

Hamden
Collaborative
Learning
Center
2024-2025

35 Hillfield Road • Hamden, Connecticut 06518
(203) 407-2010 • Fax (203) 407-5861
www.hamden.org

A Message to Students and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the HCLC Program. We believe that an essential ingredient of our program has been our close working relationship not only with our students, but with their families and service providers.

Students who attend HCLC often have a history of school problems and have experienced a great deal of discontinuity in their learning. HCLC offers the caregivers of our students a step toward renewed commitment and on-going collaboration with a supportive team.



Many of our students have had school and community experiences which have led to challenges in their educational progress. We work to help high school students assess their past and present behavioral patterns, set new goals, and make a commitment to make positive changes. We emphasize the development of good social judgment, and we work with students to help them make constructive life decisions and to move closer to fulfilling their potential in academic areas.

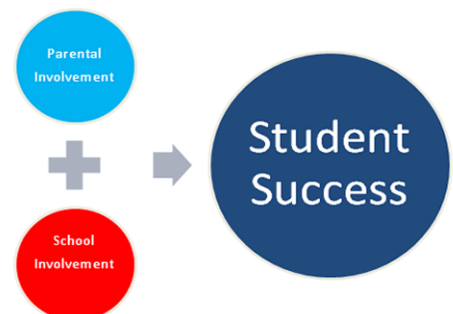
We have seen students make progress and we have learned a great deal over the years from our work with students and their families. When we have been the most successful, it has been because the loop of students, parents, guardians and service providers have worked closely with us to close the circle of support, offering valuable insights and feedback. We seek to develop a meaningful home/school/community partnership in order to most effectively meet the needs of our students. Please keep in touch with us – do not hesitate to call with your questions, concerns and suggestions. We welcome and appreciate your involvement!

Please remember to refer to the Hamden Public School website (www.hamden.org) frequently in order to stay on top of district news and information.

All the Best,

Darce DeCosta
ddecosta@hamden.org
203-410-1020
Coordinator

S STUDENT
P INVOLVEMENT



Hamden Collaborative Learning Center

The **Hamden Collaborative Learning Center (HCLC)** is a district-based alternative education program for students, grades 10-12, who have not achieved success in the larger school environment. Students attending HCLC, experience a smaller learning environment, with emphasis upon developing meaningful connections with adults and producing quality work that will equip students for graduation and beyond.

Our curriculum is aligned with district and state standards for student performance. Learning experiences are tailored to meet the unique needs of each learner. Student-teacher relationships, parent involvement, and community connections are essential in order to foster academic success and better prepare students for success in post-high school learning or employment opportunities. To this end, students can maximize their potential for academic, social and emotional success.

Students attending HCLC are assigned classes based upon their instructional level and needs. Students attending HCLC remain connected with Hamden High School (HHS) working toward diploma based upon satisfactory completion of all high school distribution and graduation requirements. To maximize the potential for student success, HCLC offers:

- A smaller, flexible, supportive learning environment;
- Classes with instructional support from a teacher and paraprofessional;
- Curricula that is aligned with district and state learning standards, modified to meet the individual learning needs of each student;
- Student Chromebooks to support classroom instruction;
- Work study or work experience;
- School and community-based Internships;
- Individual and group counseling to promote the social, emotional and behavioral development of all students;
- Elective course options taken at Hamden High School;
- Virtual Learning/On-line courses/Credit Recovery Courses;
- Assistance with planning for post-secondary education, training or employment.



*Hamden
Collaborative
Learning Center*

HCLC Mission Statement

We are committed to creating a safe and respectful learning environment where all students can achieve their full potential. We recognize that each student is unique, and we strive to meet their individual needs while fostering academic and personal growth. Our dedicated staff works collaboratively to ensure that every student feels valued, supported, and challenged.

Our mission is to cultivate a learning environment where every student feels safe, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. We believe that education is not a one-size-fits-all journey, and we are dedicated to recognizing and nurturing the unique qualities and strengths of each student.

By creating a safe and respectful learning environment, we are able to prioritize the physical and emotional safety of our students, ensuring they feel secure and comfortable in their school environment.

Respect is at the core of our community, where diversity is celebrated, and every student's voice is heard and valued.

It is our mission to foster academic and personal growth. Our curriculum is designed to challenge students academically while providing the support they need to succeed. We emphasize the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and life skills that prepare students for future success.

We recognize that each student has unique needs and learning styles. Our personalized approach ensures that every student receives the attention and resources necessary to thrive. Through differentiated instruction and individualized support, we help students overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Our teachers and staff work together to create a cohesive and supportive educational experience. Their dedication and passion for teaching inspire and motivate our students. We are committed to ongoing professional development, ensuring our educators are equipped with the latest strategies and tools to provide the best possible education.

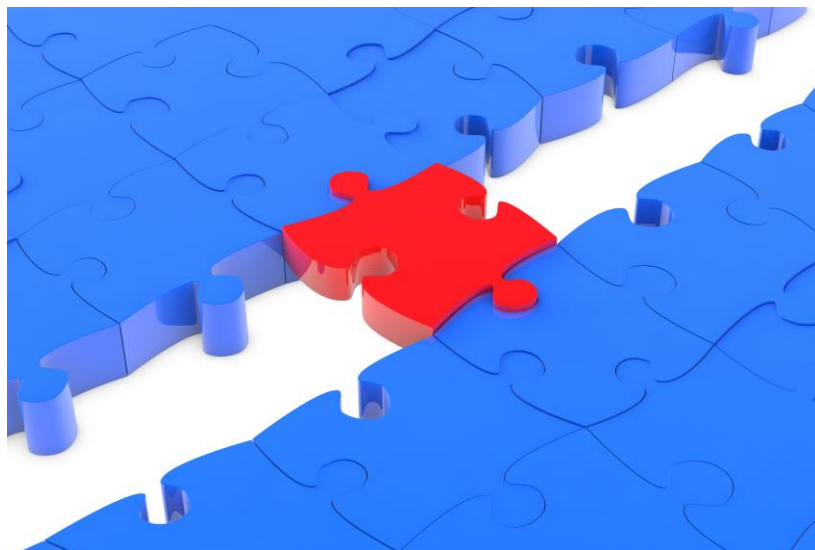
We believe that every student has the potential to succeed. We strive to build a community where students feel valued and understood. We set high expectations for all students, encouraging them to push beyond their limits and discover their capabilities. Through rigorous academics and a supportive atmosphere, we help students develop the confidence and resilience needed to face future challenges.

We aim to provide an educational experience that not only meets the academic needs of our students but also supports their personal development, ensuring they are well-prepared for whatever the future holds. We are committed to partnering with parents and the community to create a nurturing and dynamic learning environment for all.

Transition

In addition to their academic program, all students at HCLC participate in transition activities. The transition component helps students prepare for their future by exploring the areas of post-secondary education/employment, independent living, and community participation.

Internship opportunities are available for students who qualify based on their academic record, behavior, interests, motivation, and future plans.



Service learning opportunities are also incorporated into the school program. Students may elect to participate in activities that support charitable causes.

Grade 12 students complete the credit and course distribution requirements for a high school diploma. Seniors are required to take a Careers course exploring the areas of vocational skills, life skills, and post-secondary opportunities.

HCLC Program Guidelines

- HCLC adheres to and enforces the Hamden Board of Education Policies regarding smoking, drugs and alcohol, bullying and sexual harassment. For more information on this and other information on student discipline, see the Hamden Board of Education District Policies on the school website: www.hamden.org > District Policies > Students (Series 5000).
- **Cell phones and electronics must be turned off during class time unless instructed differently by staff. See the new school policy below.**
- Students may not leave the school building or grounds without following proper procedures. Parents and proper authorities will be contacted.
- Students 18-years of age or older are NOT allowed to leave premises during the school day. Attendance is a critical component to earning credit toward graduation. Absences for leaving school grounds are **unexcused** regardless of age, notifying staff or signing out.
- Students must stay in assigned areas unless given specific permission by a staff member.

Cell Phone Policy

- HCLC staff understands the need for each family to have a clear line of communication with their child. We understand the desire for students to possess cell phones. However, Board of Education policy dictates that students should turn off all cell phones upon entering the building and secure cell phones

within their bags during the school day. Texting is not permitted. Student cell phones should never be seen nor heard during the school day. **If a cell phone is confiscated due to usage, a parent will need to retrieve the phone from the grade level administrator. Students will be warned by the teacher 2 times, after which, the student will be referred to the administrator for support.** HCLC is not responsible for lost or stolen phones, iPods, game devices, MP3 Players, etc.

HCLC Program Approaches

Human beings are happiest, healthiest and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in authority do things *with them* rather than *to them* or *for them*.

Choice Theory

Students will become familiar with the tenets of Choice Theory which embody Caring Habits of:

- 1. Basic Needs:** *According to Choice Theory, everyone has five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Understanding these needs helps educators create a supportive environment where students feel motivated to learn.*
- 2. Internal Motivation:** *Students are internally motivated. They are more engaged and successful when they see the relevance of their learning and feel a sense of ownership over their education.*
- 3. Quality Relationships:** *Positive relationships between students, teachers, and peers are essential. These relationships foster a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel valued and respected.*
- 4. Personal Responsibility:** *Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. This empowers them to make choices that positively impact their learning and behavior.*
- 5. Problem-Solving:** *Instead of focusing on punishment for undesirable behavior, Choice Theory emphasizes problem-solving and making better choices in the future.*

Benefits of Choice Theory for Students:

- 1. Increased Engagement:** *When students have a say in their learning and can choose topics or methods that interest them, they are more engaged and motivated.*
- 2. Enhanced Responsibility:** *By taking responsibility for their choices, students develop a sense of ownership and accountability, which can lead to better decision-making and increased independence.*
- 3. Improved Relationships:** *Fostering positive relationships in the classroom creates a supportive community where students feel safe to express themselves and take risks in their learning.*
- 4. Greater Self-Understanding:** *Understanding their own needs and motivations helps students develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence, which are valuable life skills.*
- 5. Positive Behavior:** *By focusing on internal motivation and problem-solving, students learn to manage their behavior in constructive ways, leading to a more positive and productive classroom environment.*

How Choice Theory Is Implemented at HCLC:

- **Student-Centered Learning:** Teachers can offer choices in assignments, projects, and activities, allowing students to pursue their interests and strengths.
- **Goal Setting:** Students can set personal and academic goals, making plans to achieve them with the support of their teachers.
- **Collaborative Environment:** Encouraging collaboration and respectful communication helps build a strong classroom community.
- **Reflective Practices:** Students can reflect on their choices and outcomes, learning from their experiences to make better decisions in the future.

By incorporating Choice Theory into the classroom, educators can create a dynamic and empowering learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students and prepares them for success both academically and personally.

Schedules

HCLC Regular Schedule	
1.	7:50 - 8:35
2.	8:35 - 9:20
3.	9:20 - 10:05
4.	10:05 - 11:20
LUNCH	
5.	11:20 - 12:05
6.	12:05 - 12:50
7.	12:50 - 1:35

HCLC Early Dismissal Schedule	
1.	8:00 - 8:20
2.	8:20 - 8:45
3.	8:45 - 9:10
4.	9:10 - 9:35
5.	9:35 - 10:00
LUNCH	
6.	10:20 - 10:40
7.	10:40 - 11:00

HCLC 2-Hour Delay Schedule	
1.	10:00 - 10:29
2.	10:29 - 10:58
3.	10:58 - 11:27
4.	11:27 - 11:56
LUNCH	
5.	12:13 - 12:42
6.	12:42 - 1:11
7.	1:11 - 1:40

Grading and Eligibility for Incentives

Grading is based on classroom performance that incorporates work output, progress, participation, behavioral expectations and attendance.

Students are expected to monitor their grades via PowerSchool access. Grades for work completion and



participation are recorded each day by teachers. Please click here to reset or create a [PowerSchool](#) account.

Incentives are received when students have a C+ or better for grades in all HCLC classes. Additionally, incentives are given for positive behavior reinforcement based on our point system. Incentives include field trips, extra social, activity time and nutritional rewards.

Field Trips

All students are encouraged to participate in subject-related or incentive-driven field trips. They are experiences that provide exposure to the community and give students the opportunity to learn how to conduct themselves in a variety of settings. Field trips are not only fun, they serve as educational chances to build social skills. Participation in special field trips may be contingent upon current student grades which must reflect a C+ or better in all HCLC classes. Most field trips are sponsored by HCLC and free of cost to students. All program rules apply and students must take bus transportation provided to and from field trips.

ALPS/Student Support Services



There are times when a student may require a temporary change in setting. **ALPS** (Alternative Learning Placement Site) is a short-term intervention. It is an opportunity to process concerns that affect the community. Issues are resolved in this safe place so students return to the classroom where further teaching and learning takes place. HCLC social workers supervise ALPS and facilitates in this capacity.

Student Appearance

All students should be dressed and groomed in a neat, modest, and appropriate manner as determined by staff and social norms.



Office Hours

All classroom teachers have office hours once a week from 1:45 to 2:30. Based on need, teachers often make themselves available more often than this as well as during lunchtime. There are times when a student may be required to attend teacher office hours to address academic and/or behavior concerns.

Attendance

For **ALL** absences parents/guardians must notify HCLC at (203) 407-2010. For students attending AM classes at HHS, call (203) 407-2040 also. HCLC staff will call parents and students directly by 9:30 to determine a cause of non-attendance. The school day at HCLC begins at **7:50 AM** and begins at **7:20 AM** at Hamden High School. If students arrive up to 10 minutes late to their class, they will be considered tardy. In excess of 10 minutes late is considered an unexcused absent for the class.



For medical issues, the direct number for the school nurse is (203) 407-3101. Only written documentation of appointments will be considered as evidence for an excused absence.

Oversleeping, a parent phone call, written notes, and missing the bus are not deemed excusable. A parent phone call before the school day will be marked as PCA (parent called absent). All other non-documented absences will be marked UNX (unexcused). Credit may be lost in classes if absences exceed 9 per semester.

If a student is not present for more than 50% of a school day, it is considered a full-day absence.

Rights

A “right” is something that belongs to you and cannot be taken away by anyone. Your classmates and teachers have the same rights:

You have a right to a safe school. This means that your school should provide safe classrooms, equipment and rules to ensure your safety at school.

You have the right to be respected and treated with kindness at school. This means that others should not laugh at you, make fun of you, or hurt your feelings.

You have a right to be an individual at school. This means you should be treated fairly whether you are tall or short, boy or girl, dress or talk differently or it takes you a little longer to get the right answer.

You have the right to work without being bothered. This means that others should not bother you as you responsibly make good use of your time.

You have the right to express yourself. This means that you may talk freely about your ideas and feelings when appropriate.

You have a right to tell your side of the story.....when asked of your involvement in a situation.

Responsibilities

There are some things you should do without being told. Some of these things you do for others and some of these you do for yourself:

You have a responsibility to come to school. This means that you come to school every day, on time, unless you are documented as sick or excused due to civic duty.

You have a responsibility to take care of property. This means observing all safety and classroom rules.

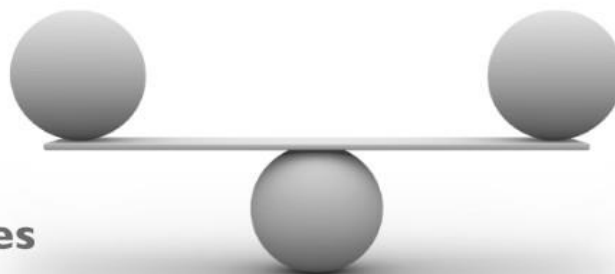
You have a responsibility to complete your classroom assignments. This means to do your best with your class assignments and homework, and submit them on time.

You have a responsibility to take messages home. This means that it is important for you to take all school messages to your parents/guardians.

You have a responsibility to practice good personal cleanliness. This means that you come to school clean and appropriately dressed.

You have a responsibility to help make school a good place to be. This means being thoughtful, respectful and courteous to others.

**Rights and
Responsibilities**



Transportation

First Student is the bus company for Hamden Public Schools.

Call **(203) 288-2887** for information regarding routes, times and any bus related issues.



First Student is your first option to resolve bus issues. **It is the responsibility of students and parents to contact them directly, not HCLC, to work out bus situations that may occur in the morning.** Students and parents may inform HCLC if a transportation concern persists over time.

AM bus schedule to HCLC:

Standard Arrival for 7:50, Period 1 – Bus will arrive at pick-up points between 7:00 and 7:45. Check website for bus number, detailed times and bus stops.

HCLC students assigned to an afternoon bus **MUST** take their designated bus home. Only students **18-years of age** or older have the right of transportation refusal in the afternoon and have the option to walk or use an alternate mode of transportation at the end of the school day.

As noted in the Guidelines section:

- Students 18-years of age or older are **NOT** allowed to leave premises during the school day. Attendance is a critical component to earning credit toward graduation. Absences for leaving school grounds are **unexcused** regardless of age, notifying staff or signing out.

A written note, phone call or e-mail from a parent/guardian does NOT authorize students under 18 to change buses, find another ride or walk off school grounds during or after the school day.

Students may be dismissed during or after the school day to only those individuals who are documented on their HCLC Student Emergency Information Form.

Students who possess a license and a vehicle must clear their driving status with school staff before being approved to drive to school. There may be contingencies placed on a student to be approved or to maintain driving status.

