

# Pleasant Hill Academy

## Student Handbook

### 2023-2024

*Preparing Our Students for Life*



**Ms. Shauna McDowell, Principal**  
**Mrs. Gabrielle Billingsley, Asst. Principal**

Mrs. Cherita Mack - Sr. Support Specialist  
Mrs. Donna Smith - Sr. Support Specialist  
Ms. Deja Mapp- School Resource Coordinator  
Mrs. Elizabeth Greene - School Social Worker

# STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you to another memorable school year at Pleasant Hill Academy!

Our school's vision is to meet the needs of all students, recognizing the uniqueness of each child, and preparing students to lead productive, moral, responsible lives. Students, parents, and community members can expect that our collaboration as a district will continue to vault student learning to great successes this year by committing to our professional learning community. Student life at Pleasant Hill will include many positive endeavors that will support their learning through character, service, and excellence. Some of these endeavors include:

- *Rigorous Curriculum*
- *Research-Based Instructional Practices*
- *Response to Interventions*
- *Data-Informed Decision Making*

As building Principal (year 13 at PHA), and through our district leadership, our staff will be focused on our continued pursuit of research-based professional development and using student achievement data to make informed decisions on curriculum. Our staff's vision for learning is that all students will learn in an innovative student-centered environment that is constantly improving and builds lifelong characteristics of success. We are committed to provide structure and protect time for teachers to collaborate, to recognize and celebrate best practices, and to continue to grow.

Success in school requires some thoughtful planning and commitment. Hard work and regular attendance are a must. Researchers have noted that the most important thing parents/guardians can do for their child's education is to take an active interest in their child's schooling. When parents are involved in students' education, the children do better in school.

As always, we look forward to an exciting year and wish each family academic prosperity for the 2023-24 school year.

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The school phone number is 363-4300. The school office is the nucleus of the schoolhouse. It is the place in which we manage all of the core operations of the building. Due to the importance of the school office we must establish systems that will enhance the quality of the school environment.

## **Dismissal (Office)**

If your child rides the school bus, he/she will be placed on the bus unless you send a note with your child that they should not ride that day. The note should explain the student's alternative way home.

Grades K-6 Carpool students will be dismissed from the basketball court. Walkers will be dismissed out of the front doors. Students must follow dismissal procedures to ensure their safety. Please encourage your child to come home immediately after school to avoid participation in unacceptable and/or undesirable behaviors that generally result in severe consequences.

## **Students are not permitted to go to the College Hill Library after school without a parent letter stating otherwise.**

The end of the school day is a hectic time of the day. If a change to your child's daily routine needs to occur please notify your child's teacher in advance. It is imperative that all arrangements be made prior to 12:00 p.m. We will not attempt to deliver a message to a child received after 1:00 p.m.

**NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO RIDE ANY BUS EXCEPT FOR THE ONE THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO BY TRANSPORTATION!!**

**Parking in the Fire Lane (in the front of the school) for any reason is not allowed!!! You can be towed!**

## **Tardiness**

It is important that students come to school every day on time. This includes Preschool Students. Instructional time is lost when a student is late to school. Habitual tardiness will affect academic performance. A note must accompany the student stating the reason for the tardiness. School starts at 7:40 a.m. Please call the school if you know your child will be late. A tardy will only be considered excused if your child has an early morning doctor appointment or family emergency (which does not prove to be a pattern), provided you send a note from the doctor's office. Please make sure your student leaves home in plenty of time to arrive at school on time.

### **Morning arrival**

Students whose parents drive them to school in the morning must be dropped off in the front of the building by the main office.

Do not drop your child off in the cafeteria parking lot. The cafeteria parking lot is where our teacher's park their cars. We want to keep children safe from traffic.

Do not park in the Fire Lane in the front of the building for any reason at all. Please pull in a parking space.

### **Early Dismissal**

Students will not be released for early dismissal after 1:30 p.m. This time is set aside for instructional time, homework assignments, planners signed, etc. Exceptions will be made only in case of emergency. In cases of frequent emergencies, families will be referred to our School Social Worker for possible truancy charges.

A written note stating time and reason for early dismissal is required. The note will need to be given to the homeroom teacher, who will give information to the office. In case of an emergency, where a note cannot be sent and a parent must call before 12:00 p.m. for early dismissal; students will be called to the office once the person picking them up arrives.

### **Daily Schedule**

Pleasant Hill Academy hours are 7:40 a.m.-2:10 p.m. **Students must enter the building through the front doors.** Students will be able to enter the building at 7:15 a.m. daily and not before. Morning announcements begin at 7:45 a.m. ***Students that arrive after 7:40 are considered tardy.***

All students who arrive **after 7:40 a.m.** should come to the office for a late slip.

### **Dress Code**

Uniforms are mandatory for the 2023-2024 school year. Students are to wear uniforms **every day**. Students in grades PreK-6 are permitted to wear any combination of blue, black, white or khaki.

Students must dress appropriately for school. It is expected that student dress and grooming be neat, clean and in good taste so that each student may share in promoting a positive, respectful, healthy, and safe atmosphere.

To respect our students and our learning environment, WE DO NOT want to see the SEVEN B's:

BRA/Straps, BOSOM, BOTTOMS, BOXERS, BELLIES, BEDROOM WEAR, BACKS

Student dress and grooming will be the responsibility of the individual and of the parents, within the following guidelines:

1. Dress and grooming will be clean and in keeping with health, sanitary, and safety requirements.
2. All students must wear gym shoes, boots or other types of footwear that cover the entire foot. No house slippers, flip flops nor slides will be allowed unless they are a part of a school sponsored activity.
3. Dress and grooming will not disrupt the teaching/learning process or cause undue attention to an individual student. Eccentric hair or scalp color (color that is not considered a natural shade) or excessive make-up may be disruptive and should not be worn. Pajamas are not appropriate for wear at school.
4. Clothing with undue exposure of the body or undergarments is not permitted: Midriff shirts, Tank Tops, Muscle Shirts, Shirts with Straps, Camis, Short Shorts (“Daisy Dukes”), and See-Through Clothing worn without proper undergarments will be considered inappropriate. Students are not allowed to wear pants below the waist (“sagging”).
5. Articles of clothing with insignias or slogans that are disruptive to the educational process are not permitted. This includes clothing and accessories that display information about alcohol, drugs, profanity, violence, or sexually suggestive slogans or drawings.
6. Students will not be allowed to wear hats, hoods or attire such as bandannas or scarves of any kind in the building unless they are a part of a school sponsored activity.
7. Class activities may require the student to adjust hair or clothing during the class period in the interest of maintaining safety standards.
8. No heavy coats, jackets or hoodies will be allowed to be worn in the classrooms, hallways, or cafeteria.
9. All clothing should be worn as the clothing designer intended it to be worn. Students should respond appropriately to any reasonable teacher or administrator request involving the dress code. When, in the judgment of the principal, a student’s appearance or mode of dress disrupts the educational process, or constitutes a threat to health or safety, the student may be required to make modifications. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct.

# **ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY**

Good attendance is critical for any worker including students! Children develop work habits at a very young age. If children learn early in life the bad habit of being late and absent, it will be difficult to change that habit as they enter adulthood. One of our goals as a school family is to prepare our students to be good, solid productive members of society. Students are required to attend school every day and on time. This is the law. A student that is absent more than ten percent of the school year will be retained the following year. In the event that your child will be absent from school, the following procedures should be followed:

- 1) Phone the school office before 8:00 a.m. at 363-4300 and leave a message if the office phone goes to voicemail.
- 2) Send a note to school upon your child's return, explaining the reason for the absence. (Students will give the note to the homeroom teacher to turn into the office to update your child's attendance record)
- 3) If a phone call is not made or a note is not sent, the absences will be considered **unexcused**. When your child reaches **four unexcused absences**, you and your child will be referred to the school Social Worker for follow up. Additionally, a note sent with the student does not guarantee an "excused absence".

## **Chronic Absenteeism**

Any student who has chronic unexcused absences in one quarter will need to be aware of the following consequences:

Ø 5 unexcused absences = Mandatory Parent Meeting

Ø 6 unexcused absences = Court Referral

THIS IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

## **After School Tutoring (TBD)**

Students will receive extra help in meeting Ohio Achievement goals. Details will be released at a later date.

## **Computers/iPads**

**Students will be expected to have their device daily for school use with the following items:**

<b>Laptops</b>	<b>iPads</b>
Fully charged	Fully charged
Carrying case	Case
Charging cord	Charging Box and Cable
Device should be in their bookbag	Device should be in their bookbag
<b>Replacement fee \$660</b>	<b>Replacement fee \$398</b>

***\*The safest place for your child's device is in their bookbag, not their hands. No liquids in bookbag with device\****

**Student Technical Support:** The Family Technology Support Center is available in English and Spanish from Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Call FTS at (513) 363-0688 or contact via email at [FTS@cps-k12.org](mailto:FTS@cps-k12.org)

## **Discipline**

All students have the right to learn, and no student has the right to disrupt the learning activities of others. Each year, the Cincinnati Board of Ed. adopts a district wide policy to provide guidelines for the teaching and implementation of expected behaviors.

Students must follow the district wide code of conduct before, and after school. The Code is in effect inside school buildings, on school grounds and at school related activities. Students must also follow these rules on the yellow buses or vans that bring them to and from school and transport them to school related activities.

### **School-Related Problems:**

If a student has a problem related to discipline, security or personal safety, the student should do one or all of the following as quickly as possible:

- Tell the nearest teacher or staff member, or talk to the principal or assistant principal.
- Talk to someone who can help the student learn ways to deal with a problem — perhaps

a peer mediator, peer helper, teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker or an adult mentor.

- Tell parents or guardians about the problem.

### **Personal Problems:**

For help with personal problems that may impact a student's school life or activities, the student should:

- Discuss the problem with parents or guardians, if possible.
- Talk with school counselors, psychologists and social workers at the schools;

they are trained to offer help with personal problems and can lead students to other resources.

### **District Resource Regarding Discipline:**

\*See Character and Support Guide Code of Conduct K-12 on District Website @

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JyEATKQyqL7Ps3jBEZOhpCSZvWqLQ81YnYd6fvsKhWQ/edit>

### **Emergency Removal**

A student who is issued an Emergency Removal may not return to school for 24 hrs. and/or until a parent/guardian returns with the student. When an emergency removal is issued, parents should contact office personnel at 363-4300 to set up an appointment with the administration and teacher team.

### **School of Promise**

The School of Promise is an option for students in grades 4-6 facing suspension or expulsion which allows them to continue their school work while completing a discipline program. Students from Pleasant Hill will attend the School of Promise:

School of Promise at  
The old Jacobs Center building  
5225 Winton Ridge Lane  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45232  
(513-363-2400)

**When an Alternative placement is issued and served parents should contact the school office, at 363-4300 to set up an appointment with the principal/teacher team before the student can return to school,**

### **Student Work Detail or Detention**

Students who commit "Small, Non-Aggressive Offenses" may be assigned work detail or detention from 2:15 – 3:15 p.m. Students who receive work detail or detention will stay after school for 1 hour and help clean up or complete assigned assignments. In order for students to participate in work detail or detention a signed permission slip must be kept on file.

### **Breakfast/Lunch**

Breakfast is available and free to all students beginning at 7:15a.m. Please encourage your child to eat breakfast daily. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast and Lunch are free to all students.



Our Country is pushing to decrease obesity within children. The Ohio Dept. of Education has also adopted a “More Healthy Life-Style” so we are asking parents to please follow the below packed lunch requirements.

**1) No pops/sodas**

**2) One small lunch size snack (chips, dessert, etc.)**

**3) Students will not have access to a microwave for packed lunches.**

**4) Food is not permitted to leave the cafeteria for any reason**

### **Student Fees**

Student fees are used to pay part of the cost of essential classroom materials that are very important for your child's successful performance in school.

Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, Ohio law prohibits Cincinnati Public Schools from charging these fees to a student who qualifies for public assistance. If your child is eligible for a waiver **be sure to complete a waiver form for your child.**

For parents that do not complete and return the waiver form before the last day of the 2018/2019 school year you will be required to pay the maximum amount on the student fee form. Partial payments will be accepted anytime throughout the year.

We would be grateful for your cooperation in paying student fees promptly—**by October 12.**

If you have questions regarding your child(ren) student fees, please call the office @ (513) 363-4300 and ask for Mrs. Donna Smith.

### **Lunchroom Procedure**

Each child is provided 30 minutes for lunch. Due to the time constraints associated with lunchtime it is imperative that all students adhere to the following:

Ø Arrive to the lunchroom area quietly, in a straight line

Ø Wait quietly and patiently in your seat while each student secures his or her food

Ø Go through the lunch line in an orderly fashion

Ø Eat using level 1 voice level, keeping hands, feet and food to yourself

Ø Raise your hand before getting out of your seat

Ø Clean your eating area

Ø No running in the cafeteria

**Food from the lunchroom may not be taken out of the lunchroom for any reason**

### **Playground (Recess) Procedure**

Students participating in recess should adhere to the following.

Ø Listen to the adults at all times

Ø No rough play or “play fighting”

Ø No sports and/or activities that requires physical contact

Ø Do not leave school grounds area without permission

Ø No fighting

Ø No eating

Ø Use appropriate language at all times

### **Hallway Procedure**

All students must walk in the hallways on level 0 (no talking). No student will be allowed to move about the school without an adult unless the office authorizes it or they are carrying a hall pass.

### **Toys**

Students are not permitted to bring any toys to school. The school will not be responsible for any lost, broken or stolen toys.

### **Emergency Information**

Every child enrolled must have an Emergency Medical Authorization Form with emergency information on file with accurate up to date contact information. Please return this form to your child’s teacher the first week of school. It is vital that the school has accurate contact information for your child in case of emergency. Include work and cell phone numbers. Please notify the office when any information changes, such as address or phone numbers.

**If contact information changes you must complete a NEW Emergency Medical Authorization Form with updated information for the safety of your child. All forms are located in the office.**

### **Field Trips/Recognition**

All students may be invited to attend field trips each school year. Students who **do not** pay school fees won't be permitted to attend school field trips until fees are paid. Students who have inappropriate behavior will not be permitted to attend any field trips. This decision will be up to the teacher. Permission slips and any money required must be turned in by the specified deadline listed on the permission slip.

All field trips are educational experiences therefore, parents may not request that their child not attend.

### **Visits to the School**

Parent participation is an extremely important ingredient in a child's academic success. We love parent visitors, however, all school visitors must schedule all classroom visits in advance. All visitors must report to the office and register before entering the main hallway. You will then be given a badge identifying you as a visitor. We encourage parents to visit your child's classroom. Remember a visit to observe the room is not conference time. The best times to ask questions or share concerns are by phone, in writing, email or schedule a time to come in for a conference. The instructional time is precious, so we thank you in advance for understanding if we cannot have a face-to face conference during your child's instructional time

### **Phone Calls to Students**

The office will only take calls for students during extreme emergencies. The office will not get students out of instruction to answer phone calls. Students will be permitted to use the phone only in emergency situations.

### **Cell Phones**

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school according to the district policy. The school is not liable for lost/stolen phones. All Pleasant Hill students' that bring a cell phone to school must have them turned off completely from 7:40- 2:10. **ANY** student that is seen with their cell phone out and/or are using their cell phone will have it confiscated. The cell phone will not be returned to the student only to the parent/guardian. **Students in grades 5 and 6** cell phones will be collected each morning and returned to the student at the end of the day.

## **Promotion/Retention**

A student shall be promoted to the next grade level when it is in the best interest of that student's academic achievement as well as the student's social and emotional development.

In such cases that the professional staff and/or parent/guardian of the student believe that the student is not meeting instructional objectives for the assigned grade or is not demonstrating the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for the assigned grade, then a team will be convened to determine the tiers of support needed for that student to address their needs in the current grade, as well as after promotion. This team will consist of the classroom teacher, parent/guardian, and any relevant specialized staff, including but not limited to Intervention Specialists, School Counselors, and School Social Workers.

**A student shall not be promoted to the next grade level** if the student has been truant for more than ten percent of the required attendance days of the current school year and has failed two or more of the required curriculum subject areas in the current grade unless the student's principal and the teachers of any failed grade subject area agree that the student is academically prepared to be promoted to the next grade level.

## **Homework**

Students are required to complete homework. **Please contact your child's teacher if your child does not come home with a homework assignment.** *This is a school policy.*

## **Parental Support**

In an effort to support instruction, the Pleasant Hill Academy Family is asking each parent to encourage their child(ren) to read, and/or read **daily** with your child.

\*Parents should write questions pertinent to the story (i.e. who, what, why and when questions) and encourage students to provide written answers.

\*Students/parents who complete this task regularly should perform well on the State Assessments in the spring.

[Parent directions on how to set up a Powerschool Account for your child](#)

## **Individualized Education Programs**

If you are concerned about your child's educational performance, schedule a conference immediately with the teacher to discuss your concerns. **IEPs are not** developed for children unless adequate documentation and testing has been completed by official school personnel and/or a child's doctor.

Any new student to Pleasant Hill with an IEP must have a transition meeting prior to them starting school. If your child's Intervention Specialist does not schedule this meeting with you, please call the homeroom teacher or the administrative staff.

### **Medication**

Prescribed medications must be kept in the nurse's office, in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, type of medication and dosage information. A medication form signed by the student's Doctor and Parent/Guardian must be on file before medication will be dispensed to a student. Non-prescription medication, (i.e. Tylenol ,Ibuprofen, Anti-Itch cream/lotion, Tums,Cough Syrup/Drops ) can be distributed from the nurse with the Authorization for Administration of Over the Counter Medications at School form on file signed by Parent/Guardian.

### **BULLYING**

Pleasant Hill will not tolerate bullying of any sorts. We are very aware that this is a serious matter. If your child feels as though they are being bullied they should tell a staff member immediately. Students and or Parents can contact Ms.Elizabeth Greene, School Social Worker to report all incidents.

\*Board Policy No. 5517.01 defines bullying, harassment or intimidation as either "violence within a dating relationship; or any intentionally written electronic act, ...verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibit more than once, toward another particular student(s) and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student(s) and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student(s)."

As we know children will be children, all incidents are not considered bullying. Please see the definition above for clarity.

### **Bus Transportation**

**Bus Transportation is a privilege that can be withheld from any student that does not follow bus safety procedures.**

Assignment of bus stops is based on the student's legal residence, which parents give to the student's school. When a family moves, it is critical that the family's new address be given to the child's school prior to the move because a different stop location may be assigned based on the new address.

Bus stops will meet safety rules regardless of the distance between stops, so it may not be possible to place bus stops in locations that allow parents to observe their children at the stops from their homes. Parents/guardians are responsible for students' safety between homes and the bus stops.

Student behavior that distracts bus drivers is a hazard to the vehicle's safe operation, and jeopardizes the safety and welfare of all passengers. Misbehavior while on a yellow school bus or a Metro bus can result in disciplinary action for the student or the suspension of transportation service for the student.

All school buses are equipped with video-camera equipment to assist in monitoring student behavior.

To ensure safe, efficient transportation service, students should:

1. Arrive at bus stops before the buses are scheduled to arrive.
2. Wait in locations clear of traffic and away from the bus stops.
3. Behave at the school bus stop so as not to threaten life, limb or property of any individual.
4. Go directly to a seat (empty or assigned) so the bus may safely resume motion.
5. Remain seated, keeping aisles and exits clear.
6. Observe classroom conduct and obey drivers promptly and respectfully.
7. Do not use profanity on the bus.
8. Do not eat or drink on buses, except as required for medical reasons.
9. Do not use tobacco on buses.
10. Do not possess alcohol or drugs on buses, except for required prescription medication.
11. Not throw or pass objects on, from or into buses.
12. Carry onto buses only objects small enough to be held in their laps.
13. Leave or board buses at assigned locations, unless they have parental and administrative authorization to do otherwise.
14. Not put heads or arms out bus windows.
15. Only ride the bus they have been assigned to ride but the bus company.

When a student does not comply with behavior rules, the bus driver will complete a School Bus Conduct Report. Consequences will be given based on offense.

When incidents occur that require police involvement - either to remove a student from a bus or to restore order - the following procedure will be followed: Students will be removed for the following infractions: fighting, weapons, drugs or other illegal activities. Students will be suspended immediately from future bus service pending a conference to be held at the school, which will include all students involved in the bus incident, their parents, a school administrator, and a bus vendor representative. At the conference, disciplinary action will be implemented and a plan of action developed to prevent future incidents.

Parents/guardians may request a change in a morning and/or afternoon bus stop location to accommodate child care or other special circumstances by filling out the Transportation Request Form at your child's school.

**ALL TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THE NUMBERS BELOW**

CPS Transportation (513) 363-0330 Transportation: (513) 363-RIDE / (513) 363-7433

First Student (513) 761-2230 Transportation: (513) 363-RIDE / (513) 363-7433

Peterman (513) 351-2302 Transportation: (513) 363-RIDE / (513) 363-7433

UTS (513) 829-1287

## **Inclement Weather**

At Cincinnati Public Schools, we want to make sure our students and staff are safe when severe weather or extreme temperatures occur, while maximizing students' time in class. CPS may close for snow, or for extreme cold or hot temperatures. When severe weather is predicted, parents should check the CPS website, [cps-k12.org](http://cps-k12.org), or local television or radio stations, for announcements about school closings or delays. CPS rarely will dismiss schools early, but it does happen occasionally. Please make sure your child's school office has correct emergency contact information. We know that start delays and no-school days for snow or extreme temperatures represent an inconvenience to parents, so we do our best to declare them only when necessary.

## **Schools Closed**

Decisions to close schools are made only after analyzing much data and consulting various authorities.

After reviewing all information available, the superintendent consults with senior staff, bus company operators and City of Cincinnati road maintenance authorities, and makes a decision as soon as possible (usually by 5 a.m.).

## **Two-Hour Delay**

Grades K-8 Yellow buses will pick up students at morning bus stops two hours later than normal.

No preschool bus service will be available.

Safety- Even with a two-hour delay, some families may not feel comfortable driving their child or having their child walk to school. This is a household decision and parents/caregivers should have students arrive when it is safe to do so.

High school students who ride Metro buses (public transportation) to and from schools. Metro bus schedules cannot be adjusted to accommodate CPS' two-hour delay and will run as close to normal schedules as weather and road conditions permit. Check Metro Route times at:

<https://www.go-metro.com/student-transportation>

Afternoon dismissal will occur at each school's normal time.