

HILLCREST ACADEMY

STUDENT/ PARENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2016-2017

Hillcrest Academy

A member of the Union County Educational Services Commission
WWW.UCESC.ORG

Union County Educational Services Commission's Mission Statement

The mission of Union County Educational Services Commission is to build partnerships and provide innovative educational solutions that support school districts and benefit all 21st century learners.

Union County Educational Services Commission's Belief Statements

We believe that all students have the right and ability to learn.

We believe that students deserve a safe, positive, nurturing, and supportive educational environment.

We believe that every student can develop skills needed to be a productive member of society.

We believe that building upon successful experiences promotes life-long learners.

We believe in offering highly specialized learning programs/environments.

We believe that UCESC is always evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of students by building partnerships between home, school and communities at the local, state, and national levels.

We believe that UCESC exists to provide innovative solutions for the benefit of the 21st century students in an effective and efficient manner.

Hillcrest Academy Mission Statement

It is the mission of Hillcrest Academy that all graduates have demonstrated in school and are able to transfer and apply out of school the following attributes:

- Responsibility and accountability for themselves by routinely producing quality work through high academic standards now and in the future
- A sense of pride in who they are and what they can contribute as a responsible citizen
- Great self esteem coming from a positive attitude, confidence, and a sense of self worth
- Confidence in planning for their future
- Tolerance, Respectfulness, maturity, honesty, and integrity

These attributes will ensure the success of all Hillcrest Academy graduates as they are able to:

- Work well in groups
- Have positive work habits
- Identify and develop their talents
- Think and work productively
- Use technology for a variety of purposes
- Routinely produce quality work with integrity

What you will see in the classrooms and “in and around the building” to ensure Hillcrest Academy’s mission:

- Students will confidently share ideas
- Students will be taking risks to better themselves
- A sense of a community of learners
- Trust amongst students and teachers
- Teachers will provide appropriate assessments and frequent feedback
- A positive small learning community
- Engagement and critical thinking
- Autonomy, recognition, and integrity

Hillcrest Academy Goals

Hillcrest Academy will provide our students with the following:

- A challenging learning environment where students can and will achieve.
- A safe, nurturing environment that encourages students to develop and interact.
- An environment where students develop confidence to take risk and set goals.
- A commitment to the professional development of teachers, staff, and administrators.
- A standard where students act responsibly and have respect for themselves, their school, and their community.

Hillcrest Academy SUCCESS

Sharing: a partnership involving the home, school and community.

Uniqueness: recognizing the worth of each individual.

Caring: respect and support of all members of the school community.

Communication: a technique for expressing ideas effectively.

Environment: a firm, fair, positive, and respectful learning atmosphere.

Self-Discipline: responsibility and accountability for your actions.

Sense of achievement: reaching your personal goals while preparing for a successful future.

Students, if they appropriately apply themselves, can take advantage of all that HAS has to offer.

Some of the opportunities we offer are the following:

- Earning back credits through our Credit Retrieval Program.
- Participate in the Community Service Program.
- Be a part of the Student Council government body.

A successful high school culture fosters lifelong learning.

A culture that fosters lifelong learning, in which learning is seen as a journey of continual discovery rather than simply the mastery of a series of discrete tasks encourages the mutual experiences of teaching, learning and intellectual engagement between students and staff. This climate must be created if the high school is to successfully foster effective and productive citizens for a rapidly changing global environment.

Each learner is unique.

The best way to improve our learning capacity is to understand how we learn; therefore the broader school community expects that learning and assessment for each student will accommodate his or her learning styles and tap into his or her human spirit. In a community of learners, no student is anonymous and no teacher is isolated. The learning and teaching environment in the high school should be personalized to the greatest degree possible. The high school must develop structures and foster values that ensure that each student is provided meaningful contact with at least one school based professional who understands and respects him or her as a unique learner. Likewise, the high school must develop structures and foster values that ensure that each teacher has the time and opportunity to interact with students, parents and other school and district staff in order to support his active participation in the construction of knowledge.

Family and community partnerships are essentials for learning.

The broader school community of staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members should share the high school's core value and primary purpose. They are critical partners in creating a meaningful learning environment for students. Active participation by students is critical to the learning process. The model of learning at the high school should be that of integrated learning with the teacher as a guide, facilitator, and coach, drawing out the best of each student and requiring his or her active participation in the construction of knowledge.

Respect is fundamental.

The rich diversity amongst the students at Hillcrest Academy and the broader school community should be valued, embraced, and integrated into the learning experience in the high school. Expectations of excellence apply to all students and staff: the broader school community expects that each student will achieve rigorous academic standards, develop critical thinking skills, and master essential learning's that are grounded in the wisdom of the disciplines. It has similar expectations of excellence for the high school staff, and looks to them to model the skills and behaviors that create the environment necessary to support student excellence.

Attendance

Unexcused absence:

- 12 unexcused absence per semester = loss of all semester credit and student will be placed on a Non-credit status
- 3 late arrivals/early dismissals = 1 unexcused absence

Excused absences are defined as:

- Medical: documentation from hospital or doctor
- Death in the Family: documentation from obituary or funeral home
- Court: documentation from court office
- DYFS: documentation from Social Services case worker
- EHS appointment: documentation from Elizabeth High School official

Documentation must be turned in no later than three days after returning to school. On the fourth day, it will be counted as an unexcused absence. A student is placed on **non-credit status** when he/ she either exceeds the allotted days to be absent from school and/ or are not reaching the academic expectations.

Even if an absence is excused, every student is required to make up their seat-time and assignments for every day they are absent by possibly attending mandatory Lunch Tutoring and/ or After School Tutoring. All work must be made up to maintain a passing grade during scheduled tutoring hours or for homework.

*All attendance matters will be reviewed on an individual basis by the attendance review committee.

Academic Integrity

Hillcrest Academy is a place where learning and knowledge are based on the core values of respect, excellence, accountability, consideration, and honesty. We hold our students to the highest standards of performance and integrity. We also expect each student and staff member to maintain those standards and strive for continuous improvement. Hillcrest Academy expects students to take responsibility for their actions, maintain academic honesty and uphold a positive learning environment.

Hillcrest Academy believes that plagiarism and cheating inhibits a student's academic achievement and compromises the trust between principal, teachers, and students, which is fundamental to the learning process. Cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Presenting work as one's own, handing in the work of someone else, or using the opinion of someone else without proper acknowledgement.
- Borrowing of the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of materials, or the pattern of thoughts of someone else's without proper acknowledgement.
- Having another person work on an assignment that is then submitted as one's own work.
- Failing to use proper documentation and a bibliography.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to the following:

Obtaining test or quiz materials for an assessment without the instructor's knowledge or inappropriate use of graphic calculators, programmable watches, palm pilots and other computer or electronic devices.

- Sharing student's work that should be individually/ independently produced. Using cheat sheets during test situations.
- Discussing information about a quiz or test with students who have not completed the assessment.
- Obtaining answers from another student during a test with or without the student's knowledge.
- Obtaining or providing answers from any source during a test or quiz.
- Failing to follow teacher guidelines regarding collaborating on assignments or projects – completing all work independently unless expressly instructed otherwise.

Teachers will:

- Provide students with explicit requirements and directions.
- Structure conditions during testing to alleviate the possibility of cheating.
- Specify the types of collaboration that are permissible.
- Teach and review correct use of documentation when assigning work.

Administrators will:

- Assure that all faculty, students and parents have knowledge of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Create a school wide environment that encourages a consistent culture of adherence to the academic integrity policy.
- Encourage teachers to enforce the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Maintain cumulative records of reported violations.
- Facilitate academic integrity policy violations conferences and enforce appropriate disciplinary actions.

Students will:

- Avoid situations that might contribute to cheating, plagiarizing, lying, and stealing.
- Avoid giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on all school assignments.
- Cite sources appropriately.
- Avoid plagiarizing by:

1. Using quotations marks for statements taken from others.
2. Acknowledging information, ideas, or patterns of thought borrowed from any source.
3. Consulting faculty about any questionable situations.

Graduation Requirements

Students who receive an INC will have an opportunity to modify their grade within a specified time frame. Withholding of Course Credits may occur for the following reason: unexcused absences, refusal to make up work, incomplete assignments/ failing grades, conduct, and/ or dismissal.

The Elizabeth Board of Education shall award a state endorsed diploma to acknowledge the successful completion of the requirements for a high school diploma as per the Elizabeth Public School District graduation requirements.

Numerical Grading System

Numeric	Letter Grade	Decimal Equivalent
97-100	A+	4.35
93-96	A	4.00
90-92	A-	3.65
87-89	B+	3.35
83-86	B	3.00
80-82	B-	2.65
77-79	C+	2.35
73-76	C	2.00
70-72	C-	1.65
67-69	D+	1.35
63-66	D	1.00
0-62	F	0.0
*Incomplete	I	NA
Insufficient Class Time – No Grade	NG	NA
No Credit Due to Excessive Absenteeism	NC	NA

Code of Conduct

Hillcrest Academy adheres to the firm belief that student have basic rights in pursuing their educational experiences in school. These rights include; the right to a safe environment, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to educational opportunities, and the right to inquiry and expression. Administration reserves the right to terminate a student based non-compliance of the code of conduct.

We expect students and staff to conduct themselves in a positive manner at all times in accordance with our mission, goals, beliefs, and principles.

- Speaking in respectful tones, refraining from the use of vulgar and derogatory language, and dressing appropriately.
- Resolving conflicts through peer mediation in a respectful, honest, and caring manner and never resorting to physical contact or threatening behaviors.
- Respecting the property of others. Never engaging in theft, vandalism, or destruction.

- Promoting a safe and positive culture by being an active member in the betterment of our school community.

School rules are to be followed at all times that included but not limited to the following. Please note that our code of conduct can be accessed at www.ucesc.org:

- There are no hats or head coverings except for medical and religious reasons that must be approved by an administrator.
- **Electronic Device Procedures:** *Electronic devices are defined as but not limited to cell phones, music devices, video game devices, and/ or recording devices (i.e. iPad, iTouch, Kindle, laptops, etc.)*
 1. Electronic devices are not permitted in school.
 2. Students are required to store the electronic device(s) in their assigned Electronic Device Lockers upon entry into school.
 3. Students will be allowed to retrieve their electronic device(s) from their assigned Electronic Device Locker at the end of the school day.

Cell phones will be safe and secure once placed in the Electronic Device Lockers.
Students will be permitted to receive emergency calls in the main office.

Violations:

A student in possession of or using an electronic device during the school day.

- 1st Violation-Confiscation-1 day of detention.
- 2nd Violation-Confiscation-1 day ISS.
- 3rd Violation-Confiscation-1 day OSS, mandatory parent conference, and contract signed.
- 4th Violation-Administrator's discretion and possible disenrollment
- There is only one student permitted out of a class at a time. If a student needs to leave their class for any reason a pass must be written. If you are going anywhere other than your locker or the bathroom, the staff member you would like to visit must be called first to receive permission and if permission is granted then a pass is to be written.
- Public displays of affection (PDA's) are not permitted.
- All purses and backpacks are to be stored in your locker.
- When students switch classes they are to immediately report to the next scheduled next class.
- Students who bring food all not permitted to use the school's refrigerator, microwaves, or ovens.
- Students are required to wear appropriate clothing that consist of the following:
 - Shirts must be at the neck (low cut shirts are not permitted)
 - Shorts and skirts must be to at least the knees.
 - Shirt sleeves must come down to at least mid-bicep and the length must cover the student's mid-section at all times.
 - Undergarments are permitted to be seen at any time.
- The UCESC and HA is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen property, even if something is confiscated. If students follow the school rules pertaining to restricted items and place appropriate items in their lockers, situation such as this can be avoided.

A safe and positive environment is non-negotiable. To support the social and emotional needs of students, a safe learning environment and positive school climate must be established and maintained. This is essential for intellectual growth and to prepare students to fulfill their responsibilities as adults and citizens.

- **Metal Detectors:** all students are required to pass through a metal detector upon entering the building. If an alarm is triggered, a staff member will request to search the student's possessions that activated the alarm. If a weapon or an illegal substance is found then HAS will follow its procedures found in the code of conduct/and or Zero Tolerance.

- **Lockers:** is a storage place provided by the school and pupils shall not have an expectation of privacy as to prevent examination by a school official. Inspections of student's lockers, desks, and storage facilities may be conducted at any time without notice.
- **School Bus:** rules of conduct apply to daily transportation to and from school and on field trips. Failure to comply with school and district rules may cause an unsafe situation on the bus and may result in suspension from use of this service, out of school suspension, and/ or parental conference. The Commission operates video cameras (monitoring devices) on school vehicles. They may be utilized to monitor and observe behaviors of students on the vehicles that are used for school activities.
- **Conduct contracts:** conduct contracts will be drafted if a student violates the attendance policy, academic policy, and/ or the code of conduct. All parties involved will be required to sign the contract and follow the stipulations. It is important for the student and family to work closely with the school for students to be successful. Failure to comply with this contract count result in termination from HAS.
- **Detention:** detention will be utilized for students who are in violation of our code of conduct.
- **In-school detention (ISD):** an be earned for refusing to complete assignments(s) and/or not obeying the classroom rules. Students may be removed from their scheduled class, escorted to the social workers office with an assignment, and may return to their schedule once their assignment(s) are completed and the situation is rectified.
- **Lunch Detention (LD):** Will be earned for various minor infractions and in order to make up missing assignments.
- **After School Detention (ASD):** May be held two days a week between the hours of approximately 2:30 until 4:00. Students will be transported by the UCESC to their bus stops. Students who refuse to attend will be suspended from school with a mandatory parent conference.
- **In-school suspension (ISS):** Students will be scheduled to a specific area for the duration of a school day as a consequence to infractions in the code of conduct.
- **Out-of-school suspension (OSS):** When a student is placed in out-of-school suspension, they may not trespass on school property. A mandatory parent conference will be conducted before the student is eligible to return.
- **Disenrollment/ Termination:** students who are guilty of serious and/or consistent misconduct, and who are seriously interfering with learning opportunities for students will be terminated from HA.

Hillcrest Academy Support System

An important program objective at HA is the support for the student's continued development. Students may be referred to any of these support teams for additional assistance and/or to improve their chances of modifying unacceptable attendance, academics, and/or conduct. Refusing to participate in these supportive programs could eventually results in being terminated from HA.

- **Guidance counselor:** college and/or vocational training research, employment opportunities and careers in the military are offered in a variety of formats for assemblies, field trips and on an individual basis
- **Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Team:** This is typically compromised of the principal, supervisor of instruction, social worker, school nurse, students assistance coordinator, psychiatrist, and one teacher. This team will intervene whenever there is a concern regarding a student's attendance, academics, and/or behavior. Parents/ guardians and other community supports services will be notified and/or invited to attend these conferences.
- **Tutoring:** tutoring may be available during and after school. Mandatory tutoring for students who earn a D+ average or lower. See your teacher, social worker, or administration for further details. Transportation will be provided for after school tutoring that is between the hours of 2:30 and 4:00.
- **School Anti- Bullying Specialist:** works in collaboration with UCESC's anti-bullying coordinator, school staff, students, and parents/ guardians to provide instructions on preventing HIB in accordance with the CCCS.
- **School Safety Team (SST):** The School Anti-Bullying Specialist will serve as the chairperson and the SST that will comprise of a teacher, parent/ guardian, and other members determined by the principal. For a list

of responsibilities, please contact the main office. *If a parent/ guardian is interested in serving a term (one school year that typically meets two times), please forward a typed letter/ email expressing your interest to the school principal.*

- **School Nurse:** provides health services including, but not limited to: counseling, implementing control of communicable disease in compliance with the rules established by local and state health departments, instructing the state required credited Health course, assist all students who become injured during school, and regularly communicate with parents/guardians for all absences and health related issues.
- **Social worker:** is available as needed on a daily basis, assists students in post-graduation planning (college, technical, military, or work force), and is available for individual, group, and peer mediation interventions.
- **Student Assistance Coordinator:** Shall be responsible for abuse assessments, referrals to community based treatment agencies, drug test monitoring, individual and group counseling, and peer mediation.
- **District Anti Bullying Coordinator:** perform responsibilities as determined by law.
- **Psychiatrist:** is available on as-needed basis every other week or once per month and acts in conjunction with administration, the social worker, and the student assistance coordinator.
- **Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO):** HAS believes that the welfare of our students depends on creating a strong and collaborative relationship between the home, school, and the community. The PTO is designed to foster a positive school environment, raise supplemental funding for school activities, and strengthen the bond that education forms between parents, school, community, and their children. If you are interested, please contact the main office for additional information.

HA Student Activities

Community Service: Students are able to participate in community service learning activities that are a requirement for high school graduation. Students may be eligible to earn credit for their participation if they meet all the requirements of the program.

Apex, Credit Retrieval, &/ or Independent Study:

These classes can be taken in order to earn back credits, similar to Saturday School or Summer School, during the school day and offered at the discretion of the administration. These courses are self-paced and completed independently with a teacher as a facilitator. Student may be required to stay for After School Tutoring and work on their assignments for homework.

Student Council Government Body:

A student government body is designed to assist HA staff with planning: incentive trips, fund raisers, assemblies, plays/talent shows/ multicultural events, clubs, committees, and to improve the over-all high school culture and high school experience.

Leadership/ Student Ambassadors/ Advocates:

Students who represent the school by reflecting their interest in all aspects of the school's varied functions. HA's goal is to identify functions where student take responsibility and empower themselves for contributing to HA's positive school spirit and culture. The objective is that all students get involved and will take responsibility for the organization, and representation, implementation, and facilitation of all HAS's school functions and activities.

Yearbook Committee:

Students are needed to assist staff in gathering pertinent information, planning the layout, and organizing the yearbook. Students may also be responsible for updating the school website and hallway décor.

*All policies and regulations of the Union County Educational Services Commission can be viewed from the district website: www.ucesc.org