

Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven

HILLTOP
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



**2105 Martin Luther King Blvd. NE Winter
Haven, FL 33881**

Parent-Student Handbook

Operating Hours: 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

School Day Hours (K-5th Grade) 8:15 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

School Colors: Green – White School

Mascots: Elijah and Erica the Eagles

(thehilltopchristianacademy.com)

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Contents

THE GOVERNING BODY	4
Board of Trustees	4
Mission Statement	4
Handbook Policy.....	5
Enrollment and Conduct Policy	5
ACADEMICS	5
Diplomas	5
Grading Scale (Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade).....	5
Grading Scale (3 rd – 5 th Grade).....	6
Progress Reports.....	6
Special Area Classes - Elementary	6
Textbooks	6
Student Expectation – Academic Standing.....	6
Academic Integrity	7
ATTENDANCE POLICY	7
Tardies	8
Absences	8
Absence Types.....	9
Pre-Arranged Absence Policy.....	9
Early Sign Out	10
Hall Passes	10
BIBLE	10
Foundation	10
Chapel.....	11
Church of Christ.....	11
CODES OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS	12
Courtesy.....	12
Early Childhood and Primary Discipline Policies.....	12
Codes of Conduct	13
Harassment.....	14
School Behavior Management Plan	16
Student Pledge.....	16
Demerit System.....	17
Level I - Offenses	17
Level I - Disciplinary Options	18
Level II - Offenses.....	18

Level III -- Disciplinary Options	19
Progressive Discipline Plan.....	20
Student Dismissal Policy.....	20
Reasons for Dismissal.....	20
Expulsion.....	21
Expectations	21
Parent Expectation	22
Conferences/Grievances – A Ministry of Reconciliation.....	23
COMMUNICATION	25
DRESS CODE	26
Dress Code/Appearance.....	26
Uniforms.....	27
Shoes and Socks	27
Uniform Options for Cold Weather	28
Free Dress Days	28
EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS.....	30
Shelter-In-Place/Emergency Plan.....	30
Severe Weather	30
Emergency Dismissal or Cancellation.....	31
ENROLLMENT.....	31
FIELD TRIPS.....	32
FINANCIAL INFORMATION	33
Tuition.....	33
Fees.....	34
Delinquency.....	34
HEALTH AND MEDICATION	35
Lunch and Snack.....	37
Emergency Lunch Assistance Policy.....	37
Forgotten or Missing Lunch Procedure.....	37
Emergency Meal Provision	38
Support for Families in Need	38
Confidentiality.....	38
Pets.....	39
Phones Calls.....	39
Photographs	39
Safety.....	39
Right to Search	40

Insurance	41
Smoke-Free Campus.....	41
School Hours.....	41
Shadowing	41
SOLICITATION/FUNDRAISING.....	41
STUDENT MATERIALS.....	41
Book Bags	41
Non-Sanctioned Items.....	42
Cell Phones	43
Lost and Found	43
TRAFFIC AND DRIVING PROCEDURES	43
Traffic Rules and Car Line Protocol	43
Morning Drop Off.....	45
After School Pick Up	45
Arriving Early	46
Late Pick Up.....	47
TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS	47
VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS.....	47
Background Screening.....	47
Parent Advisory Committees	48
Volunteer Hours	48
WITHDRAWAL/TRANSFER	48

THE GOVERNING BODY

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is a fiduciary body that oversees long-range financial planning. The Board of Trustees is not involved in the daily operation of the school. All operational decisions, including but not limited to academic, admissions, discipline, dismissal, and enrollment are made at the sole discretion of the Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven administrators.

The Board of Trustees includes 4 board officers and 5-7 members. Board

Officers

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Administrator

- School Administrator

Office Staff

- Administrative Assistant
- Teachers

Mission Statement

Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven is committed to preparing young men and women for academic success through Christ-centered education in a nurturing environment. We promote a heart for service and a love for all people, reflecting the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Handbook Policy

This Parent-Student Handbook replaces all previous versions. While we strive to keep the information current, Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven reserves the right to amend, suspend, or discontinue any policies or procedures contained herein at any time, with or without prior notice to parents or students.

Enrollment and Conduct Policy

The administration reserves the right to deny admission, suspend, expel, or otherwise discipline any student whose enrollment is not in the best interest of Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven, its student body, or the individual. Grounds for dismissal may include behavior or attitudes that conflict with the Christian values of the school or failure to meet academic expectations.

Parents and students acknowledge that school administrators and teachers are entrusted to act in *loco parentis*—in the place of parents—by administering reasonable and appropriate disciplinary measures, consistent with the biblical principles of nurture and correction.

ACADEMICS

Diplomas

All graduation options at Hilltop Christian Academy meet or exceed the standards required by the Florida Department of Education.

Grading Scale (Kindergarten – 2nd Grade)

E = Exceeds Expectations

M = Meets Expectations

P = Progressing Toward Expectations

N = Needs Improvement

Grading Scale (3rd – 5th Grade)

- A** = Exceeds Standard (90–100%)
- B** = Proficient (80–89%)
- C** = Approaching (70–79%)
- D** = Below Standard (60–69%)
- F** = Well Below Standard (59% or below)

Achieving high standards is an important accomplishment and honor students will be recognized during the end-of-year awards ceremony.

Progress Reports

Parents will be notified of students' progress by progress reports and report cards.

Special Area Classes - Elementary

Beginning in Kindergarten, students have special area subjects such as art, music, P.E., and Bible. Children are expected to participate and be respectful of these special teachers. Students will receive a grade based on participation, conduct and progress through subject/material.

Textbooks

Elementary school students are responsible for the care of their school issued material, including iPads, Kindles, and other educational resources/materials and are expected to pay for lost or damaged items. Writing in non-consumable textbooks is considered damage. (I Cor. 4:2)

Student Expectation – Academic Standing

At Hilltop Christian Academy, students are expected to demonstrate steady academic growth and maintain performance that reflects grade-level standards. For our youngest learners in Kindergarten through Grade 2, progress is measured using a standards-based scale. Students may earn marks of Exceeds Expectations (E), Meets Expectations (M), Progressing Toward Expectations (P), or Needs Improvement (N). To remain in good standing, students should consistently achieve at the Meets Expectations level or higher in their core subjects. If a child receives repeated marks of Progressing (P) or Needs Improvement (N) in multiple subject areas, the student will be placed

on academic support status. At that point, parents will be notified and a collaborative support plan will be created to help the student meet the expected standards.

Beginning in Grades 3 through 5, students are evaluated using a letter-grade system that reflects their mastery of subject matter. Grades are assigned as follows: A (90–100%) = Exceeds Standard, B (80–89%) = Proficient, C (70–79%) = Approaching, D (60–69%) = Below Standard, and F (59% or below) = Well Below Standard. In order to remain in good academic standing, students must maintain an overall average of C (70%) or higher across their core classes. If a student's average falls below this level, they will be placed on academic probation for one grading period. During this time, the student is expected to demonstrate improvement in order to continue enrollment at the Academy.

Academic Integrity

It is our goal that each Hilltop Christian Academy student model academic integrity. Academic cheating and/or plagiarism is the attempt to obtain information, knowledge or material from any other source and submit it as one's own work. Cheating in any form is not in keeping with the expected moral, ethical or spiritual values of Hilltop Christian Academy. *Academic integrity is an attitude that values honesty above grades, friendship, social acceptance and peer pressure.* (Eph. 4:25) Students who cheat or plagiarize on any assignment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his/her education. Missing class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of instructional content. Therefore, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences, tardies, and checkouts. Students' tardies and absences will be recorded on the report card and permanent record. It is the parent/student's responsibility to keep up with their child's attendance

record and keep in accordance with the policies and consequences listed in this handbook.

Tardies

- All students who arrive at school after **8:15 a.m.** must report to the school office to sign in. The office will follow the school attendance policy to determine if the tardy is excused or unexcused and then document it. Supporting documentation is necessary in order for a tardy to be recorded excused. Disputes regarding accuracy must be filed within three days of the date of occurrence. Otherwise, the recorded status will remain.
- Students who disregard the school attendance policy will not be allowed into class and could be subject to discipline.
- Excused tardies include personal sickness, family emergency, road emergency, and doctor or dental appointments.
- A student with three or more excused/unexcused tardies cannot have perfect attendance.
- Our staff understands absences and tardies are inevitable. In most instances, students will be allowed to make up missed work for excused tardies. **Excessive and frivolous absences/tardies are not acceptable. This is a disruption to the instructional environment and may be grounds for dismissal.**
- 3 tardies will equal 1 absence.

Absences

- Parents are requested to email teachers and the school office to report their child's absence. Parents can also use online Parental Portal to report their child's absence. If using email: The school office email is hilltop@thehilltopchristianacademy.com. Title the email "Absence of *child's name*." In the email write a note including the child's name, date of absence, and reason for the absence. Documentation regarding absences (doctor's note, etc.) should be provided to the school office through email.
- All students are required by law to attend school.

Absence Types

- **Excused Absences (AE)** include sickness, death in the family, doctor or dental appointments, and any other reason excused by the School Administrator **BEFORE** the absence occurs. Please see pre-arranged absence policy below.
- **Unexcused Absences (AU)** include unapproved vacation days or time off from school for reasons other than those listed in the Excused Absence section above. **Students will earn zeros for classwork, homework, and quizzes missed during unexcused absences. Students may still complete tests upon their return from an unexcused absence.**

Pre-Arranged Absence Policy

- Pre-arranged absences, such as, vacations, family trips, etc., will be considered an “AE” (excused absence) if pre-approved by the School Administrator.
- To obtain approval, send an email prior to absence unless the absence is due to school business.
- It will be the responsibility of the student to gather work for any days absent, and the work must be turned in when the student returns to school. Students are also responsible for collecting assignments (class notes, projects, etc.) that were completed by the class during the absence.

ALL ABSENCES COUNT TOWARD TOTAL ABSENCE COUNT:

- Whether excused or unexcused, absences are still recorded on a student’s transcript.
- Students who record more than 26 absences (excused or unexcused) must be tutored by a certified elementary teacher, or enrolled in an authorized summer program, to be eligible for promotion.
- Elementary students checking out of school early may not be given credit for a full day in attendance.

Early Sign Out

Numerous incidents of early check out are unacceptable and unfair to other students and the teacher whose instruction is interrupted each time a student leaves early. For the safety of our campus, the enhancement of our academic program, and the mitigation of instructional distraction, students will not be called to leave class before an authorized parent, guardian, or pre-approved designee is present in the office to sign them out. Students who need to leave school early must sign out in the school office and permission must be granted by a legal guardian. Every 3 early sign outs will count as an absence in grades 1st-5th.

Hall Passes

Students should remain in class at all times. Students may be permitted to leave class at the discretion of the teacher. Students should go directly (and only) to the approved place and return immediately to the classroom. Disturbing other classes is not permitted. Except in the case of illness, students must have the approval of a teacher or administrator to be out of class during scheduled class periods. Hall passes should be issued to any student leaving the classroom during class time.

BIBLE

Foundation

Hilltop Christian Academy was founded in order to provide an education that has the Bible as its final source of authority in matters of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16-17), and Christian principles and standards applied to every aspect of its operation. We believe students should be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Also, we stress the words of Solomon (Eccl. 12: 1) for students to “remember now your Creator in the days of your youth ...”. These abiding truths are emphasized in every class, chapel and daily school activities.

Chapel

Students must participate in chapel services each week. Parents are welcome to attend chapel with their child. All visitors, including parents, must show I.D., and have an up-to-date and favorable background investigation on file. Please see the “safety” section for more information. Younger siblings or other guests (with completed background investigation on file) are welcome to attend, however we ask you to exit quickly should younger siblings become disruptive.

Church of Christ

Families are invited to attend worship services and Bible classes with their children to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24) and reinforce Christian teachings.

Weekly Worship Services at Hilltop Church of Christ 2101 MLK Blvd NE, Winter Haven, FL 33884

Sunday 9:00 a.m. Bible Classes (all ages) 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship

5:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Bible classes (for all ages)

If you are interested in learning more about the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16), please contact the office to schedule a Bible study with a member of our staff (Acts 8:30-31; II Tim. 2:15).

CODES OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

Courtesy

Courtesy is the rule in all relationships. Paul said that “love... does not behave itself unseemly,” but rather it is mannerly. Parents, students, staff, and guests are asked to observe Paul’s words in the halls, classrooms, athletic fields, and all circumstances in which we represent Hilltop Christian Academy (I Cor. 13:5).

Early Childhood and Primary Discipline Policies

The Word of God instructs us in Ephesians 6:4, to “...provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” In order for each child to grow to his/her potential, guidelines must be set to be followed in our classrooms.

- Acceptable behavior will be continually reinforced in a positive manner.
- Children are expected to:
 - Respect faculty, staff and peers
 - Listen and follow directions
 - Be kind to each other in actions and words
 - Respect property that belongs to the school or another person
- To avoid disciplinary actions, we will:
 - Recognize the developmental characteristics of children at each age level
 - Set realistic expectations
 - Carefully explain what is expected
 - Provide a positive and accepting environment
 - Anticipate and attempt to prevent problem situations
- For non-compliant behavior, the teacher will have the following procedures:
 - The teacher will attempt to divert the child’s attention by redirecting the unfavorable behavior or providing a gentle reminder.
 - The teacher will attempt to help the child resolve any situation through teacher/child discussion with a firm reminder.

- Continuation of the behavior will result in time out in a quiet area, in view of the teacher, giving the child time to think over the inappropriate actions.
- Parents or administration may be asked to assist in resolving the problem.
- If after working with a child and/or parent, behaviors affecting the classroom climate persist, the student will be dismissed from Hilltop Christian Academy.
- Students striking a teacher, using foul language or exhibiting other such inappropriate behaviors may be suspended or expelled from school.
- If you wish to discuss any of these procedures, please contact the administrator.

Codes of Conduct

Institutions have standards and expectations. Polk County School standards should be applied equally to school hours and non-school hours as long as the student is enrolled. If inappropriate student behavior off campus impacts the educational environment and climate on campus, disciplinary actions may be warranted. Attendance at Hilltop Christian Academy is a privilege. Students whose attitude and conduct do not reflect the biblical principles and fundamental purposes of this school will not be allowed to continue.

God has called us to walk toward purity, with gentleness and respect for others, in these and many other areas of our lives. The school will initially provide guidance on these and other issues, based on biblical principles. However, depending on the severity of the situation, students are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the school or non-renewal for future academic years for conduct that is, at the sole discretion of administration, disrespectful to the school's Christian mission and values.

The following offenses will lead to suspension and/or dismissal of a student. It is the reserved right of the administration to determine judgment. Violators may be subject to immediate termination.

- Bullying (consistent, targeted, and repeated behavior that is unwelcome, unwanted, or uninvited)
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Comments, references, or conduct of a sexual nature
- Continuing non-support of school standards
- Defacing school property
- Disrespect or insolence
- Fighting
- Immoral conduct
- Inappropriate use of technology (this includes the use of social media)
- Insubordination
- Lying
- Name-Calling
- Negative attitude
- Profanity
- References, threats, or insinuations regarding the use or possession of a weapon or anything that could be used as a weapon (will also be subject to immediate termination and reporting to authorities)
- Theft
- Truancy
- Vandalism
- Verbal, physical, written threats or intimidation of any kind will be at our discretion
- Weapons (and/or look-alike weapons)

Harassment

Hilltop Christian Academy is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Our students must be able to pursue his or her academic program without fear of intimidation, humiliation, or degradation from unwelcome and unacceptable behavior of another. Hilltop Christian Academy expects that all of its students will treat each other with courtesy, dignity, and respect. Hilltop Christian Academy does not tolerate violation of federal and state laws prohibiting harassment.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performances that take place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, and that has the effect of:

- Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property
- Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to a student's property
- Creating a hostile educational environment

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical, verbal, or emotional bullying
- All forms of insulting remarks about race, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, or sexual orientation, including oral, written, printed or electronically transmitted remarks or images
- Threats, intimidation, or coercion
- Unwelcome physical contact, telephone calls, texting, email, or use of social media

Early detection, notification and intervention are the best strategies to providing a safe school for all of our children. Students who believe that they are a target of harassment, intimidation, or bullying should *immediately* report such conduct to any teacher, counselor, or administrator. A prompt and thorough investigation of the alleged incident will be conducted, and appropriate corrective action will be taken. To the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action, any complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be treated as confidential.

Retaliation against any student who, in good faith, reports a claim of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or who cooperates in the investigation of any such claim, will not be tolerated and will in itself be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

School Behavior Management Plan

Biblical Foundations to Guide Student Behavior

“Let no one despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity.” I Timothy 4:12

- **Obedience** – Acts 5:29, “We are to obey God...,” Ephesians 6:1-2, “...parents,” “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority,” Hebrews 13:17; “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities...,” Romans 13:1. Christians will obey God, parents, preachers, elders, and those in authority.
- **Modesty** – I Timothy 2:9 and I Timothy 3:2; God commands His children to be “modest” and “orderly.” “Modesty” means “well arranged, seemly; living with decorum. “A well-ordered life.” Therefore, the Christian will have propriety in dress, speech, appearance, and conduct, and will be acceptable, appropriate, well-ordered and not calling attention to self.
- **Moderation** – Philippians 4:5, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” Moderation literally means “seemly, suitable.” It is “agreeably fashioned; marked by propriety and good taste.”
- **Love** – Mark 12:13-31: Christians are to love the Lord above all and their neighbors as themselves. I Cor. 13:5-6, “Love is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”
- **Glorify God** – I Cor. 10:31, “...do it all for the glory of God.” Whatsoever Christians do will be to the glory of God, not causing others to stumble (I Cor. 8:9, Rom. 14:21), not dishonoring themselves (I Cor. 11:14). I Thess. 5:22, “Avoid every kind of evil.” Phil. 4:8, “Finally brothers, whatsoever is true, whatsoever is noble, whatsoever is right, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Student Pledge

“As a student of Hilltop Christian Academy, I will treat all people with respect and dignity. I will strive for integrity and daily honor. I will not cheat, steal, or lie. I will accept and realize every person’s individuality. By upholding all the Christian principles promoted by this school, and striving to honor this pledge,

I know Hilltop Christian Academy will be a better place because of my efforts”. “*The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.*” *Proverbs 10:9.*

Demerit System

Hilltop Christian Academy expects students to exhibit high standards of behavior. Failure to comply with the standard of conduct will result in the issuing of demerits. Teachers have the initial responsibility for disciplining students however; any school personnel may recommend a student for demerits. Students will be graded on their ability to maintain these standards.

For additional or recurring offenses a parent conference, suspension, and/or dismissal may result. If administration feels that demerits are not changing a student’s behavior, the administration may use other means of discipline in lieu of or in addition to demerits. Below is a general list of offenses covered by the demerit system. Other circumstances may be placed in the demerit system at the approval of administration as deemed necessary.

Level I - Offenses

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that interfere with the orderly educational process. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being tardy to class
- Running and/or making excessive noise in the halls, buildings, and/or classrooms
- Not following classroom rules
- Eating or drinking in an undesignated area
- Using items with communication capabilities (cell phones, smart watches, etc.)
- Not bringing required classroom materials and/or assigned work to class
- Violating the dress code
- Lunchroom misconduct (i.e., misuse of food, cutting in line, etc.)
- Horseplay

Level I - Disciplinary Options

- Teacher/student conference
- In-class disciplinary action (i.e., verbal correction, isolation)
- Parent contact
- Parent conference
- Behavioral contracts
- Confiscation of a prohibited item
- Withdrawal of various student privileges
- Environmental change
- Detention

Level II - Offenses

Level II acts of misconduct include those student discipline infractions that are somewhat more serious than those in Level I in their interference with the orderly educational process in the school. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any repeated or chronic misbehavior
- Cheating in any form
- Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, crass, or offensive language and/or gestures to others
- Leaving the classroom or school grounds without permission, cutting class, or truancy
- Exhibiting any unacceptable physical contact, which could but does not result in injury
- Not abiding by the rules and regulations regarding field trips
- Altering school records or documents or signing another person's name on school documents
- Defacing school property. Student pranks resulting in property damage, cleanup, etc.
- Interfering with, impeding, or challenging school authorities
- Fighting -- which is defined as physical conflict between two or more individuals

- Stealing -- which is defined as the act of taking and carrying away the property of another without the consent of the owner
- Inappropriate use of social media (not reflecting Christian character)
- Persisting in acts of disobedience or disorderly behavior that may prove detrimental to the school, harmful to health and safety, and inhibiting to the rights of others
- Displaying any behavior that is disruptive to the orderly process of education
- Showing disrespect toward school personnel or failing to comply with the requests of school personnel
- Possession of any dangerous weapons on school premises or at any school-sponsored functions
- Failure to report to a teacher or administrator the knowledge of an event, device, object, or substance that could cause bodily harm to a person or persons on school property

Level III -- Disciplinary Options

Whether a student is referred to an administrator's office by repeated Level I behaviors or Level II behaviors, the consequences of his/her actions are dependent on the severity of the rule infractions. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Loss of privileges to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Administrator/teacher/student conferences
- Required restitution
- A mandatory zero for cheating on any written work, including all involved parties
- Exclusion from extra-curricular activities
- In-School Detention
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Expulsion
- Consequences determined by administration

Progressive Discipline Plan

Repeated level 2 demerits have a compounding effect on disciplinary consequences. After earning the third level 2 demerit, the student is suspended, placed on a 30-day probation, and a mandatory parent conference is scheduled. A level 2 demerit earned while on probation will result in an immediate suspension. Students earning five level 2 demerits or three out-of-school suspensions may be dismissed.

Student Dismissal Policy

Students who violate the policies of Hilltop Christian Academy will be dismissed. Reasons for such action include, but are not limited to failure to maintain passing grades, violations of the student code of conduct, contributing to the spiritual or moral decline of other students, falsifying information, failure to maintain financial commitment, or as deemed necessary for the good of the school.

Reasons for Dismissal

- Parents will not cooperate with administration
- A student's conduct, attitude, negative influence, or lack of effort makes it inadvisable for that student to remain at Hilltop Christian Academy
- A disruption to school climate or the orderly process of education caused in part by allegations, hearsay, and other situations that impugn the reputation of Hilltop Christian Academy
- Continual failure to achieve academically or continual lack of effort
- Repeated suspensions
- Failure to remain current on school account
- Excessive tardies or absences
- Threats to teachers, staff, or students
- Intentional destruction of property
- Forcible entry into any school buildings
- Obscene gestures and language directed at the faculty or staff
- Immoral behavior
- Possession of obscene or inappropriate material (Administration's discretion)

- Possession of any type of weapon, explosives or literature on explosives
- Verbal or written references or threats involving weapons or explosives

Expulsion

Expulsion refers to the permanent dismissal of a student from school once it is determined that a complete change of environment is in the best interest of the student and/or school, or if a parent continuously refuses to support the administration, teachers, or mission of Hilltop Christian Academy. In the event of expulsion, the parents are responsible for full payment of tuition and other fees through the end of the calendar month of the last day of attendance.

Expectations

Our students represent the image of Hilltop Christian Academy in their behavior at all times, even off school site. Anything that the administration feels would bring reproach upon the name of Hilltop Christian Academy will be dealt with accordingly, and may result in dismissal from the school. This includes use of internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Hilltop Christian Academy expects responsible use of technology by students. Parents and students are not permitted to create a social media account using Hilltop Christian Academy branding. Students are expected to conduct themselves in manner that is consistent with legal, moral and biblical laws and standards.

Respect for God, country, school staff and visitors, family, and fellow students must be exhibited by Hilltop Christian Academy students. A student that will not cooperate with the school will not be allowed to remain at Hilltop Christian Academy. Parents that do not support Hilltop Christian Academy and its policies will be asked to withdraw.

A student may be dismissed or expelled or not allowed to return the following year if s/he is out of harmony with the biblical teachings or the policies of the school at the sole discretion of the administration. Readmission following dismissal will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Physical demonstrations of romantic involvement between students such as hugging, holding hands, embracing, or any other such contact at school or at school functions are considered to be in poor taste and will be dealt with according to need.

In recognition of Biblical commands, immoral conduct will not be tolerated. The Bible forbids sinful behavior and Hilltop Christian Academy expels for such as described in I Corinthians 6:9. Such bodily contact as forbidden in the scriptures or “identifying statements” making claims to have desires of a biblically “unnatural nature,” as made clear in God’s word, is incompatible with the Christian teachings of Hilltop Christian Academy. This is written in vague language intentionally to protect young and innocent minds. The command, however, is clear and explicit. Expulsion is the result.

Parent Expectation

While the entire staff at Hilltop Christian Academy greatly encourages parent participation and visitation, providing a safe and secure learning environment with minimum disruptions is our priority. In order for teachers and students to accomplish daily goals, the following procedures are designed to minimize unscheduled classroom interruptions:

1. Secondary entrance doors are locked. All visitors, including parents, must use the main office entrance doors.
2. All visitors, including parents, must have an up-to-date and favorable background investigation on file. Please see the “safety” section for more information.
3. Visitors will be asked to register in the front office and asked if they have an appointment or if one can be made to see a teacher.
4. Items such as homework, lunch boxes, school projects, etc... will be collected in the office and delivered to the classroom at a convenient time.
5. Friends and relatives other than parents/guardians are discouraged from coming to school to visit with students. Background investigations are required for all visitors. The school reserves the right to request verification of a stated relationship.

6. Students concerns will only be addressed with parents or legal guardians except for matters mandated by law.
7. Anyone on official school business must report to the main office with proper identification to sign in and to receive further direction. No outsiders should be on the campus. All trespassers are subject to arrest.

We are partners in the education of your child. The spirit of all communication at Hilltop Christian Academy is expected to be reflective of the Spirit of Christ. Parent behavior at all events should reflect positively on our school, and comply with all school policies. Rude and inconsiderate behavior toward faculty, staff, administration, or other school representatives is never appropriate. Parents are expected to be supportive of school personnel and school disciplinary policies and decisions.

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their guests. A lack of support may result in a student being dismissed from school. Parents/Guardians displaying any behavior that disrupts the learning environment jeopardizes their child's enrollment at Hilltop Christian Academy. Parents that do not support Hilltop Christian Academy and its policies will be asked to withdraw their child(ren). It is acknowledged and agreed by you that any student whose parent or guardian seeks to tarnish the reputation of Hilltop Christian Academy in the eyes of others, or cause problems for the school and its ministry by a direct action, through the use of rumor or gossip, unmerited or baseless criticism, or who threatens a lawsuit, will be dismissed without reimbursement.

Conferences/Grievances – A Ministry of Reconciliation

****Parents wishing to meet with a teacher are required to schedule a conference in advance. A minimum of 24 hours' notice is requested to allow teachers adequate preparation time. Unscheduled meetings before or after school cannot be accommodated.**

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Matt. 18:15-16)

Matthew 18 specifically addresses what should be done if a Christian has suffered an offense by another Christian. While not all disagreements are necessarily offenses in an institutional setting, Hilltop Christian Academy does expect students, parents, faculty, and staff to follow the basic Matthew 18 principle of going first to the person with whom one disagrees. This includes, but is not limited to, academic concerns.

At Hilltop Christian Academy we desire a harmonious relationship with our parents. If parents have a concern regarding a policy or an event that involves their child, they should make an attempt to contact teachers to resolve academic issues before bringing the concern to the School Administrator or guidance counselor. An effort will be made to resolve any differences and maintain communication between parents and school personnel. Conferences that are planned and scheduled for a specific time are typically productive. Impromptu conferences are likely to be unsatisfactory.

The **18th chapter of Matthew** provides us instruction in how Christians are expected to resolve conflict. The first step involves seeking resolution sincerely by going to the person with whom the conflict exists. In most instances, if both parties truly seek a resolution, the conflict will quickly be mitigated. Classroom issues or concerns must first be addressed with the teacher. Face-to-face conferences are preferred.

All parties will submit to the authority of Hilltop Christian Academy administration, in so doing fulfill the word of God in **Romans 13:1**: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” Both during and after resolution of a conflict, it is expected that teachers, coaches, and administrators maintain confidentiality and avoid gossip about the conflict with others. Hilltop Christian Academy also expects students and parents to maintain confidentiality and avoid gossiping about conflicts. It is not appropriate for students, parents, faculty, or staff to publicize conflicts.

Because we have been given a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18),

we have been charged to resolve important matters that affect the lives, well-being, and good names of students, parents, school employees, and the school as an institution.

It is acknowledged and agreed by you that any student whose parent or guardian seeks to tarnish the reputation of Hilltop Christian Academy in the eyes of others, or cause problems for the school and its ministry by a direct action, through the use of rumor or gossip, unmerited or baseless criticism, or who seek legal action, may be dismissed without reimbursement.

COMMUNICATION

- The “Little Eagles Nest” is our school’s newsletter designed to keep you informed of school events, field trips, etc. It is distributed via email and posted on the school’s website.
- Notices and reminders are sent home periodically from the office via email.
Please check your email daily.
- Written notes, emails, and phone calls are used by teachers and administration to share information regarding the child’s progress as well as other relevant concerns. Expect to receive a newsletter as well as reminders and other updates via e-mail. Please notify the office should you change your e-mail address. This is our primary source of communication.
- Inform us of any problems that may cause your child emotional upset.
- Be assured that we are here in the interest of your child.

DRESS CODE

Dress Code/Appearance

Students should give witness to their faith in their appearance.

The purpose for a dress code policy at Hilltop Christian Academy is two-fold.

- To improve the learning environment and build an educational community that is not centered on fashions or fads, but is focused on student success in the classroom.
- To avoid using clothing or fashion as a basis for making a statement of who we are as individuals, but to emphasize who a person is within and their importance as a child of God. “Man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart.” (I Samuel 16:7)
- Students must dress and groom in such a manner as to reflect cleanliness, modesty, safety, wholesomeness and good taste.
- Hair should be clean, well groomed and should not create a distraction in the classroom.
- Hair should always be neat and “natural” in appearance.
- Hair accessories of all types are not permitted for boys.
- Boys will not be permitted to wear earrings. Girls may only wear one earring in each ear. No body piercing. No gages. No other extreme or fad jewelry without prior permission.
- Excessive jewelry is not appropriate.
- No skin art, to include tattoos, drawings, coloring, etc. Temporary tattoos, stickers, face paint, etc. may be pre-approved on spirit days.
- Girl’s dresses, shorts and skirts shall be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.
- Boy’s shorts may not be longer than knee-length and no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.
- All pants and shorts shall be secured at the waist with a belt.
- Untucked shirts should not be longer than fingertips at arm’s length.
- Tops should cover the stomach, back and sides at all times, including in PE and when arms are lifted.
- No sleeveless tops in grades 4 and up.

- Halter tops, midriff tops, short shorts, excessively baggy pants, etc. are never allowed.
- No tee shirts with sarcasm, inappropriate slogans or advertising, or potentially offensive references from the entertainment industry or pop culture. The same rules apply to backpacks, folders, notebooks, etc. (including socks, shoes, and all articles of clothing).
- Clothing not properly fastened shall not be worn. Faded or torn clothing is not permitted.
- No tight, short, or immodest clothing (i.e., skinny jeans, jeggings, joggers, yoga pants, sweat pants, biker shorts, leg/arm warmers, cut-offs, etc.)
- Students may wear denim jeans with the current school year spirit shirt on designated days. No tobacco, alcohol, offensive or controversial logos or pop stars are to be worn or displayed on backpacks, shoes, hats, lunch boxes, etc.
- Nail polish must be clear or pastel for girls in grades K-5.
- Head coverings shall not be worn inside buildings.
- Many clothing items are lost each year. Please write your child's name inside on the tag.
- All guests will adhere to the school dress code while on campus or on school sponsored trips.
- Students who stay after school must remain in complete school uniform.
- Appropriate dress is interpreted by the School Administrator.

Uniforms

Students in kindergarten are required to wear uniforms each day.

***Students may not make alterations to school uniforms or any other Hilltop Christian Academy apparel.**

Shoes and Socks

All shoes must be a solid black, white, navy, tan, brown, burgundy, or grey. Simple two-tone options in these color combinations will be acceptable. For example, a white or black soled shoe with an upper portion of a solid color,

but no patterns, stripes, checker board, plaid, floral, etc.. *If in doubt, choose solid colors listed.*

- Low-top style shoes, Mary Jane, ballet flat, boat shoe, tennis or athletic shoe styles are acceptable.
- Unacceptable shoes include moccasins, boots, platforms, raised heels, flip flops, Croc-style shoes, slides, skate shoes, mid-top, and high-top shoes (must not cover any part of the ankle).
- For safety reasons, shoes must have a back or back strap. If you are unsure, type “school uniform shoes” into an online search engine to view examples of appropriate options, however this description is very clear.
- Socks must be white, navy, or black (no logos or patterns). Girls are encouraged to wear knee socks on Chapel Day.
- Leggings or tights should be solid, opaque navy, white, or black and knee socks should be solid navy or white.

Uniform Options for Cold Weather

- During cold weather students may wear a plain white, gray, or navy long sleeved shirt beneath an approved uniform shirt with the Hilltop Christian Academy logo.
- Students may wear solid crewneck sweaters over Hilltop Christian Academy uniform shirts (free from brands and/logos of a single-solid color in navy, white, grey, or burgundy).
- All approved Hilltop Christian Academy logo items (long sleeved polos, fleece, and sweatshirts) are acceptable.
- Non-Hilltop Christian Academy apparel may include cardigan sweaters (full length zippers or buttons) or jackets that are plain, neat in appearance, and free from brands and/logos of a single-solid color in navy, white, grey, or burgundy.
- Pullover fleece, hoodies, and non-sanctioned sweatshirts are not allowed.

Free Dress Days

Students are expected to choose appropriate clothing and approved footwear (as described above) on free dress days. Remember, appropriate dress is

interpreted by the School Administrator. (Please refer to the prior Dress Code/Appearance section for items deemed inappropriate.)

Elementary free dress days include the last day before Christmas break, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day, unless the day falls on Chapel Day or a field trip. Other days will be given at School Administrator's discretion. Unless otherwise approved, a Hilltop Christian Academy school uniform is required at all times on campus.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

Shelter-In-Place/Emergency Plan

At Hilltop Christian Academy, we have developed an emergency disaster plan, not because we expect disaster, but to be prepared should the need arise. To help put you at ease, we would like to make you aware of some of the policies already in place.

- We have teachers and staff with current training in CPR and First Aid.
- We have a Shelter-In-Place plan which follows the American Red Cross guidelines should hazardous materials be released into the atmosphere. Should this happen, please be advised that our doors will be locked and our plan implemented. For your own safety, it is recommended that you take shelter and not try to pick up your child.
- Should we need to evacuate the school campus, we will relocate the children to the nearest shelter as suggested by the American Red Cross.
- After a disaster, please check our website for information regarding our status and any other information we may need to get to you. If we are able, these will be updated with additional information.

Severe Weather

- Hilltop Christian Academy will closely monitor announcements issued by the National Weather Service when a hurricane warning or weather alert is issued. Check the weather or call the school after 7:00 a.m. and a message will be available with current information. Following an actual hurricane, we will only close if damage is specific to our school.
- We routinely practice unannounced severe weather and fire drills. Instructions for evacuation are posted in each room. When the bell rings, students should exit quickly and quietly remaining under the supervision of their teacher.
- When Polk County Schools close for reasons other than inclement weather or emergency dismissals (e.g. 9/11), such as using the public schools as shelters for other Florida counties evacuating to Winter Haven, we will not close. Hilltop Christian Academy is not a shelter.

Emergency Dismissal or Cancellation

We will use the Hilltop Christian Academy Parent Alert system to communicate emergency dismissals or cancellations.

ENROLLMENT

To enroll in Hilltop Christian Academy, applicants must complete a tour, complete an application form and submit required records/documents and recommendation forms. A student testing and interview is required for students entering grades K-5. After receiving acceptance notification, parents are provided information necessary to complete the admissions process. All State of Florida immunization and physical examination requirements must be met as part of the enrollment process (Charter 232.032 Florida Statutes) and forms must be on file before the first day of school or attendance may be denied.

Hilltop Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

- Hilltop Christian Academy reserves the right to dismiss any child, if after enrolling he/she seems unable to participate in group experiences or if fees and tuition have not been paid.
- Hilltop Christian Academy does not accept students who have demonstrated repeated patterns of harassment or misconduct in their previous educational setting.
- Hilltop Christian Academy does not offer at this time, any special needs programs, including those designed for SLD (Specific Learning Disability), EH (Emotionally Handicapped), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder).

- Enrollment at Hilltop Christian Academy School is a privilege. Students or parents who express an attitude of disregard for the school, its standards, teachers, or staff will be summarily dismissed. This includes verbal, written, or electronic expressions of discord. A cohesive partnership between home and school is essential to maintaining a positive learning environment.

FIELD TRIPS

Hilltop Christian Academy enhances curriculum through a variety of enriching field trip opportunities. For the protection of our students and school, field trip protocols must be observed. All children under the age of 4 are required to travel in car seats. It is the guardian's responsibility to arrive early and buckle their child's car seat into the driver's car if they wish to do so. Car seats left at the school for field trips or other reasons will be placed in the car by Hilltop Christian Academy staff or authorized personnel. Neither these individuals nor Hilltop Christian Academy will be held liable should they be placed in the automobile incorrectly. We will follow current Florida law for children four years and older.

Parents will be asked to chaperone and/or drive unless the school provides bus transportation. Permission slips must be signed by a parent and returned.

Additional costs may be required for certain attractions or exhibits.

Students are required to wear school shirts with uniform attire on all off-campus trips. On occasion, children will be allowed to wear denim with Hilltop Christian Academy shirts. For such field trips parents will be informed in writing. Please do not assume that it is acceptable to wear jeans unless you have received permission. For most field trips, we will represent our school dressed in chapel attire. Chaperones should dress modestly according to the school dress code.

Parents driving on field trips should not give students anything to eat or drink or make any unscheduled stops including the drive thru. This is unfair to

students not traveling in your vehicle or under your care as a chaperone. Also, it is to protect children against food allergies and to respect parental preferences.

Students may not be transported in convertible vehicles. Chaperones should never give a student unauthorized medication. Following a background check, drivers who have incurred an infraction involving controlled substances while operating a motor vehicle, or temporary loss of license may not transport other children on a Hilltop Christian Academy sponsored field trip (even with the permission of parents). The administration reserves the right to deny participation in field trips and assign an alternative activity to students having trouble with conduct and/or attitude. *See Delinquency under Financial Information.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month and late on the 5th. If the 1st falls on a holiday, weekend or on a day your child is not in school, you may pay on the next school day. A late fee of \$20.00 will be applied after the 5th.

Tuition may be paid by the following methods:

- For security and PCI compliance purposes, all credit or debit card payments must be made through our secure online third-party vendor accessible via the school's website or directly in the FACTS Family Portal.
- Mailing a check to Hilltop Christian Academy of Winter Haven.

Please do not put tuition in your child's book bag or give tuition to a teacher or car line attendant.

Fees

- All fees (to include registration, administration, materials, supplies, field trips, and specials) are non-refundable.
- Accounts will be charged a \$15.00 fee for returned checks.

Delinquency

Accounts are delinquent after the 5th of each month. Report cards and test results will be held by the school if charges, tuition, book debts or other monies owed to the school have not been paid at the time of their distribution.

- If tuition and fees are not current, monies sent in for other activities, field trips, etc., will instead be applied to tuition. Students may not participate in extra-curricular activities when tuition has not been paid. If one child's account is delinquent, all other accounts within the household will be considered delinquent.
- If your child is absent for 2 weeks and tuition has not been paid, we will assume that your child is not returning and student will be dropped from enrollment.
- If final payment is not received prior to Friday before testing begins, students will not be able to take standardized testing and no records will be transferred.
- Payments made after May 5th must be cash or money order. Payments must be made 2 weeks prior to the last day of school to be taken off the "hold records" list. Report cards will be mailed once payment has been processed.
- The school reserves the right to withhold report cards and student records until tuition and other fees/ charges have been paid in full.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION

In general, any child in attendance should be able to participate in the activities. The school should be informed of any illness, emotional upset, loss of sleep, medication administered or other situation that may affect your child.

- If your child is ill (running a fever of 100 degrees or above, exhibiting flu or strep symptoms, experiencing constant sneezing or runny nose, or has an unexplained rash, head lice or nits, please keep him/her home and notify the office of his/her absence. They must remain home for 24 hours after a fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Anytime your child becomes ill during the school day, we will call you to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, we will call one of the friends or relatives you have listed to contact in case of emergencies.
- Teledoc - Doctor appointments should be scheduled outside school hours. When necessary, students must sign out and leave campus for Teledoc (virtual) appointments during the school day.
- If your child leaves school ill one day, he/she must stay out 24 hours unless a doctor's note is brought in stating that s/he is able to return to school.
- Medication must be either accompanied by doctor's orders or prescription, and the appropriate forms must be filled out in the office.
- In the event a student is to receive routine medication during school hours, such medication must be in the original container and adequately labeled. Parents must report to the office, request the medication log and sign in: child's name, name of medication, the date, the dosage, time(s) to be administered and SIGN. Only staff members will administer medication. The staff member signing in prescription medication will have the parent count the pills in their presence and will be asked to confirm the accurate number of pills being left with Hilltop Christian Academy with signatures from both parties. Even cough drops and throat lozenges must be kept in the office.
- Accidents and injuries will be reported to the parent as deemed necessary by the attending teacher. Accident Report Forms will be sent

home. These should be signed by parents and returned the following school day.

- Parents will be notified if a communicable disease has been detected in the school.
- If your child has an allergy, please pick up an Allergy Alert form in the office. Students with allergies will be required to have a signed Allergy Alert form on file with Hilltop Christian Academy.
- If your child is diabetic, please pick up a Diabetes Medical Management Plan form in the office that will need to be completed by your child's doctor. Students with diabetes will be required to have a signed Diabetes Medical Management form on file with Hilltop Christian Academy.
- If your child has asthma, please pick up an Asthma Action Plan form in the office that will need to be completed by your child's doctor. Students with asthma will be required to have a signed Asthma Action Plan form on file with Hilltop Christian Academy.
- In case of emergency, the following steps will be taken:
 - Parents or emergency contact person shall be notified.
 - If the above persons cannot be reached, then the child's doctor will be contacted.
 - 911 will be called in cases with serious injuries.

For helpful information about the dangers of the flu and how to protect your child, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> or <http://www.immunizeflorida.org/>

*****Students are NOT to administer their own medications. Parents, do not send medicine in lunch boxes, book bags, purses, etc.***

*****Students are NOT to distribute medication of any kind to one another.***

BREAKING THESE RULES COULD RESULT IN EXPULSION.

*****Any medication left after the student's last day of the school year may be destroyed.***

Lunch and Snack

- K-5th grade students should bring their lunch or money for hot lunch.
- Students may bring a lunch item that can be warmed in a microwave. Students may not use microwaves for popping popcorn.
- Please do not send candy as your child's snack or lunch.
- For young children, please plan a way to help your child distinguish snack from lunch foods.
- If it is time for your child's class to eat lunch, we cannot wait for you to bring their lunch. Keep in mind that sometimes due to special events, a class may switch their lunch schedule for a day. It is best to send your child's lunch with her/him to school. If the lunch is brought late, it will be kept in the cafeteria and the child will be notified to pick it up at their designated lunch time.
- Students may bring their own lunch in a self-contained lunch box. The lunch box needs to contain their lunch, all utensils (no knives), napkins, and something to drink.
- Students are responsible to take their lunchboxes home at the end of EVERY day. The school is not responsible for lunch boxes left at the school. Lunchboxes that are left for longer than one week will be discarded.

Emergency Lunch Assistance Policy

Purpose

Hilltop Christian Academy is committed to the well-being of every student. While families are responsible for providing their child's daily lunch, the school recognizes that unexpected situations may arise in which a student arrives without food. This policy outlines the school's procedures for ensuring that no student goes without a meal during the school day.

Forgotten or Missing Lunch Procedure

1. Initial Occurrence:

If a student forgets their lunch, the school office will first contact the parent or guardian to bring the lunch to school. If this is not possible, the

student will be provided with an emergency meal at no charge for the day.

2. **Repeated Occurrences:**

In cases where lunch is forgotten multiple times, parents may be asked to reimburse the school for the cost of replacement food. The school will communicate with the family to determine if additional support or resources are needed.

Emergency Meal Provision

To ensure that all students are nourished throughout the day, the school will maintain a limited supply of **non-perishable food items**, such as:

- Peanut butter or sunbutter sandwiches (allergy-friendly options provided when necessary)
- Applesauce or fruit cups
- Granola bars, crackers, or similar snacks
- Bottled water or 100% juice boxes

These emergency meals are intended as temporary assistance, not a substitute for a parent-provided lunch program.

Support for Families in Need

If staff become aware of a student who consistently arrives without lunch due to financial or family hardship, the school will:

- Provide meals discreetly as needed, and
- Connect the family with local community resources, church ministries, or food assistance programs for ongoing support.

The goal is to care for the child while preserving dignity and helping the family achieve long-term stability.

Confidentiality

All emergency meal assistance will be handled **privately and respectfully** to protect the student's dignity and maintain family confidentiality.

Pets

As part of our continuing efforts to keep students healthy and safe, family pets are not allowed on campus, including those intended for 'show and tell' presentations. Educational exceptions are occasionally made, but not for common, domestic pets such as cats, dogs, hamsters, guinea pigs, birds, rabbits, etc. Please help us maintain a safe climate by not bringing your pets onto the school campus during school, special events or otherwise.

Phones Calls

Please arrange student social activities with other parents and confirm plans with the parent/child prior to the school day. Calls made to speak with a student should be reserved for emergencies only. **Students will not be allowed to have a phone in their possession during instructional time.**

Photographs

Unless received in writing stating otherwise, it is assumed that Hilltop Christian Academy has permission to take your child's photograph or video your child. We may use a student's picture or video in the yearbook, school brochures, social media or promotional publications.

Safety

While the entire staff at Hilltop Christian Academy greatly encourages parent participation and visitation, providing a safe and secure learning environment with minimum disruptions is our priority. In order for teachers and students to accomplish daily goals, the following procedures are designed to minimize unscheduled classroom interruptions:

- Secondary entrance doors are locked. All visitors, including parents, must use the main office entrance doors and sign in through the front office.
- We require all visitors (parents, relatives, guests, and chaperones) to have a current and favorable background check on file in the front office (see front office for instructions).
- The visitor's name badge should be worn in a **VISIBLE** location on your clothing so that our teachers and staff will be able to see it clearly.

- Parents choosing not to participate in the background screening will not have access to the campus during the school day. We appreciate your cooperation and support as we make every effort to ensure a safe and loving environment for you and your child.
- Visitors are not allowed on campus for extended visits. This policy includes relatives and friends of existing students as well as former students. Faculty and staff are responsible for enrolled students. Visitors for unofficial purposes will not be granted access to the general population of Hilltop Christian Academy during normal operating hours. All visitors must be prepared to show identification upon request.
- Visitors will be asked to register in the front office and asked if they have an appointment or if one can be made to see a teacher.
- Items such as homework, lunch boxes, school projects, etc., will be collected in the office and delivered to the classroom at a convenient time.
- Friends and relatives-other than parents/guardians - are discouraged from coming to school to visit with students. Background investigations are required for all visitors. The school reserves the right to request verification of a stated relationship.
- Student concerns will only be addressed with parents or legal guardians except for matters mandated by law.
- Anyone on official school business must report to the main office with proper identification to sign in and to receive further direction. No outsiders should be on the campus. All trespassers are subject to arrest.

Right to Search

Hilltop Christian Academy has a responsibility to provide for the safety and welfare of all students and employees. For this reason, the school reserves the right to examine the contents of any purse, backpack, school bag, or any other container used while the student is involved in a school activity or on school property. Likewise, a student may be required to empty pockets, purses, or other containers and may be subject to physical search. Any such examination shall be conducted by or at the direction of the school School Administrator or such School Administrator's designee.

Insurance

Hilltop Christian Academy carries liability insurance; not medical insurance; therefore, if your student has an accident, it will not be covered by Hilltop Christian Academy or any affiliation. Therefore it is recommended that parents obtain health and/or accident insurance for their child's protection.

Smoke-Free Campus

Hilltop Christian Academy maintains a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted at any time on campus, or during field trips. The policy is in effect on the school grounds as well as inside buildings and is in effect after school hours as well as during school hours.

School Hours

The gate will open for access at 7:30 for all students. The school day hours are as follows:

8:15-2:30 Elementary (K-5th grade)

Shadowing

Hilltop Christian Academy works hard to maintain a safe and secure campus for both our students and staff. Therefore, we do not allow shadowing on campus.

SOLICITATION/FUNDRAISING

Unless pre-approved by administration, there shall be no solicitation of parents, teachers, or students on the campus of Hilltop Christian Academy.

STUDENT MATERIALS

Book Bags

Students are encouraged to use a book bag. Bags should be of a manageable size and marked with student's name. Parents are urged to check book bags daily for notices and other important information. Wheeled

backpacks **may not** be used unless special permission has been granted. (See Dress Code).

Non-Sanctioned Items

Please do not let your child bring toys to school except on designated days. This includes spinners, fidget cubes, slime, and any other items that proves distracting in the educational setting. Books or other special theme related items of interest, to share with the class, are welcome. Please have the child's name on any item brought to school. Skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, and skate shoes are not permitted on the school grounds. Guns, ropes, knives (including kitchen cutlery) and other toys including squirt guns, paint ball guns or any "look-alike" weapons or items that encourage rough and violent play are not allowed at school. Dangerous items are not permitted. Music recordings, CD's, DVD's or videos should not be brought to school. Ear Buds, Radios, CD players, MP3 players, cell phones or electronic games are not to be used during the school day. The school is not responsible for locating such items should they become lost or stolen.

Students are not allowed to bring tobacco products, medications, matches, cigarette lighters, gum, playing cards or obscene materials to school. Trading cards and games are not allowed at school. Books or magazines containing inappropriate or potentially offensive material may not be brought to Hilltop Christian Academy. Items in violation will be taken away from students and kept in the school office for parents to pick up. Items must be picked up within 30 days. A suspension may be assessed to a student who brings any "look alike" weapon or items mentioned above. Any student found with illegal drugs/substances will be immediately expelled and legal action may be taken.

Smart watches, and all other non-sanctioned devices capable of accessing the Internet, are not permitted at Hilltop Christian Academy. These include, but are not limited to: Apple Watch, Samsung Gear, LG Style/Sport, Asus Zenwatch, etc. Confiscated items must be picked up from the main office by a parent.

During class, students are permitted to drink water only from clear, colorless, non-breakable containers with closable lids or caps. Coffee, soda, gatorade, juice, etc. are not allowed during class or in hallways.

Cell Phones

Students choosing to bring cell phones or other electronics are responsible for them. Student cell phones should not be on or visible during the school day.

Abuse of this rule could result in losing the privilege of bringing a phone to school. Cell phones collected by teachers will be turned into the office and are subject to being searched. Students found using their devices as hot spots (avoiding our filtered network) will also lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone on campus.

School phones are business phones and are not for student's personal use (i.e. making social arrangements, etc.). In case of emergency or urgent needs and with specific permission from the office staff, students may make brief calls home.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the front office. Lost jewelry, eyeglasses, cameras, and other personal items will be kept in the office. Items will be held only until the end of a nine-week grading period, at which time they will be donated to charity. Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or valuables to school.

Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property. Items marked with students' names are more likely to be returned to owner.

TRAFFIC AND DRIVING PROCEDURES

Traffic Rules and Car Line Protocol

- For the safety of our children, do not use electronic devices such as cell phones and tablets while operating a vehicle on the campus of Hilltop Christian Academy.

- Traffic is one way on school grounds.
- Drive slowly and with caution. The speed limit on our driveway is 5 miles per hour. Always be prepared to stop.
- Do not leave your car unattended in car line at any time during school hours. If you plan to exit your car, please park in a parking space. NEVER leave your children (or pets) in the car unattended; especially a car with the motor running.
- Drivers are not permitted to stop in the pedestrian lot (office parking lot) to drop off or pick-up children. This area is reserved for parents that are PARKING and WALKING their students to class or coming into the office. We understand that often you are in a hurry and appreciate those that abide by the policies to keep children safe.
- Illegal parking will result in vehicles being towed away at the owner's expense.
- When pulling up to car line, always leave adequate space between your car and the one in front of you. Put your car in park any time your vehicle is stopped in the car line.
- While waiting in car line, young children inside the car should be buckled in their seats.
- New primary students should walk in with a parent the first week of school.
- Always be aware of slowing down prior to the entrance or exit.
- Never take chances on "beating" oncoming traffic when turning in or out of the entrance or exit.
- If raining, allow extra stopping time for your vehicle and others.
- For the sake of all our children, be a defensive driver at all times.
- Always be sure you and your child are wearing your safety belts.
- Keep in mind that delivery trucks, visitors, mowing services, etc. are occasionally on campus unaware of our procedures. Non-school related traffic may be exiting or entering the incorrect direction. For the safety of our children, please remain cautious.
- If you observe anyone violating these rules, report the violation to our office immediately.
- Student drivers must use reserved parking area.

- Please help us protect our precious children by observing these policies.

Morning Drop Off

- Car line will begin at 7:30 for all school students. A staff member, school volunteer, or our safety patrol team will be on hand to greet your child.
- Please keep in mind that this procedure is for quick drop offs. Out of courtesy for our patrols and other parents, if you need to fix your child's hair, finish breakfast, adjust clothing, or say lengthy good-byes please park in the parking lot. If your child wants you to walk him/her to the door, you must also use the regular parking lot.
- Never allow a child to walk or run through the parking lot. Too many cars are moving in too many directions.
- If you are going to be on campus, you must be signed in at the office and have completed our background check procedures.

After School Pick Up

- It is assumed that your child will be dismissed to car line unless otherwise noted. Bike riders and walkers must have a signed Dismissal Transportation form on file in the school office.
- You will receive a car sign with your child's name. Please hang the sign with your child's name facing out on the mirror during pick up. Once your child is loaded, flip the sign to the other side to reveal the large check mark (✓).
- For the safety of our children, the traffic pattern at Hilltop Christian Academy is a counterclockwise flow that allows all loading and unloading of children to occur on the PASSENGER side of each vehicle.
- There are two lanes. The right lane is labeled "Pick Up", and is designated for vehicles waiting in queue for their children to be loaded. Our staff will be assisting. The left lane is labeled "Exit", and is only used for through traffic. Once your car has been loaded, a staff member will direct you into this lane so that you may safely exit. Please wait for their signal.

- When pulling into queue, make sure you leave enough room to pull out after loading. Students will use the paved walkway to expedite the afternoon pick-up.
- The “Pedestrian Lot” is still reserved for parents who are parking their vehicles and coming in to the office. You may NOT use this area to drop off or pick up children.
- Additional staff will be on site to provide assistance. Please watch for them and use extra caution for the continued protection of our children.
- We understand that your time is valuable. We strive to run the car line efficiently. However, safety is always our priority. Please allow us to load your child in car line and refrain from walking up to pick up your child so that we can keep our focus on all children.
- If your child is to be picked up by someone not designated in the student’s file, then an email will be required prior to pickup. Photo identification will be required.
- Car line moves slowly in the early school months as we are learn to recognize the parent’s vehicles. Please be patient as you wait your turn. If you need to get out quickly, please arrive early.

It is your responsibility to inform all persons responsible for dropping off or picking up your child of these procedures, including the identification requirements. Our priority is providing for the safety of all our children.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Arriving Early

Hilltop Christian Academy cannot assume responsibility for students who arrive prior to their drop-off time due to our inability to provide adult supervision in the classrooms. Please do not arrive early unless your child is participating in a specific supervised activity. Please do not take your child to the playground before or after school hours. **Our Hilltop Christian Academy staff is the only personnel allowed to monitor children on the playground.**

Late Pick Up

- Please respect our teacher's planning time and pick up your children promptly.
- Parents arriving later than 10 minutes past dismissal will be assessed an additional fee.
- Parents arriving late must park in a marked parking space and pick up their child from the office. These accounts will assess the daily rate. Please do not try to cheat or beat this system. It is put in place for late-comers to ensure a safe place for your child to wait. We pay staff to allow you this service and in turn need you to pay for the service when you use it.

****Hilltop Christian Academy assumes no liability for students who are not engaged in official, supervised school functions during hours other than normal operating hours. Students not picked up by dismissal may not be under the direct supervision of a school employee.**

TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

Requests for student records and transcripts must be submitted in writing. Official documents will be processed within five business days of written request.

VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Background Screening

Parents meeting our background check requirements (see office for more information) are welcome at Hilltop Christian Academy, and will be allowed access to all facilities. For the safety of the children, all persons are required to sign in and wear the Hilltop Christian Academy volunteer name tag *before* conducting business on campus. Be prepared to show identification upon request. **We strongly encourage every parent to fulfill our background check requirements** early in the school year to avoid potential problems

and/or delays attending school programs, field trips, class parties, lunch visits, etc.

*Also see *Field Trips*

Parent Advisory Committees

Hilltop Christian Academy welcomes parent involvement. You are encouraged to become active in the school. Membership donations are \$5.00 per family. Dues are used to set a budget for planned events. Meetings will be posted in the school's newsletter, "Little Eagles Nest".

Volunteer Hours

Parents are asked to volunteer 8 hours per year. Ample opportunities are provided during school hours.

WITHDRAWAL/TRANSFER

Change is never easy. It is especially difficult when a student transfers or withdraws before the end of a grading period. In addition to the emotional challenge for students, this creates a disruption to the educational environment. For these and other reasons it is recommended that such decisions are discussed with guidance and/or administration as early as possible. Tuition for an entire month is due if a student attends any portion of school at Hilltop Christian Academy during that month. If a 30-day notice is given, tuition is only required for the last month of the last day the child attended. Otherwise, tuition is required for an additional month. In the case of an early withdrawal reimbursement (for any reason), a 5% administrative fee will be added if the tuition was paid in full.

