

Hill Country Parent Handbook 2016-2017



Cougars Value:

**Honesty
Respect
Pride**

Hill Country Cougars

Parent Handbook

2016-2017

Parent tips, policies and opportunities to enhance your child's school experience.

HCMS – rated exemplary by TEA & a National Blue Ribbon School

Hill Country Middle School

1300 Walsh Tarlton

Austin, Texas 78746

(512) 732-9220

(512) 732-9229 (fax)

www.hcms.eanesisd.net

HCMS Office Staff

(512) 732-9220

Principal – Kathleen Sullivan

Assistant Principal – Felix Grimmett

Assistant Principal – Manjula Nookala

Principal Secretary – Shellie Foster

Office Secretary – Suzanne Flowers

Registrar – Kelly Ballengee

Nurse – Robin Reed

HCMS Counseling Staff

(512) 732-9223

Counselor – Todd Huber (6th)

Counselor – Casey Davids (7th)

Counselor – Danielle Wiest (8th)

Office Secretary – Suzanne Flowers

LSSP – Jolene Ellis

A brief overview of policies at Hill Country Middle School

Hill Country Middle School: Our mascot is the cougar. Our colors are red and blue. We have approximately 1,000 students.

School Hours: The building opens at 7:45 a.m. and students should go to the cafeteria. School starts at 8:30 a.m. and gets out at 3:57 p.m. Students are expected to leave the campus by 4:00 p.m.

Drop-off procedures: In the morning before school, you may drop off your child in front of the school prior to 8:00 a.m. After 8:00 a.m., the drop-off line forms in the parking lot on the south side of the building. You are not allowed to drop off your child in the bus lane, in the parking lot by the tennis courts, or by stopping on Walsh Tarlton. In order to keep the drop-off line moving quickly, please have your child ready to get out of the car when you reach the drop-off line. Please drive slowly and be aware of the students and faculty walking through the parking lot.

Pick-up procedures: To pick up a student during school hours, a parent or guardian must come **into** the office to sign the student out. If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up a student, the office must have a note signed by a parent authorizing that person to pick up the student.

Closed Campus: Hill Country is a closed campus, and students may not leave campus from the time they arrive on school property until 3:57 p.m. unless checked out by a parent through the front office or accompanied by an adult from the school on a field trip. Students must report to the cafeteria when they arrive at school. Students will be dismissed to class at 8:23 a.m. After school, students need to report to their bus or other appropriate after-school location. Students are not allowed to loiter around school unsupervised after school. Students may not leave campus for lunch with anyone other than their parents without specific written permission from the student's parent. Leaving school is a serious behavior offense and will result in appropriate consequences.

Visitors: Parents and official visitors are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. All parents and visitors are required to sign in at the office, present their driver's license so the school can run it through the Raptor system, and upon their approval, receive a Guest Badge to enter the building. In order to minimize classroom disruptions, parents and visitors are not allowed to observe classes. If there is a concern regarding a particular class, please schedule a meeting with the teacher. Students may not bring guests to attend classes. Guests may have lunch with a student with prior approval of the principal and a written request from the parent of the student who is being visited. School visitors must comply with all school rules.

Parent Lunch Deliveries: Parent lunch deliveries should be delivered directly to the cart in the entry. Lunches are not to be left in the front office. In addition, due to heightened concerns and awareness of food allergies, parents are asked to bring food items for their child only!

Student Deliveries: In middle school we are working hard to teach students to be independent. However, we realize they are still learning and may forget something a time or two. If your child forgets something at home, you may leave it in the front office. We will get it to your child, but cannot guarantee a specific time.

Messages to students: If a student must receive an important message during school hours, the student's parents may call the office. Every effort is made to minimize classroom interruptions and preserve instructional time. Messages will be delivered to classes for an emergency; however, it is extremely difficult to get messages to students after 3:00 p.m. Please do not have your child leave their cell phone on to receive important messages.

Dress Code: Students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for a school environment. Any clothing that is determined to be disruptive to the school environment or deemed a safety issue may not be worn. The dress code applies, but is not limited, to the following:

- Students participating in P.E. and/or athletics will wear P.E. clothing approved for those classes.
- Shorts may not be cut-off. Shorts and skirts may have fringe but must be hemmed.
- Skirts and shorts must extend to the tip of the student's thumb when student's arm is extended.
- Pajama attire is not acceptable.
- Footwear must be worn at all times.
- Hats may not be worn in the building except on special occasions.
- Half-shirts or any other type of shirt or blouse that exposes the mid-section of the body, tank tops, halter tops, see-through shirts or blouses, and clothing with rips or tears may not be worn. Clothing such as sleeveless shirts/blouses that intentionally or accidentally exposes any underclothes, such as bra straps, may not be worn. Shoulder straps must be at least two inches wide. "Spaghetti-straps" and revealing necklines are not allowed.
- Students may not wear any clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco, or messages of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, whether explicit or not. Students may not wear clothing that displays weapons or displays messages and/or pictures that depict violence.
- Students may not wear clothing that would normally be associated with gang membership or activity, whether or not actual gang membership or activity is the intent.
- Pants are to be worn around the waist area and will not be permitted to "sag" below the waistline. Pants must be worn so that underclothing is not visible.
- Wallet chains are not allowed.

Students in violation of this dress code will be asked to call a parent to bring appropriate clothing to school. If a parent cannot immediately respond, the student may be asked to wear school-provided clothing or be isolated in in-school suspension until such time the parent may bring appropriate clothing to school. Repeat violations will result in further disciplinary action.

Discipline: Programs and policies regarding discipline have been conceived and designed to involve educators, students, and parents. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Guidelines. There will be instruction during advisory, as well as in student assemblies, to go over these expectations with students.

Tardies: Excessive tardies will be dealt with by the assistant principal under the campus discipline policy as follows: (a) for the 1st tardy, the teacher will give the student a warning and explain the policy and potential consequences (b) the 2nd tardy will result in a student conference with the teacher and a phone call home from the teacher (c) the 3rd tardy will result in a referral to the office (d) continued tardiness, which interrupts the classroom environment, may result in additional disciplinary consequences that include detention, Saturday School, or In-School Suspension.

Absence Information: Each day a student is absent, parents are requested to contact the office to verify the student's absence. When the student returns to school, he/she must bring a written excuse signed by the parent or a doctor. If this excuse is not submitted, the student's absence will be UNEXCUSED. The parent will have 24 hours in which to submit the written excuse in order to change the UNEXCUSED absence to *excused*.

Students who need to leave early should bring a note, signed by a parent, to the office BEFORE first period begins. The note should state the specific time and reason for leaving. A permit to leave school will be issued. At the specified time, the student will show the permit to the teacher and then report to the office to check out. Parents should come to the front office to sign the student out. Students cannot meet parents outside without the parent signing them out first.

Students who arrive after the 8:30 bell should report directly to the office for a permit to enter class.

When a student's absence for personal illness exceeds 4 consecutive days, the assistant principal will ask the student to present a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition requiring the student's extended absence from school. If a student has established a questionable pattern of absences, the principal has the authority to require a statement from a physician, clinic, or school nurse as a condition of classifying an absence of even one day as excused.

The district shall excuse students from attending school for the purpose of observing religious holy days when it is a tenet of their faith that they must be absent from school during such time.

Students are expected to make up the school work missed on those days. They will have the same amount of time to make up work as for other absences.

When a student is going to be absent from school for a trip for 3 or more days or for some other personal reason, he/she will need to get an "Absent" form from the front office. You will need to fill it out and get the Principal's approval. The student will then need to take it to each teacher so he/she may get any work that will be missed. These absences may not be excused according to Eanes ISD Board Policy EIAB(Local), Family trips are considered unexcused absences. However, if the principal is notified in advance, the student shall be allowed to make up missed assignments and tests.

Make-Up Work for Excused Absences: Students are allowed one day for every day they are absent to make up missed work. Students are responsible for getting their make-up work from each teacher.

Make-Up Work for School-Sponsored Activities: When a class is missed due to a school-related activity, it is the responsibility of the STUDENT to pick up assignments and turn in work due **PRIOR** to the absence and/or to be prepared to turn in work or take exams upon returning to class. Consult the teacher or class syllabus for any modifications to this policy. Days missed due to participation in school-sponsored activities are not counted against a student in determining loss of credit.

Make-Up work for Unexcused Absences & Family Travel: A student who misses class due to other unexcused absences or family travel shall be allowed to make up missed assignments and tests. The recorded grade shall be 100% of the actual grade earned.

Absence without consent: A student who is absent from class without school or parent consent shall receive a zero on all assignments that were due or completed on the day of the absence. The student will also receive a disciplinary consequence.

Volunteers: HCMS has many volunteer opportunities for parents. Please visit the Cougar Club link on the HCMS website to find out more information about how to get involved.

Office Telephone: Students may use a designated phone in the front office to contact parents in case of emergency.

iPads: The district provides iPads to all students. iPads are to be used only for educational purposes.

Electronic Devices: District policy prohibits the use of electronic devices such as cell phones, video games, iPods, MP3 players, etc. unless the classroom teacher gives permission. Students at HCMS are allowed to use electronic devices before school and after school but not during the school day unless under the direction and supervision of their teacher. This includes texting, which is not allowed during the school day. A staff member who discovers a student using or in

possession of an electronic device, he/she will take up the device. The staff member has the option to give it back to the student at the end of the day or give it to an administrator. The electronic device will be returned to a parent/guardian on the second offense. Future offenses will result in further disciplinary action and a forfeiture of the device to an administrator for parent pick-up which may result in prohibiting the student from bringing the electronic device to school.

Valuables: Students should not bring valuable items or excess money to school. Students are responsible for all personal possessions. Personal belongings should never be left unattended. Students in P.E. and Athletics should use their assigned lockers to secure valuables.

Lockers: HCMS only has lockers for students in Physical Education and Athletics. Lockers will be assigned by P.E. teachers or Athletic coaches. Students are responsible for all personal possessions. Students are to use the lockers assigned to them for security of clothing, books, backpacks, and other valuables. Students are to lock their lockers and not share their combinations with others.

Backpacks: Students are allowed to bring backpacks on campus. Backpacks must remain with the students or stored in appropriate places (classrooms or locker rooms). Students must leave backpacks on cafeteria hooks during lunch. All backpacks left in the hallway or unsupervised will be confiscated and a warning will be issued to the student.

Lost and Found: A designated area in the cafeteria is provided to aid students who misplace their belongings. If clothing/shoes have names in/on them, we will return them to the student. All items not claimed by the end of each month may be donated to a charity.

Textbooks: State adopted textbooks are provided by the school and state law requires that textbooks be covered at all times. Students are personally responsible for each book issued to them, and they are required to pay for lost or damaged books. Textbooks, once issued, should remain at home. Students do not need to bring their textbooks to and from school. There is a set of textbooks in each classroom for them to use while at school. Many of our subjects have online textbooks.

Academic Dishonesty/Cheating: Cheating is defined at HCMS as (1) providing or receiving information or help on an individual test, quiz, assignment (daily or homework), or a project; (2) possession of any unauthorized material during a test or quiz; (3) submitting duplicate or plagiarized work; and (4) having someone else complete the assignment for another student. All cheating incidents will be referred to the office. If a student is caught cheating, he/she may receive a zero for the assignment and be sent to the office, a parent will be contacted, and he/she will be referred to the counselor. Please read the Honor Code found on the "Students Resources" link on our school website.

Technology: All students in Eanes ISD are issued a school owned iPad. This is to be used for instructional purposes during the school day. There are consequences for students who violate expectations. Further, Eanes ISD provides technology resources to students for educational purposes. Students are given email addresses, internet access, and access to home folders. There are acceptable guidelines that must be followed by those who utilize these resources. Students who violate the Responsible Use Guidelines found in the Student Code of Conduct are subject to disciplinary consequences.

Students will need access to the Eanes ISD website, home folders, etc. to complete assignments started in school. Students will need to know how to save their documents into their home folder and access it from home. Instructions on how to access home folders are posted on the HCMS website.

If you have questions regarding technology, please contact our technology specialist, Mr. Rich Lombardo. rlombardo@eanesisd.net

Gum: Students are not allowed to chew gum on campus at any time.

Drugs & Weapons: Eanes ISD Administration Student Code of Conduct prohibits drugs, controlled substances, alcohol, and weapons. Students found in possession or under the influence of any illegal substance(s) or in possession of any weapons will be immediately suspended from school (after due process) pending a principal's conference and will be recommended for placement in the Alternative Education Program held off campus. Police may be contacted in these instances, as well. **There will be no exceptions made regarding this policy.** Hill Country administrators make it a top priority to keep this school safe for all students and staff.

Searches: Areas such as lockers and backpacks may be searched by school administrators.

Bullying: What is bullying? Bullying is written, electronic, or verbal expression or physical conduct that (1) has the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. Hill Country Middle School does not tolerate bullying and any incidents should be reported immediately to an HCMS staff member. Students or parents may report bullying incidents on the Bullying Report Form found on the "Student Resources" link on the HCMS website or to any adult on campus.

Student Safety: Cameras may be used throughout campus to monitor student activities. Laser pointers will not be allowed on school grounds for any reason at any time. For safety reasons, certain games may not be played on campus at any time. Any game where a student is knocked down, tackled, tripped, or otherwise thrown to the ground by others, such as tackle football, keep-away, dead legging, etc., may not be played. Games where objects are thrown at a student (except in a supervised class, such as sports, P.E., or advisory) with the intent of hitting the student with the ball may not be played. These games, sometimes referred to as "Wall-ball," may result in serious injury. Students may not bring balls to school. Hard rubber balls and tennis balls are not allowed in free play situations. Students may not play in the gymnasiums before or after school unless a coach/teacher is physically present. Bicycles are to be ridden to school for transportation only. Students must walk their bikes once on school grounds. Bicycles should be locked up at all times while on campus and should be registered with the local law enforcement agency. Skateboards are NOT allowed at any time.

Cafeteria: Breakfast and lunch can be purchased through the cafeteria. Students can pay cash, bring a check to the cafeteria, or pay online through Skyward. Their lunch account is accessed through their student identification number. Students may not take food outside of the cafeteria, they are expected to clean up their mess, and they are not allowed outside until dismissed. Parents can get a printout of the food that is purchased by their child, and they can also "block" certain foods. The school menu is posted on the Eanes ISD website. Eanes ISD also provides applications for reduced and free lunch. Applications are online or in the HCMS front office.

Bus: Students are expected to observe the same conduct as in the classroom; they are required to stay in their seat, keep the bus clean, keep their head, hands, and arms inside the bus, and cooperate with the bus driver. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats. Bus rules are separated into non-destructive and destructive categories. Failure to comply with rules may result in a student conference or removal from the bus for a specified period of time depending upon the nature of the offense. Fighting, insubordination towards the bus driver, or any behavior that results in injury to another student may result in more serious consequences, including immediate removal from the bus and denial of bus privileges.

School-home communication is essential to the success of your child!

Grading Scale: A = 90 – 100 B = 80 – 89 C = 75-79 D = 70 – 74 F = Below 70

Grades: Grades are determined by weighted assignments. Refer to each teacher's syllabus to determine how grades are achieved. Please make sure your child is also aware of the importance of tests and quizzes and the impact they have on their overall grade.

Honor Roll: Honor Roll is available to all students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. There are two honor rolls based on academic achievement. Students must make all A's to make the Distinguished Honor Roll and all A's & B's to make the Honor Roll. Recognition will be given to these students every nine weeks by posting their names.

Final Grades: Your child will need to have a final grade of 70 or above in order to pass their classes. Failure to have a 70 in their core classes (Math, English, Science, or Social Studies) will result in summer school. Final grades are reached by averaging the first and second semester grades. First semester is figured by averaging the first and second nine weeks' grades. Second semester is figured by averaging the third and fourth nine weeks' grades.

Progress Reports: A progress report will be posted electronically in Skyward every 3 weeks. A progress report is a way to communicate how your child is performing in his/her classes. This is not the report card grade and often grades will change prior to the report card.

Report Cards: Report cards will be posted electronically in Skyward every 9 weeks.

Eligibility: In order to participate in extra-curricular activities, students must maintain passing grades in all courses. A student who receives below 70% in a course is ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the time period specified by state law. Some extra-curricular activities also have requirements pertaining to citizenship grades. Students should check with coaches and sponsors to be sure eligibility requirements are clearly understood. Extra-curricular activities include academic competitions, UIL competitions, choir, band, orchestra, cheerleading, and athletics.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: We do not have scheduled parent/teacher conferences. We have "Back to School Night" at the beginning of the year. If you have questions about a class or assignment, please contact the teacher by email. To email a teacher, you will put the first letter of their first name and the last name @eanesisd.net. If you would like to leave them a voicemail, you may call their extension. Call the main office at 512-732-9220 and listen for voicemail menu instructions.

Important Internet Information!

Skyward Family Access: Skyward Family Access is a program that allows you to view your child's grades and attendance. Skyward Family Access is a great tool to keep you informed about your child's progress in all of their classes. In order to receive a password, you must fill out a Family Access application. Applications can be found on the HCMS website or in the front office. Please be aware that our teachers have many students and they may not have grades posted the same day as the assignment due date. If you have a question about a grade, please email the individual teacher. If you have questions or trouble using Skyward, please contact Kelly Ballengee, our registrar. kballengee@eanesisd.net

Teacher websites: All HCMS teachers have their own website. They post their assignments weekly, and they also post major projects and tests. The assignments posted are subject to change so it is best to check with your child. **Ultimately, it is the students' responsibility to know what is expected of them each day in every classroom.** Teachers may also post review sheets, answers to worksheets, sample quizzes, and other tools to help your child learn. These websites are an excellent tool for students and parents throughout the year!

Testing calendar: Each grade level has a testing calendar on the HCMS website that allows you and your child to see upcoming tests and major projects. This is a great way to help your child plan a study schedule.

HCMS website: The HCMS website is full of information. Please take some time to peruse the website to learn more about our school and faculty. <http://hcms.eanesisd.net>

Principal Newsletter: Mrs. Sullivan will send out a principal newsletter via email every week. You will need to sign up through Skyward Family Access. This is a great way to receive information about upcoming events.

Student Support Services

Advisory: Advisory is a program designed to give a small group of students interaction with an adult. Advisory period is daily and is usually 22 minutes in length. During this time, announcements will take place, important information will be discussed, report cards/progress reports will be handed out, and timely issues relating to the EISD commitment to strengthen human relations will be addressed. The main purpose is for a group of students to have daily contact with an adult in an environment that is totally "kid-centered" and supportive of the middle school students.

Announcements: Important information will be given to students via the public address (P.A.) system and HCTV (Hill Country Television). This information will give directions to assemblies, notice of meetings, activities for which students can sign up, safety drills, and other school functions of interest. It is very important that your child listen to these announcements so he/she knows what is going on at HCMS.

Electronic Calendar: Students will be expected to use an electronic calendar to record assignments and tests on a daily basis. Good study habits are important for all students whatever their level of academic ability. Once a good study behavior becomes habitual, it will be effortless and permanent. This goal is worth the time and effort it takes to achieve.

Tutoring: Many of our teachers are available before school starts to help students with questions about homework or to have tutorials the morning of a test. Students are not permitted in the academic areas before the first bell unless they have a hall pass or are accompanied by a teacher or parent. Students may go to the library in the morning at 8:00 a.m., if they have a written note from a teacher or parent. Students in the halls at any time during the day must have a hall pass or library pass.

Note: If your child needs help outside of school, we have a tutoring list on-line under the counseling corner.

Library: The library will be open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A pass from a teacher is necessary to use the library during school and at lunch. Library passes are issued by the librarian to all students after their English class has attended library orientation early in the school year. Students who wish to go to the library before school should show this pass to the teacher on duty at the double doors. A parent may also write a note to allow a student to use the library before school. All books checked out must be returned on time and in good condition. If damage to a book or periodical is found, a fine will be assessed. Lost books must be paid for before checking out another book.

Gifted & Talented: Our gifted and talented program is provided through our social studies classes. The social studies curriculum is compacted into four days and the fifth day the students go to the GT room for instruction. In addition to one day a week, they also have the opportunity to go to "Open Door" every Friday. For those interested in having their child tested for the HCMS GT program, we test once a year. The testing includes an I.Q. test, a student project, and evaluations by teachers and parents. Parents will need to fill out a "Consent for testing" form if you would like your child tested for Gifted and Talented. You can get the form in the counseling office or on the HCMS website. Testing is done in October. If you have questions, please contact our GT specialist, Ms. Meghan McCamant. mmccamant@eanesisd.nt

Reading Seminar: Reading Seminar is a class for students with dyslexia. This class takes the place of an elective and the students work through the Wilson Reading System program. Wilson

helps the students with phonics, comprehension, etc. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Sharon Burns. sburns@eanesisd.net

English as a Second Language: We offer ESL to students whose primary language is not English and who have limited knowledge of English. Students will be evaluated by our ESL teacher, Mrs. Rhoni McClennahan. If a student has little to no English, he/she will be placed into a period of ESL, which takes the place of an elective. If a student has some English but still needs support, he/she will receive ESL support by Mrs. McClennahan. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. McClennahan. rmclennahan@eanesisd.net

P.E. Waivers: We offer P.E. waivers to those students who participate in activities outside of school. A Category 1 waiver requires students to participate in a sport for 15 hours or more a week. This allows the student to either leave school an hour early every day or come to school an hour late every day. The 15 hours must be in the same sport. A Category 2 waiver requires students to participate in a sport 5 hours a week. This waiver allows the student to pick an elective other than P.E. or athletics. If you have additional questions, please come by the HCMS counseling office. Applications are online posted on the HCMS Counseling webpage. **Students who have a category 1 P.E. Waiver are to be picked up when their classes are done. They may not stay on campus.**

Please note: There are deadlines for P.E. Waivers; refer to the P.E. Waiver information in the course description booklet.

Health Clinic: Our school nurse is Mrs. Reed. She is on duty to take care of illness and injury requiring first aid during the school day. A student should obtain a hall pass from a teacher before going to the clinic. If, in the opinion of the nurse, a student is too ill to remain at school, Mrs. Reed will make arrangements for the student to go home. **Students who are ill must check out through the clinic before leaving school.** If a student needs to be excused from participating in physical education, a note signed by a parent should be brought to the clinic before first period. A clearance slip will be issued by the nurse. All medication, prescription or non-prescription, must be in its original container and taken directly to the nurse's office upon a student's arrival at school. In order for the nurse to administer any medication, written permission by the parent is required. reed@eanesisd.net

Counseling Office: HCMS Counselors are available to help students. Counselors help students with problem solving, bullying, conflicts with students, struggles with academics, and other situations they might encounter throughout the school year. Counselors also have support groups for divorce, grief/loss, friendship, and study skills. Students interested in participating in a group may stop by the Counseling Office. If a student would like to visit with a counselor, he/she can request a pass from a teacher or stop by to make an appointment.

Mr. Huber: 6th grade counselor thuber@eanesisd.net

Ms. Davids: 7th grade counselor cdavids@eanesisd.net

Mrs. Wiest: 8th grade counselor dwiest@eanesisd.net

Schedule Changes: Course selection is made in the spring and every effort is made to honor student course requests. Personnel assignments and the master schedule of course placement are based on the student's selections; therefore, a student's schedule is difficult to change once it is in place. Changes will be made for the academic benefit of the student when possible and for no other reason(s). If any changes are made, they will need to be done the first week of the semester.

Teacher Change Request: Teacher changes are not something we do often. However, if you feel your child needs a different teacher, please set up a conference with the teacher to discuss your concerns. The goal of the conference is to problem solve and create a plan moving forward. If things do not improve, contact the Principal, Mrs. Kathleen Sullivan.

Student Support Team (SST): The Student Support Team is comprised of an assistant principal, our two counselors, a reading specialist, an intervention specialist, and an LSSP. This committee discusses students and their academic and behavioral needs. Teachers and parents can refer students to this committee.

Student Activities on Campus

Cheerleading: Cheerleading is conducted on a try-out basis; tryouts are in the Spring, and are open to current 6th and 7th grade students. Candidates will be judged on jumps, dance, cheer, chant, enthusiasm, and overall performance and appearance. Students interested in trying out must also complete a teacher referral form based on attitude and classroom behavior.

Candidates must also meet the following criteria: (a) The candidate must meet the requirements as set by the State of Texas for extra-curricular activities, and (b) The candidate must not have received any discipline referrals for serious or major behavior problems as defined by the District Code of Student Conduct nor any referral resulting in the assignment of in-school suspension or suspension from school. In conjunction with the HCMS administration, the sponsor has the right to make the final determination of appropriate activities for the cheerleading squad.

We currently have two squads, 7th and 8th. Cheerleaders practice two mornings a week. They are required to attend athletic events that are held in the evening. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the cheer sponsor.

Joy Eickoff jeickoff@eanesisd.net

National Junior Honor Society (NJHS): All 7th and 8th grade students are eligible for consideration for admission to NJHS. The following admission guidelines apply:

- The student must attain a minimum of a 92.5 cumulative grade average for the fall semester in the four core courses (English, History, Science, and Math). Pre-AP courses add 3 points to their grade. For example, a 91 in Pre-AP Math would figure in as a 94.
- Students who are eligible for NJHS based upon their grade average will be required to complete a Service Activity Form. Students who do not complete and turn in the form within the designated time period are ineligible for NJHS consideration.
- The Service Activity Form will be rated by the NJHS sponsor or his/her designee in the following manner: Blank form (name only) 0 points, Any 1 service listed 1 point, 2-5 services listed 3 points, 6 or more services listed 5 points.
- Teachers will be asked to complete evaluations on students that have fulfilled the requirements outlined above and whom they have taught during the first semester. Students will be rated in three categories by teachers: Character, Citizenship, and Leadership.
- The following formula will be used to establish a student's Total Score: 33% Service Activity Form Score, 33% Average of Character/Citizenship teachers' ratings, and 33% Leadership teachers' ratings.
- The NJHS Faculty Senate will establish the minimum acceptable student total score for induction into NJHS.

- Four service hours each six weeks will be required from each NJHS member. The hours must be accumulated during the academic year (no credit for summer activities). It is at the school sponsor's discretion to divide the requirement of 24 service hours as the sponsor sees fit during the year.

If you have questions about NJHS, please contact the sponsor, Rhoni McClennahan.
rmcclennahan@eanesisd.net

Latin Club: Latin Club is offered to 7th and 8th grade students taking Latin. David Finkelstein is our Latin teacher. Please contact him with any questions. dfinkelstein@eanesisd.net

Destination ImagiNation: Destination ImagiNation is an innovative organization that teaches creativity, teamwork, and problem solving to students across the U.S. and in more than 30 countries. Its main program is an unconventional team-learning experience where student teams all over the world solve mind-bending challenges. Ms. Meaghan McCamant is in charge of this competition team. Please contact her with any questions. mmccamant@eanesisd.net

University Interscholastic League (UIL): UIL is an academic competition between schools. There are several categories, and all three grades participate in the competition. Information about this competition is given to the students through HCTV, announcements, and advisory teachers. Students initiate interest and try-out for the different "teams." Once they are selected, the "coach" will set up practice times. The competition is in March on a Saturday. If you have questions, please contact Ms. Crystal Boyd. cboyd@eanesisd.net

Art Club: Art Club is available to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade art students. These students need to have a passion for art and commit to working before and after school. These students also participate in the Art UIL competition in March. There is an application process, and not all students are accepted. Please contact Mrs. Kathie del Hierro if you would like more information.
kdelhierro@eanesisd.net

Student Council: The student activities program is planned and managed by the Student Council. The Student Council members hold elective and appointed offices and meet regularly. Officers must qualify for candidacy by maintaining a B average or above, having and maintaining a favorable discipline record, and obtaining 25 student signatures on a petition. Applications are available from the Student Council sponsor. Designated classes will elect a representative to attend the meetings. Offices that may be held by election are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Elections will take place in the spring. Melissa New is the Student Council sponsor. mnew@eanesisd.net

School Dances: Dances are sponsored by the various clubs to raise money for their activities. Dances are open to 7th and 8th grade students. There will be one 6th grade dance at the end of the year. School dress code applies at all school dances. The cost is \$5.00. All dances begin at 7:00 and end at 9:30. Students must be picked up and will not be allowed to walk off campus at the end of the dance. Please make sure you pick your child up on time.

Pep Rallies: Pep rallies are held periodically to encourage school spirit. There is usually one pep rally in the fall and one in the spring.

HCMS Athletics

Hill Country students who wish to participate in Athletics must pay an annual non-refundable participation fee. This fee must be paid, or your child will not be allowed to play sports. This fee does not include any additional items that your child may need for the sport. If your child doesn't make the team, you will get a refund on the athletic fee.

\$275.00 flat fee for the school year for participation in 1 or more team sports (football, basketball, soccer, or volleyball)

OR

\$200.00 fee for participation in 1 individual sport (cross-country, golf, tennis, or track)

OR

\$275.00 fee for participation in more than 1 sport, individual or team

7th grade Athletics occurs before school and continues through 1st period.

8th grade Athletics occurs during 8th period and continues after school.

This schedule is for the following sports: volleyball, football, basketball, and track. Our other sports either occur before or after school.

Cross Country: Cross Country practices before school in the fall. All 7th and 8th grade students are welcome to join. Mr. Ryan Sanderson coaches cross country for both girls and boys.

rsanderson@eanesisd.net

Volleyball: Volleyball starts the first week of school with try-outs. If students try out for volleyball and don't make the team, they remain in athletics. They will do off-season training, which includes conditioning and weight training.

Ms. Amy Huddleston: 7th grade A & B team ahuddleston@eanesisd.net

Ms. Christine Jones: 8th grade A & B team cjones@eanesisd.net

Football: Football starts the first week of school with try-outs.

Mr. Kevin Long: klong@eanesisd.net

Mr. Ty Gotcher: tgotcher@eanesisd.net

Mr. Larry Embrey: lembrey@eanesisd.net

Mr. Kirk Siler: ksiler@eanesisd.net

Basketball: Basketball tryouts start in November and the season continues through February. Students who wish to play basketball will need to be in both semesters of athletics.

Ms. Nicole Greathouse: 8th grade A & B team ngreathouse@eanesisd.net

Ms. Jessica Weisinger: 7th grade A & B team jweisinger@eanesisd.net

Mr. Larry Embrey: 7th grade boys A team lembrey@eanesisd.net

Mr. Ty Gotcher: 7th grade boys B team tgotcher@eanesisd.net

Mr. Kevin Long: 8th grade boys A team klong@eanesisd.net

Mr. Kirk Siler: 8th grade boys B team ksiler@eanesisd.net

Track: Track is a spring sport and starts after the basketball season is over. Students will try out for the many different events.

Ms. Amy Huddleston: 7th grade girls track coach ahuddleston@eanesisd.net

Ms. Jessica Weisinger: 7th grade girls track coach jweisinger@eanesisd.net

Ms. Christine Jones: 8th grade girls track coach cjones@eanesisd.net

Ms. Nicole Greathouse: 8th grade girls track coach ngreathouse@eanesisd.net

Mr. Larry Embrey: boys track coach lembrey@eanesisd.net

Mr. Ty Gotcher: boys track coach tgotcher@eanesisd.net

Mr. Kirk Siler: boys track coach ksiler@eanesisd.net

Soccer: Soccer is a spring sport offered to 7th and 8th grade students. Practice is after school.

Mr. David Kee: boys and girls soccer coach dkee@eanesisd.net

Tennis: Tennis is a spring sport offered to 7th and 8th grade students. Practice is after school.

Mr. Luis Haro: girls and boys tennis coach. lharo@eanesisd.net

Golf: Golf is a spring sport offered to 7th and 8th grade students. Practice is after school.

Mr. Kevin Long: girls and boys golf coach. klong@eanesisd.net

Testing

Testing: Our students take the STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) in every grade starting in 3rd grade. Our 6th graders will take Reading and Math. Our 7th graders will take the Writing, Reading, and Math test. Our 8th graders will take the Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies test. Students in Algebra I will also take the STAAR End of Course subject test.

If you would like to see released details regarding STAAR, you can go to the Texas Education Agency's website. www.tea.state.tx.us

Nine Week Test Schedule: In order to allow students to prepare fully for major tests, HCMS supports a test schedule for the ninth week of each grading period. Please visit the school's website to view the schedule. If a student has more than two major tests on a given day, he/she may reschedule a test with teacher permission granted more than 24 hours before the test time.

Academic Opportunities

If you are interested in any of the following programs, please contact the HCMS counseling office.

DUKE TIP Program: This program is open to 7th graders who score high enough on the TAKS test or on other standardized testing. This program allows students to take the SAT or ACT in December, January, or February. Duke has summer programs for those students who score high enough.

People to People: This is a leadership program for students interested in learning leadership skills. Students who participate in this program love it and gain a lot from participating. This program requires students to attend leadership conferences across the United States.

Community Resources

Westlake Hills Information: This website includes a directory of city offices and meetings, code of ordinances, information on schools and libraries, and election information.

www.westlakehills.org

Westlake Newspaper: The Westlake newspaper is the *Westlake Picayune*.

www.westlakepicayune.com

Eanes CARES Foundation: Eanes CARES has focused primarily on the areas of parent and community education, developing a resource list of healthy activities for kids, support of activities in coordination with the Eanes Student Safety and Health Advisory Council (SSHAC), and funding a community survey. www.eanescares.org

Eanes Education Foundation: The Eanes Education Foundation (EEF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The Foundation seeks current and endowed financial support from the community and corporate donors to provide and sustain district-wide opportunities for educational excellence. www.eaneseducationfoundation.org

Eanes Community Education: Community Education Classes are offered during the afternoon and evening and on weekends to elementary, middle, and high school students and adults. In addition, classes are divided into subject categories. www.eanes.augusoft.net

Safe Homes: The Safe Homes program is a grassroots organization of thousands of EISD parents taking a zero-tolerance approach to keeping alcohol and drugs out of the hands of children in our own homes. The award-winning program is in its 13th year in the Eanes School District. You can find more information under the Parent Resources tab on the Westlake High School homepage. www.eanesisd.whs.schoolfusion.us

Libraries in Westlake Hills: There are two libraries in Westlake. Both libraries, Westbank Library and Laura's Library, can be accessed through one web address. www.westbank.lib.tx.us

Wonders & Worries: Wonders & Worries is a community support program for children whose parent(s) are seriously ill.

www.wondersandworries.org

Community Sports and Health

West Austin Youth Association (WAYA): This organization offers volleyball, basketball, lacrosse, softball, and flag football. www.waya.org

Alisa's Dance Academy: Alisa's offers a variety of dance classes.
www.alisasdanceacademy.com

Synergy Dance: Synergy offers a variety of dance classes.
www.synergystudio.com

Master Martial Arts: www.mastermartialarts.org

Westlake TaeKwonDo Plus: www.taekwondotexas.com

Austin Martial Arts Academy: www.austinmartialarts.com

Champions Academy Westlake: Champions offers gymnastics classes and cheerleading classes. www.wearechampions.com

Longhorn Aquatics: A year-round swimming and diving program offered to the Austin community by the University of Texas. www.utexas.edu/longhornaquatics

West Austin Athletic Club: West Austin Athletic Club has a competitive swim program called West Austin Aquatics. www.wfly.com

Lost Creek Aquatics: LCA has a competitive swim program. www.lostcreekaquatics.com

Western Hills Athletic Club: WHAC has a competitive swim program and offers tennis lessons as well. www.whac.org

Westlake Lacrosse: Lacrosse for girls in grades 5-8. www.westlakelax.org

Westlake Lacrosse: Lacrosse for girls and boys in grades 1-8.
www.westlakelacrosse.countmein.com

Westlake Youth Basketball Association: www.wlyba.org

Westlake Youth Soccer Association (WYSA): www.westlakesoccer.com

Western Hills Softball: www.leaguelineup.com/westernhills

Western Hills Baseball: www.whll.org

Westlake Youth Wrestling: www.westlakewrestling.com

Pop Warner Football and Cheer: www.chaspopwarner.com

Pilates 360: www.pilates360.com

YNVA Volleyball League: www.theynva.org/registration

Hills Health Club and Wellness: www.thehillsfitness.com

JoyMoves: Pilates program www.joymoves.com

Yoga Vida: www.yogavida.net

Volunteer Programs/Opportunities

Girl Scouts: www.gsctx.org

Boy Scouts: www.bsacac.org

Westbank Community Library: www.westbank.lib.tx.us

Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB): This nonprofit assists more than 370 local social service agencies help feed hungry people in Central Texas. The food bank notes its dire need: 82 percent of food recipients from the CAFB are food insecure, while 49 percent experience direct hunger. Each month, CAFB volunteers contribute more than 5,000 hours of service through a variety of tasks, including sorting and packaging food, assisting with administrative tasks, and helping with special events, among others duties.

www.AustinFoodBank.org

Keep Austin Beautiful: Empowering the citizens of Austin to take personal responsibility for enhancing their community's environment, Keep Austin Beautiful is one of many groups throughout the city dedicated to creating a better community life for all by working to keep it green. Volunteers help assist in neighborhood beautification and recycling programs, as well as at events such as Host Your Own Clean-up, Adopt-A-Street Program, Adopt-A-Shore Program, and the Container Program. Both one-time and continuing volunteer opportunities are available at Keep Austin Beautiful. Volunteers can identify new volunteer opportunities by checking the ongoing Calendar of Opportunities for Volunteering on the website.

www.keepaustinbeautiful.org

Programs for Girls

GEN Austin: A non-profit organization whose mission is to foster healthy self-esteem in girls by engaging them to explore and define their personal values and to build skills that empower them with confidence and courage to make wise choices. www.genaustin.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my child need a P.E. uniform?

Only 6th grade students taking P.E. need a uniform. The uniforms can be purchased at the student store. 7th and 8th grade P.E. are required to dress out daily in their own, "dress code appropriate" workout clothes. No short shorts or tank tops for girls, and no saggy shorts for boys.

Are students required to take a shower after P.E. or Athletics?

Students are not required to take showers after P.E. or Athletics. However, many boys and girls do shower after football, volleyball, or basketball practice.

What are students participating in Athletics supposed to wear?

Girls' Athletics will issue workout clothes to those students, two pair of shorts and two shirts for the girls. Boy's Athletics need to have the following: 8th grade wears red shorts and white t-shirts, and 7th grade wears blue shorts and white t-shirts.

What is off-season?

When students try out for a sport and don't make the team, they stay in the athletic period and work on conditioning and weight training.

Can my child place out of beginner band, choir, or orchestra?

Yes. You will need to schedule an appointment and have your child audition for the directors. They will determine the best placement for your child.

Does your school have lockers?

The only lockers we have are in the girls' and boys' locker rooms. These lockers are used for P.E. and Athletics. We do not have lockers in the halls. Students carry their backpacks with them everywhere they go.

What is the best way to contact my child's teacher?

Email! Our teachers check email frequently throughout the day. Email addresses are the first letter and last name @eanesisd.net. You can find an email address on the HCMS website.

What if my child is spending an extraordinary amount of time on his/her homework?

If your child is spending a lot of time in one particular class, you will want to contact the teacher of that class. He/she should be able to help problem solve why your child is spending that much time on the course work.

If your child is spending a lot of time in all subjects and can't get their homework completed in a timely manner (1-2 hours), please contact your child's counselor.

What do I do if my child breaks his/her arm or leg?

Notify our nurse (Mrs. Reed) and your child's counselor. Together we will notify the teachers and set up the appropriate accommodations for your child to be successful as they heal from their injury.

What if my child comes home and says he/she is being bullied?

HCMS takes bullying issues very seriously. HCMS has a "no tolerance" policy for bullying. As soon as you suspect that your child is being bullied, contact the counselor or the assistant principal so they can investigate the incident. Students may also report bullying on-line anonymously. The link is on the "Student Resources" tab on the Hill Country MS website.

Can I send balloons or flowers to my child at school?

Balloons and/or flowers are NOT allowed in the hallways or classrooms due to disruption of the learning environment. Any delivery of those items will be held in the office until the end of the school day.

May my child ride home on the bus with a friend?

A student may ride home with a friend if it has been approved by the school principal 24 hours ahead of time. If there is not space, the request may not be approved.

Whom do I contact if we have a new address, phone number, or email address?

Up-to-date information is essential for the school to successfully handle emergencies and to maintain communication with parents. Therefore, the office should be notified immediately of any changes. If you have changed your address, you must provide proof of residency. All address changes will require you to bring in a copy of a power or utility bill. Please email Kelly Ballengee, our registrar, with any changes. kballengee@eanesisd.net

What do I need to do if my child comes home with a discipline referral?

A referral is written by a staff member and submitted to the assistant principal. A referral can be written for any inappropriate behavior. Once the assistant principal receives the referral, he/she will call the student in to the office and discuss the incident. At that time, the assistant principal will decide on the appropriate consequence and the referral will be sent home for your signature. Mr. Grimmatt is the administrator for 8th grade and the 6th grade A-K. Mrs. Nookala is the administrator for 7th grade and the 6th grade L-Z.

Does Eanes Community Education offer Extended Care or other after-school programs for middle school?

No. There aren't any programs available for middle school students after school dismisses.

Whom do I contact if I think my child has a learning disability?

You will want to contact your child's counselor.

How can I find out what objectives are being taught per grade level and subject?

The curriculum being taught follows the Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines. Our teachers follow the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for each class. To view the TEKS, you may look on the TEA website. www.tea.state.tx.us

How does my child get into Pre-AP classes?

HCMS offers Advanced classes in English, Math, and Science (8th grade only). Students will take a placement test in Math and Science to see if their scores qualify them for Advanced courses. English Language Arts is open enrollment and students/parents may self-select Pre-AP. If you have questions, please contact your child's counselor.

What is "the pit"?

The pit is the South endzone of the WHS football stadium. The endzone is fenced off for middle school students from West Ridge and Hill Country. Students must show their school identification, and they may not bring a friend who is not an HCMS student. The pit is supervised by administrators from both middle schools and several police officers. At the end of the game, the students are allowed to walk out onto the field. Students may purchase pit tickets at school during lunch or before the game at the gate.

If my child was identified at another school as Gifted and Talented, does he/she need to test for Gifted and Talented at Hill Country Middle School?

Yes! Eanes I.S.D does not accept other school districts Gifted and Talented placement. Your child will need to qualify using the Eanes Gifted and Talented qualifications. If you have questions, please contact your child's counselor for more information.

Will my child have the opportunity to earn any high school credits?

YES! Students can take Algebra I, Speech (Communication Applications), Health, IPC, and a world language. Some students will have the opportunity to take Geometry as well. In order for students to receive a world language credit, they must complete Spanish, French, Latin or Chinese in 7th and 8th grade.

Can my child take Spanish, Latin, or Chinese in 8th grade if they didn't take it in 7th grade?

The Spanish, French, Latin and Chinese courses are a two year commitment.

Welcome to HCMS!

We are here to help you through your child's middle years. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have throughout the year!

HCMS Staff