process, the request will be approved or denied by administration within two weeks of initial request.

VISITORS

Unauthorized visitors are not allowed on campus. Students from other schools may NOT visit classrooms. No lunch guests are allowed other than parents and volunteers. All visitors must check in to the front office and obtain a visitor's pass. Unauthorized visitors may be charged with trespassing.

CHEATING

Honesty and integrity are virtues that we value and promote at HMSHS. Cheating is dishonest and deceitful behavior that results in a misrepresentation of a person's true academic profile. Those who truly value education and are willing to put forth the effort to personally excel should reap the rewards of success. Teachers will give zeros for cheating and contact parents.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a PRIVILEGE, not a right. They are considered excused absences and all missed work may be made up. Students who leave campus for a field trip must have a current Medical Authorization Form and an Off-Campus Consent Form on file in the office. A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST SIGN THE MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION FORM IN THE PRESENCE OF A NOTARY PUBLIC. Several school staff members are notaries.

- The school reserves the right to deny a student's field trip privileges if s/he has demonstrated undesirable behavior on campus, at out of town activities, and/or in the classroom. Students who are not allowed to attend field trips must attend school on the day(s) of the trip to avoid unexcused absences.
- Students who commit discipline offenses after money is submitted may not be allowed to attend and will NOT receive a refund. If in doubt, parents should check with the teacher in charge of the trip or the dean.

CHECK IN-CHECK OUT

Check in: If you are late for school, you MUST check in at the front office. Failing to sign in can lead to confusion about whether you are absent or late and will cause you problems. ALWAYS COME TO THE OFFICE TO SIGN IN, NO MATTER HOW LATE YOU ARRIVE TO SCHOOL.

Check out: Submit to the office a note that explains the reason for the early check out, the time and date of the check out, and a telephone number where the parent can be reached. All notes are verified, so make certain that you provide a

number where the parent can be reached on that day. If an adult is coming to check you out, that person **MUST** be listed on your emergency medical card (NCSB policy) and must be prepared to present a picture ID to verify their identity. Even when a parent checks you out of school in person, you must still submit a written note for documentation purposes. The student must bring a note of explanation or a doctor's note upon return to school.

GUIDANCE POLICIES

Class Rank and GPA: Class rank is weighted. Weighted courses are used to determine Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Honors graduates. Grade point averages required for a club office, homecoming attendant, etc. for the first semester will be figured on the final grades (year's average) from the previous year. All other GPAs will be figured on the preceding semester grades. Middle school sports GPA is determined by the prior semester grading period. High school sports GPA is determined by cumulative grades.

Homebound Program: Any student who has a medical problem and can furnish the guidance department with a doctor's statement verifying that s/he will be out of school for at least 15 days may be entitled to a homebound teacher. See guidance for additional questions.

Honor Roll and Honor students: A list of honor roll students is published each semester for both high and middle school. In high school, weighted grades are considered in determining membership on the 9 weeks "All A" (no grade less than 90) or "A/B" (no grade less than 80) Honor Roll. A GPA of 3.5 is required to be considered an honor student. Weighted courses will be taken into consideration when computing the GPA.

Honor Students cannot have an F for a semester or year average.

Schedule Changes: Requests for high school changes are accepted for 10 days at the beginning of each semester (August and January).

- Transcripts may be obtained from guidance. If someone other than the person to whom the transcript belongs is to pick it up, written permission is required. Transcripts may be sent to schools and outside agencies after the student signs a release.