

PARENT HANDBOOK  
**HILLVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
2023-24



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# ATTENDANCE AND THE OFFICE

## Student Attendance & Punctuality

We appreciate your partnership in seeing that your child attends school every day and working with your child's teacher and school administration when your child must be absent. All full day absences, late arrivals and early departures must be reported using [SchoolMessenger](#) (SafeArrival)

## Valid Reasons for being "Late" to School

The only reasons you can excuse your child for being late to school are the following:

1. *Your child arrives late to school due to feeling unwell. Note, any child who has experienced cold or flu-like symptoms including fever, vomiting, and diarrhea must remain home for at least 24 hours.*
2. *They had a medical or dental appointment.*
3. *They rode the bus to school and the bus was late.*

If your child is late to school, they must check in at the office, and the "late" will be coded according to the reason. An excused late will be represented as an "L" in PowerSchool, while an unexcused late (or tardy) will be represented as a "T or 3".

When you check attendance information in PowerSchool, the number listed under "Tardies" will include both excused and unexcused lates, but if you click on that number, you will be able to see which are excused L's and which are unexcused T/3's.

In order to encourage punctuality, students will receive consequences for excessive tardies to school or to a class\*\* within the school day. The following guidelines apply within each trimester. At the end of the trimester, a student "resets" to zero.

- Tardies 1-3 are "warnings" each trimester and no consequence will result.
- Tardies 4-9 each earn a 30-minute lunch detention.
- Tardies 10+ and above will incur further consequences and communication with families.

\*\*Tardies to class that exceed 15 minutes, will be considered "cutting class" which may result in an Extended After-School Detention.

## **Valid Reasons for Absences**

(As determined by California Education Code and [MPCSD Board Policy 5113](#))

Absences from school are excused for a number of reasons. The most common reasons students are excused for being absent are as follows:

- Illness or medical/dental procedures
- Religious observance
- Attending a funeral (1 day if attending in CA and 3 days for out of State)
- Shadowing at a school (3 per school year)
- Court appearance for the student

If you are absent for any of the reasons above, your PowerSchool attendance code for that day will be an “X or XP,” meaning an excused absence.

Trips, vacations, sporting activities, and securing a passport are not considered excused absences. Students may only have two (2) unexcused absences within a given school year. Upon the third unexcused absence of the year, the student may be considered truant per MPCSD Board Policy 5113.1 and California Ed code 48260. Truancy is a technical term that means your child has missed too much school.

In accordance with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California school districts are required to monitor and address chronic absence, as it is an essential LCFF accountability measure within the Pupil Engagement section of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Please communicate with your child’s teachers, as well as with our attendance clerk, Monica Bosch, at least one week in advance of a planned absence by having your child complete this [Planned Absence Google Form](#). At the end of the form, your child will download a paper planning sheet to help them meet with their teachers so they are aware of work and assessments that need to be completed.

If you are absent, but not for a valid reason, your PowerSchool attendance code for that day will be a “U,” meaning an unexcused absence.

## **Excused Absences Limit**

A parent can only excuse a student for a valid reason fourteen (14) times within a given school year. After the 14th absence, a doctor’s note is needed to excuse your child; otherwise the absence will be coded a “U.”

## **Unexcused Absences and Truancy**

In order to encourage attendance and align our district policies to the LCAP requirements, MPCSD has created the following attendance plan:

- At 3 unexcused absences, a caution attendance letter from the school is sent home to families.
- At 6 unexcused absences, a mandatory conference with a site administrator and a plan for good attendance habits is developed and agreed upon.
- At 8 unexcused absences, a student is defined as a “Habitual Truant” and the case is referred to the Director of Students Services for the Menlo Park City School District.
- At 10 unexcused absences, parent attendance at the Student Attendance and Review Board (SARB)\*\* is required for students. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of extenuating circumstances.

*\*\*Please note that the state also requires school districts to monitor the total percentage of school days missed for any reason (both excused and unexcused). Parents of students who miss more than 10% of the school year or have extended absences will be notified and this notification will become part of the student’s permanent school record. When this percentage reaches 20%, a student is flagged with the state for chronic absenteeism.*

## **Independent Study Plans (ISP)**

If your child will be absent from school for 3 or more school days, an ISP must be arranged. MPCSD board policy also notes that an ISP cannot be longer than 10 consecutive school days or 14 total days in one school year. The District Office will disenroll your child if they are gone for longer than 10 days. ISPs are not available for the first two weeks or last two weeks of the school year.

To arrange an ISP for your child, please complete the [Request for an ISP Form](#). This will notify our attendance clerk, Monica Bosch. Both you and your child will receive a planning sheet to be completed by the student and their teachers. Your child has as many days as they are gone to complete the ISP (ie. if the ISP is for 4 days, your child has four days after they return to submit their completed ISP). Upon successful completion of the ISP, which includes submitting all assigned work and returning the signed form to [mbosch@mpcsd.org](mailto:mbosch@mpcsd.org) for the principal’s signature. Once the entire process is complete, your child’s absence will be coded as “ISP” instead of “PI,” which is pending or “II,” which is unexcused.

## **Shadowing**

Many students “shadow” or attend a preview/trial run day at local area schools during the fall and winter. **Because of our modified block schedule, we highly recommend that students not shadow on block days (Wednesday and Thursday) in order to avoid missing extended class periods.** Students who shadow are responsible for all work missed while not at school. They will need to complete Hillview’s [Planned Absence Google Form](#). At the end of the form, your child will download a paper planning sheet to help them meet with their teachers so they are aware of work and assessments that need to be completed.

**For attendance purposes, ONLY 3 shadow days count as excused absences.** After 3 shadow days, any other shadow days will be considered unexcused absences. In addition, attending testing for private school entry **is not** considered an excused absence.

## **Appointments and Signing In or Out**

If your child must arrive late or leave early from school, parents are required to report the late arrival/early departure in SchoolMessenger (SafeArrival). When students arrive late or leave early, the student and adult must report to the office to sign in or out of the attendance log. For the safety of your child, an adult whose name is specified on the child's emergency ID card must sign the student out and indicate time of departure in the office sign-in/sign-out book. When a student returns on the same day, they may sign themselves back in without an adult. If a parent requires a student to leave school on their own, a written note must be sent to Monica Bosch stipulating the time of departure, reason for departure and how the student is to get to their next destination.

## **Absences and School Events**

School-sponsored extracurricular activities, such as dances, performances, and practices are important at Hillview; however, *they are not more important than school*. In order for a student to participate in any school-sponsored after-school activity, they must attend half of the school day (shadow days are an exception). *If a student misses more than half the day, they are ineligible to participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity on that day.* While not a school-sponsored activity, the after school sports and enrichment classes sponsored by PTO also follow these same guidelines.

## **Visitors**

For the safety of Hillview students, all visitors must report to the office and sign in upon arrival at school and wear a visitor name tag for identification purposes. Please check in at the office in order to obtain a visitor name tag.

We love when our Hillview graduates visit; however, we DO NOT allow former students on campus during the school day. If former students would like to visit, they must do so outside of school hours (after 3:05 on M, T, or F; after 2:30 on W or Th).

## **Telephones/Cell Phones**

School telephones are for school business and emergency purposes. If a student needs to contact a parent, they can come to the office during non-instructional time and ask permission to use the student phone. Students may also use classroom phones with teacher/staff member permission. Students are expected to demonstrate responsibility by bringing their belongings,

schoolwork, and lunches to school, minimizing the need to call parents to “rescue” them. **Students are reminded to keep personal cell phones “off and away all day” (during regular school hours).** They need to be stored in a backpack as they disrupt the educational environment. ***Please refrain from texting your child throughout the school day.*** If you need to get a message to your child, we prefer that you send them an email to their school email address or call our front office.

## Student Health

Students attending school should follow current county and district health guidelines and be in good physical health, without signs of contagious diseases. Parents are asked to keep their sick children home until all signs of contagiousness such as vomiting, diarrhea, and fevers have subsided, medication free, for 24 hours. Communicable diseases should be reported to the Hillview nurse (hvnurse@mpcsd.org) or school office so that exposure notices can be sent to parents.

Your child needs to stay at home when he/she has:

- Any contagious disease (i.e., strep throat, influenza, untreated pinkeye, etc.)
- Nausea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Temperature over 100 degrees F, or a low grade temperature with accompanying cold or flu symptoms. Temperature needs to be normal for 24 hours before returning to school
- Frequent coughing or very runny nose with copious amounts of nasal discharge.
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Sore throat
- Severe headache
- Skin rash – ALL rashes must be diagnosed by a doctor
- Open sores, unless the area can be covered with a dressing
- Earache, toothache or other severe pain

Students found with live head lice (not nits only) shall be referred to the parent for treatment and temporarily sent home from school. For more detailed information regarding MPCSD Head Lice policy, see Board Policy BP 5141.33.

## Student Injuries

Basic first aid will be provided by designated school personnel. For more complex injuries and illnesses, parents will be notified and students must be picked up from school immediately. If your child is required to use adaptive equipment while at school (i.e., crutches, wheelchair, etc.) or requires activity modifications due to an injury, a physician’s note must be provided to the school office.

## **Medication at School**

When prescribed or over-the-counter medications are to be administered or taken during school hours, a [Medication Authorization Form](#) must be completed by the student's physician and parent/guardian and returned to the school office with medication(s) before your child begins or returns to school. The student's parent/guardian and authorized health care provider BOTH must indicate on the authorization form if the student is allowed to carry and/or self-administer medication. *Students are not allowed to carry or self-administer medication of any kind on campus without a doctor's order.* Medication found in a student's possession without a physician's order will be confiscated, held in the school office and parents/caregivers will be contacted. For students authorized to carry their own medication, it is recommended to have back-up medication in the school office. All medication must be in the original prescription bottle/package. Authorization forms must be completed annually [California Education Codes 49423 and 49423.1].

## **Vision and Hearing Screenings**

The district provides vision and hearing screenings for all 8th grade students and for students referred by staff or parents. These screenings are done by our district nurse. Parents may submit a written denial of consent if they do not want their child screened (California Education Code 49452.5).

## **Covid**

Menlo Park City School District follows the State of California and County of San Mateo Health Guidelines in terms of our health and safety guidelines, mitigation strategies, and protocols in terms of Covid-19. Please refer to the [California Department of Public Health's](#) most recent COVID-19 guidelines for isolation (Table 1), masking and quarantine (Table 2) recommendations.



# **SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

## **Safety and Behavior Rationale**

Hillview Middle School expects that all students will behave in a manner that is safe and respectful. All members of the Hillview community are responsible for reinforcing and teaching behavior that promotes safety, respect, and responsibility for all individuals on campus. Remember that our expectations apply not only at school, but also on the way to and on the way home from school.

## **Basic Safety Guidelines**

For Hillview to be a safe place for everyone, we ask students to follow these basic guidelines:

1. Keep your hands off other people.
2. Keep your hands off other people's personal belongings.
3. Respect other people's personal space and don't crowd them.
4. Keep track of your personal items and keep them secure.

## **Bullying, Harassment, and Hate Speech**

There is no place for bullying, teasing, taunting, hate speech or harassment of any kind at Hillview. We work hard to eliminate this kind of treatment and show everyone our schools are safe and inclusive. While a student will sometimes say, "Oh, I was just joking," or "I didn't really mean it," those words do not excuse any student from making others feel powerless. Whether the comments relate to one's disability, race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, we simply do not tolerate this behavior.

If your child feels like they are being teased, taunted, harassed, bullied or are the target of hate speech, OR your child witnesses this type of behavior, we ask that they speak up. Let the other person know that this behavior is not acceptable. If the bullying continues, report the behavior immediately to a teacher or other adult on campus. We encourage your child to be an "upstander," not a bystander; if your child sees bullying happen, they should take a stand against it by defending the victim, discouraging the bully, and reporting the incident. Further information regarding bullying and reporting can be found in the MPCSD [Complete Board Policy 5131.2](#).

**Bullying Definition:**

Under California law, “Bullying” is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils that constitutes sex harassment, hate violence or creates an intimidating or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

(A) Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of harm to that pupil’s or those pupils’ person or property.

(B) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.

(C) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.

(D) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

## **Types of Bullying and/or Harassment**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, spitting, poking, throwing objects, taking personal belongings (such as a backpack), unwanted tickling, etc. “Table topping” and “five-starring” are considered physical bullying.
Verbal	Taunting, teasing to hurt someone’s feelings, name-calling (can be swear words or racial slurs, but doesn’t have to be), threatening, gossiping, hurtful or harassing words, etc.
Psycho-logical	Spreading rumors (true or untrue), deliberately excluding someone from a group, extortion (getting money or belongings through threats), intimidation (making someone fearful), etc.
Sexual	Exhibitionism, voyeurism, propositioning, sexual assault, “pantsing,” physical contact of a sexual nature, sexually explicit or suggestive comments, jokes, and/or conversations, inappropriate drawings, etc.
Cyber	Verbal, psychological, and/or sexual bullying by electronic means, including, but not limited to, text messages, emails, postings on social media sites, etc.
Disability-Based	Unwelcoming conduct such as verbal abuse, name calling, disability-based epithets, and/or slurs; graphic or written statements about one’s disability(ies); threats; physical assault; other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating

## **Bullying Prevention**

To the extent possible, district schools shall focus on the prevention of bullying by establishing clear rules for student conduct and implementing strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate. Students shall be informed, through student handbooks and other appropriate means, of district and school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in bullying.

As appropriate, the district shall provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict-resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior.

Staff shall receive related professional development, including information about early warning signs of harassing/intimidating behaviors and effective response.

Students are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another student is being victimized. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall develop means for students to report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously.

School staff who witness an act of bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

The Superintendent, principal, or principal's designee may refer a victim, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate.

## **Reporting and Filing of Complaints**

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying or who has witnessed bullying may report the incident to a teacher, the principal, a compliance officer, or any other available school employee. The staff member receiving such a report shall notify the principal of the report, whether or not a uniform complaint is filed. In addition, any school employee who observes an incident of bullying involving a student shall report his/her observation to the principal or a district compliance officer, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

When a report of bullying is submitted, the principal or a district compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with AR 1312.3. The student who is the alleged victim of the bullying shall be given an opportunity to describe the incident, identify witnesses who may have relevant information, and provide other evidence of bullying.

When the circumstances involve cyberbullying, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, the principal, or other employee so that the matter may be investigated. When a student uses a social media site or service to bully or harass another student, the Superintendent or designee may file a request with the media site or service to suspend the privileges of the student and to have the material removed.

## **Investigation and Resolution of Complaints**

Any complaint of bullying shall be investigated and, if determined to be discriminatory, resolved in accordance with law and the district's uniform complaint procedures specified in AR 1312.3.

## **Consequences**

Consequences are determined following an investigation of the issue and the appropriate application of Education Code, MPCSD Board Policy, and Restorative Practices. They range from restorative circles and conflict mediation to suspension from school for more severe cases.

***For parents looking to file a formal complaint about bullying/harassment/otherwise, Menlo Park City School District has a Universal Complaint Procedure to follow, and parents are always welcome to follow this protocol. It can be found at: [MPCSD Universal Complaint Procedure](#)***

## **Restorative Practices**

Our district schools continue to use the methodology from the International Institute for Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices are aimed at creating human connection between adults and students on campus, as well as engendering an empathic school culture. Restorative Practices are woven throughout our campus culture, including in social-emotional learning lessons, community circles and our behavior management system. At Hillview, restorative practices are the foundation for our approach to behavior management. Our Restorative Justice model includes both our conflict resolution and suspension diversion programs.

# Dress Code

Hillview's Dress for Success Norms maintain age-appropriate expectations and provide an environment that allows students to feel comfortable and express their individuality appropriately.

Our **philosophy** about dress code is as follows:

- Students should be able to dress comfortably and appropriately for school and engage in learning without fear of discipline or body shaming.
- *Students' clothing must not present a health or safety hazard or a distraction which would interfere with the educational process.* [MPCSD Board Policy 5132](#)
- Student dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- Student dress code should be gender neutral and apply equitably to all students.

With these interests in mind, Hillview has developed straightforward Dress for Success Norms.

## Dress for Success Norms - What to Wear

Students must follow these Dress for Success Norms at school and all school-sponsored events. These include, but are not limited to, physical education classes, school activities, dances, field trips, and school-sponsored after-school programs.

1. The front and back of a shirt (or top of any kind) must be connected over both shoulders.
2. Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, nipples, and midriffs are fully covered with non-see-through fabric.
3. Hats and head coverings (except those worn for religious or medical purposes) are allowed at teacher discretion.
4. Clothing must be free of obscene, offensive, or inappropriate words and/or logos.

## Outside the Norms

If a student's outfit does not meet the Dress for Success Norms, they will be respectfully asked to address the issue. This can be done in a way they feel works best for them. Options include:

- Adjusting the fit of the clothing (if possible to do so and still meet the guidelines)
- Putting on something else that is already at school (e.g., PE clothes, a jacket, etc.)
- Calling home and requesting a change of clothes

We will partner with you as needed if your child consistently has difficulty following the norms.

# PARENT PROTOCOLS

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Traffic can be heavy and unpredictable around drop-off and pick-up times so please drive cautiously and honor the crosswalks and instructions given by the crossing guards. The drop-off and pick-up area is accessed off of Elder Ave. Once you enter the drive, one lane becomes two.

- The right-hand lane is for dropping off or picking up students.
- The left-hand lane is for passing.
- Do not leave your vehicle unattended in either lane.

## Communication Protocols

At Hillview, we believe that parents are our partners and that children are their most treasured assets. Proactive communication and keeping the lines of communication open help us to respond in the best way to meet the needs of all of our students. If your child can solve an issue on their own, please encourage them to try. The greatest support you can offer your child is to encourage them to advocate for themselves, attempt to solve the problems they encounter, and assist them in learning from their mistakes.

### Communication protocol for parents:

1. If your child has already tried to solve a problem on his/her own but the issue hasn't been resolved, reach out to the teacher directly.
2. Schedule a meeting with the teacher if the situation does not resolve via email/phone call.
3. Reach out to your child's counselor if the situation does not resolve after that.
4. Reach out to the Hillview administration if the situation still does not resolve after a conversation with the teacher and counselor.

Should you find yourself wishing to address a more global issue, one that affects many students, you are welcome to contact the office manager, Cathy Garagozzo at [cgaragozzo@mpcsd.org](mailto:cgaragozzo@mpcsd.org) or via phone at (650)326-4341, ext. 2000. She will ask you a few questions and schedule a time for you to speak with the appropriate individual.

We appreciate the partnership of all of our families to help better serve our students. We are focused on working together towards success for all students.

## Technology

Hillview is committed to student digital citizenship and media literacy. Students in MPCSD have had digital citizenship lessons each year and these continue at Hillview through schoolwide lessons. We emphasize Media Literacy with a 6th grade elective class and with library research projects led by our teacher librarian, a media literacy specialist.

**Student Data Privacy and Internet Safety:** The best way to ensure your child is having positive online learning experiences is to stay in touch with what she/he is doing. Regularly discuss with your child the sites she/he is accessing and review content found on web browsers, not just on the school iPad, but on all devices your child accesses.

**Student Data Privacy:** Menlo Park City School District is committed to protecting student data in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Children's Internet Privacy Act (CIPA) and California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 (CCPA) is in effect. This comprehensive law protects the personal information of all California residents collected by any company doing business in the state of California. Menlo Park City School District collects personally identifiable information for the purposes of school and district operations, only providing received data to parties within the district authorized to access the material. For more information please visit the District [website](#).

### iPad Important Documents:

MPCSD Board Policies regarding student technology use: The Menlo Park City School District Board of Education has adopted policies regarding student use of technology. Please read through the important documents below:

- [6163.4 AR Student Use of Technology and Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [6163.E Student Use of Technology - Technology Acceptable Use Agreement](#)
- [6163.4 BP Student Use of Technology](#)

## Scholarships

At Hillview, all educational and enrichment opportunities are available to ALL students. To that end, qualifying families may receive scholarships for school field trips, PE uniforms, and after-school classes and sports. Please contact your child's counselor for a scholarship. Your request will be kept confidential.