

# Student/Parent Handbook



LOWER SCHOOL  
2008-2009

HILLSDALE ACADEMY  
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## MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

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### **Hillsdale College Mission Statement**

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian institution of higher learning founded in 1844 by men and women “grateful to God for the inestimable blessings” resulting from civil and religious liberty and “believing that the diffusion of learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.” The College pursues the stated objectives of the founders: “to furnish all persons who wish, irrespective of nation, color, or sex, a literary and scientific education” outstanding among American colleges “and to combine with this such moral and social instruction as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of its pupils.”

The College considers itself a trustee of modern man’s intellectual and spiritual inheritance from the Judeo-Christian faith and Greco-Roman culture, a heritage finding its clearest expression in the American experiment of self-government under law.

By training the young in the liberal arts, Hillsdale College prepares students to become leaders worthy of that legacy. By encouraging the scholarship of its faculty, it contributes to the preservation of that legacy for future generations. By publicly defending that legacy, it enlists the aid of other friends of free civilization and thus secures the conditions of its own survival and independence.

### **Hillsdale Academy Mission Statement**

Hillsdale Academy develops within its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent and productive lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society. The Academy strives to offer enrichment and to develop character through both curricular and extracurricular offerings, to nurture the child’s humanity — spirit, mind and body — with a constant view to the potential adult. The time-honored liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy direct student achievement toward mastery of the basics, exploration of the arts and sciences, and understanding of the foundational tenets of our Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman heritage. The curriculum, by purpose and design, is a survey of the best spiritual, intellectual and cultural traditions of the West as they have been developed and refined over countless generations.

### **Hillsdale Academy Library Mission Statement**

The Hillsdale Academy Library seeks to be a repository of knowledge and wisdom by acquiring, maintaining and offering its students the

best works of the Western liberal arts tradition. The library is thus at the center of the Academy's mission, a place for students as responsible individuals to discover and explore and to begin their own dialogue with that tradition. Faithful to the liberal spirit of that tradition, the library promotes research and reading in an environment conducive to contemplation and seeks to foster worthy and age-appropriate leisure reading.

## **Hillsdale Academy Educational Philosophy**

Hillsdale Academy represents a partnership among the students, parents, faculty, administration and staff. These partners are united in their commitment to the common objectives outlined in the Mission Statement.

Students and parents respect Hillsdale Academy teachers, as role models and instructors, for their commitment to truth and their genuine concern for children. Intelligence, creativity, responsibility and loyalty are characteristics of the faculty.

Parents expect and appreciate direct and regular communication from faculty regarding their children. Reciprocally, parents are responsive to suggestions from teachers and administrators for helping students.

The headmaster, under the authority of Hillsdale College's president and provost, oversees the implementation of the Mission Statement in the school. In their capacities as policy-makers and community leaders, these administrators advance the Academy's role as an institution dedicated to providing the best education for children.

Hillsdale Academy recognizes each child as an individual who, by virtue of his humanity, is in community with all the other children in the Academy, regardless of age. By providing moral and ethical standards, the Academy prepares its students to accept the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society that honors and respects its Maker. Every child is capable of achieving his potential to the fullest extent when afforded respect, fairness, kindness, discipline and appropriate instruction.

## **Hillsdale Academy Parents' Association**

All parents of Hillsdale Academy students are members of the Parents' Association, which exists to promote friendly relationships among parents, to acquaint them with the spirit of Hillsdale Academy, to obtain their cooperation with its objectives for the development of their children and to initiate the parents' involvement in, and support for, projects and functions that aid the Academy academically, socially and financially.

The mission of the Hillsdale Academy Parents' Association is:

1. To help the Academy communicate with parents.
2. To help the parents understand the fundamental premises upon which the Academy functions.
3. To help schedule, promote and host student and parent activities.
4. To welcome new parents into the association and to instill in the new parents the need for their continued involvement in and support of the Academy.
5. To encourage pride in the children and in the Academy.
6. To assist the Academy in promoting its reputation in the Hillsdale community.

### **Statement of Religious Instruction**

Hillsdale College's Judeo-Christian tradition broadly guides the course of study and instruction at Hillsdale Academy. The Academy offers instruction based upon traditional, nondenominational biblical beliefs, principles and virtues that seek to develop those qualities of life characteristic of man's understanding of his relationship to his Creator and his place in the world.

A weekly service conducted by the College chaplain and the headmaster addresses the spiritual needs of the Academy's students through Scripture, prayer and song. Parents are encouraged to participate in these services.

### **Hillsdale Academy Prayer**

Almighty God, we beseech Thee with Thy gracious favor, to behold our universities, colleges and schools, especially Hillsdale Academy and our headmaster, that knowledge may be increased among us, and all good learning flourish and abound. Bless all who teach and all who learn, and grant that in humility of heart they may ever look unto Thee, who art the fountain of all wisdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## **ENROLLMENT**

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Parents of children ready for kindergarten (age five by August 15) apply for August placement. Applications are available in the Academy's front office and are due January 1. Interviews are conducted in April, with placement priority given to families with siblings already attending the Academy and to the children of Hillsdale College employees. By May 2, parents whose children are offered an opening in the kindergarten class reserve the opening with a \$200 deposit.

For Grades 1 through 8, parents of students already attending Hillsdale Academy are contacted first and allowed to re-enroll their children by submitting a deposit of \$200 by March 15. Application materials are then made available at the Academy's front office to parents who seek admission of students new to Grades 1 through 8. Interviews with these families are conducted and placement tests for the students are given, after which notification of each new candidate's status is made. Families for whom there is an opening also submit the \$200 deposit by May 2. All deposits are non-refundable and are applied to tuition.

All enrollment decisions are made at the discretion of the headmaster.

### **Tuition and Fees**

For the 2008-2009 academic year, tuition for the half-day of kindergarten is \$3,150. Tuition for Grades 1 through 8 is \$4,815. A separate application fee of \$25 covers the administrative costs of processing applications and maintaining waiting lists.

Tuition payment plans are available. Partial scholarship assistance is extended on a limited basis. Scholarship application forms are available in the Academy's front office on April 1 and are due by May 2. Scholarship recipients are notified by June 18.

Parents who voluntarily withdraw their child from Hillsdale Academy are responsible for the balance of the tuition for the current trimester. Prorated refunds are issued for students excused by Hillsdale Academy.

Parents are advised before the opening of school each year as to the cost of the school lunch. Similarly, parents are notified as to school uniform requirements and where such purchases can be made.

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## **ACADEMIC POLICY**

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Pursuant to our educational mission, Hillsdale Academy establishes policy to promote good study habits, clear communication of student progress with parents and recognition for outstanding achievement.

### **Grading**

Parents receive both interim reports and full report cards regarding their children's academic standing and citizenship. Teachers give most assignments and all tests numerical designations, which then guide the teachers in assigning interim report and full report card grades.

In kindergarten, reports indicate the extent to which a skill has been mastered. In Grades 1 and 2, an "O" is defined as outstanding; "S" as

satisfactory; and “U” as unsatisfactory.

Teachers in Grades 3 to 8 assign letter grades according to the following scale:

100%	A+	73-77%	C
93-99%	A	70-72%	C-
90-92%	A-	68-69%	D+
88-89%	B+	63-67%	D
83-87%	B	60-62%	D-
80-82%	B-	below 60%	F
78-79%	C+		

An “A” is defined as excellent; “B” as above average; “C” as average; “D” as below average; “F” as failing. Typically, students receive number grades for most assignments and letter grades on report cards. Achievement is based upon understanding of the subject as judged by tests and teacher observation.

Effort is judged by teacher observation. An “O” is defined as outstanding; “S” as satisfactory; and “U” as unsatisfactory.

## Honor Roll

After each report card is issued, the headmaster releases the list of students who have qualified for Honor Roll. Requirements for Grades 7 and 8 are a “B” or higher and “S” or better in effort. Students with an “A-” or higher will be placed on the Headmaster’s List.

## Academic Warning and Probation

A student is placed on *academic warning* for receiving one *F* or two grades of *D+* or lower in a marking period. A student is placed on *academic probation* for (1) receiving two *F*s or three or more grades of *D+* or lower in a marking period, or (2) being placed on *academic warning* for two consecutive marking periods. Students on *academic probation* may not participate in interscholastic sports. Any student who is placed on *academic probation* for an entire year must repeat that grade.

## Conferences

Parent and teacher conferences are held three times a year at mid-term. These times are designated for discussing the student’s academic achievement and citizenship. Both parents are expected to attend. Of course, parents and teachers are welcome to request conferences throughout the year.

## Attendance

Regular school attendance is important to a student’s academic success and also promotes good work habits and self-discipline. Apart from extreme circumstances, seven absences in a given trimester will

result in the student repeating that trimester. Also, a child who has had a proper night's rest is better prepared to learn than one who is tired due to a late night. Establishing a regular bedtime helps students appreciate that school is an important endeavor and requires adequate rest.

Parents are to report all unplanned absences to the front office by telephone. Students are not to report their own absences. Students who are dismissed from school early, for any reason, must sign out from the front office.

Assignments for absent students may be obtained from the front office between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m.

## **Morning Tardies**

The Academy's Opening Ceremony and weekly Chapel Service are important moments in each school day. Students should be present for these events by 8:20 a.m. Arrival after the start of these events is considered a tardy. Students are allowed three tardies per trimester. Tardies beyond this number will result in a detention. Emergencies and inclement weather will be taken into account. Classroom tardies are to be dealt with at the discretion of each teacher.

## **Homework**

Meaningful homework assignments are an important part of the Academy's curriculum. Teachers assign quality homework for each school night, within the following guidelines:

1. Kindergarten 15 to 25 minutes  
Grades 1 and 2 20 to 35 minutes  
Grades 3 and 4 30 to 45 minutes  
Grades 5 and 6 40 to 60 minutes  
Grades 7 and 8 60 to 90 minutes
2. From Friday to Monday is considered one school night for homework purposes; however, Friday to Monday is considered three school nights for major projects in Grades 5 through 8.
3. Homework may be assigned during long weekends, but it is not assigned the day of a vacation period to be due the day classes resume (Vacations include Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break).

Students in Grades 3 through 8 are required to document assignments in their assignment pads each day. Teachers initial the assignment pad each day to ensure that the student has accurately copied the assignment from the chalkboard. This procedure assists parents in their work with their children.

If a student spends more time on homework than designated above, the teacher who assigned the homework should be promptly informed so that corrective measures can be taken. While, occasionally, homework assignments will require more than the designated time, if a

student is spending excessive time on homework with little likelihood of satisfactory completion, the parent should help the student find a reasonable stopping point and then attach to the homework a note detailing the time spent on the incomplete assignment. The teacher will accept the homework and will then contact the parent to review the circumstances. The headmaster should next be consulted if these steps do not remedy the situation.

All homework assignments are to be completed before the beginning of the class for which the work was assigned. Students in kindergarten and in Grades 1 and 2 are encouraged to learn to meet deadlines, and teachers work closely with parents to ensure that they do. Beginning in Grade 3, failure to complete homework on time results in the loss of a full letter grade on that assignment provided the homework be made up by the next class meeting. If the homework is not made up by that time, it is completed in an after-school detention and graded for a maximum of 50 percent credit.

### **Academic Honesty**

Hillsdale Academy seeks to nurture absolute respect for intellectual property. Any willful misrepresentation of another's work or ideas as one's own — cheating or plagiarizing — will be treated with utmost gravity. Teachers in the Lower School understand that students need coaching and careful guidance in such matters.

### **Library**

All students receive library orientation during the first month of school. At this time, students are advised of specific library rules regarding using the library's resources, checking out and returning materials, appropriate behavior and the like. Most library materials are available to be borrowed if they are not reference works and if they are not reserved for use by a class. In general, Lower School students may check out two books for one week.

The Academy continues to add new books to the library and welcomes family suggestions for new purchases.

### **Computer Use**

At Hillsdale Academy, all computers have Internet access. Computers may be used for researching and typing teacher-assigned projects *only*. These are the only two acceptable uses of Hillsdale Academy computers. No use of computer games, online chat rooms, etc. is permitted. Limited use of e-mail is allowed for seniors in the process of college or university application. Each teacher assigning a research project will issue the student a computer usage pass, which must be presented to the librarian. Upon presenting the librarian with the computer pass, each student will then sign the computer-use log sheet stating purpose, time, date and computer number that they will log on and use. This procedure has been put in place to better track computer usage and assist Information Technology Services (ITS) in tracking unauthorized computer use.

**Any student using school computers for anything other than *teacher-assigned projects* will receive a demerit/detention from the headmaster.**

### **Prearranged Absences**

Parents of Lower School students who know in advance that their child/children will miss school or class are required to obtain from the front office a *Request for Prearranged Absence* form. The form should be on file at least one week in advance of the requested time off from school. The form is submitted to the headmaster for approval.

When deemed reasonable, the headmaster will approve parent requests for absences for medical and dental appointments, short family trips and the like. Extended time missed from school is discouraged.

In Grades 5 through 8, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with teachers for completing and turning in any missed assignments.

Parents are to report all *unplanned* absences to the front office by 9:00 a.m.

### **Illness**

Children who become ill in class are required to proceed to the front office, with assistance, for parental notification. They will be required to remain on campus until they are picked up by a parent.

Children who are deemed by a teacher or administrator to have, or to have potentially, a contagious illness will be isolated from other children and will be taken home by a parent. No such child will be permitted to return to school until a physician's note has been submitted to the front office, indicating that the child may safely return to school.

Hillsdale Academy is able to provide only routine first aid for children who become ill or injured at school. Tylenol can be administered in the front office upon a parent's completing and turning in a permission card, which is sent home at the beginning of the school year. Prescription medicine is kept and administered in the front office only when the Academy has on file a completed Medical Authorization form, signed by the child's physician and parent. This form is available at the front office.

### **Off-Campus Educational and Cultural Programs**

Hillsdale Academy considers off-campus education an important aspect in the total development of each student. Off-campus educational and cultural programs provide students with an opportunity to use previously acquired knowledge and skills, while gaining new knowledge and skills. For instance, the Eighth Grade class makes an annual trip to Stratford, Ontario, to see a live performance of a Shakespeare play. Academy faculty and/or administrators are always included as chaperones on these trips.

Whenever students are off campus on school-sponsored trips, they are subject to the Academy's rules and are expected to observe the Academy's standards of politeness and civility.

Parents or family members of both students and teachers may be invited to accompany any class or group of students on an off-campus program. However, adults should recognize that participation in these events will always include duties as chaperones assisting the teacher in maintaining general order among all participants. Families should not participate in these outings in any other way than as members of the Academy class or group involved in the program. Families should not expect teachers or Academy administration to provide the scheduling of transportation, room and board beyond what is necessary for student participation. Finally, teachers have final authority regarding the number of participants and chaperones.

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## CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

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The role of discipline at Hillsdale Academy is to create an environment conducive to learning. It is to provide an atmosphere of civility in which due respect will be given to teachers and to individual students, as well as to all institutional and private property, so that all members of the community will be allowed to pursue learning without distraction. In addition, discipline at the Academy ought always to uphold the essential virtues established in the school's Mission Statement and professed in its curriculum. The Academy recognizes that the good conduct of students in school promotes their education on campus. This requirement will also promote good behavior off campus and prepare students for good citizenship in adulthood. Accordingly, students will be expected to adhere to the general rules of the school as well as those rules established by each teacher within his or her classroom.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action usually proceeds as follows:

1. Reprimand or Policy Reminder
2. Demerit
3. Detention (after school)
4. Suspension
5. Expulsion

To ensure uninterrupted learning, Hillsdale Academy maintains a policy of demerits and detentions with parental notification. The Academy's goal is to work closely with parents to uphold standards of courtesy, respect and helpful behavior.

Demerits may be issued for the following:

1. Leaving an assigned seat without permission.
2. Speaking without permission.
3. Being disrespectful to an adult or child.
4. Teasing, roughhousing or fighting.
5. Lying or creating a false impression.

6. Displaying conduct deemed by the teacher or headmaster to be unbecoming of a Hillsdale Academy student.

A student serves a detention when a second demerit is issued. The Academy notifies parents when a detention is required, and a day during the next one-week period is selected for the student to serve the detention after school. Students are relieved of all demerits at the conclusion of each marking period.

Any student who is subject to a fourth detention during one marking period serves, instead, a one-day suspension. Suspended students are required to submit all missed academic work at the beginning of the next school day. The headmaster may suspend any student when, in his judgment, circumstances necessitate it.

Any student who demonstrates a general unwillingness or inability to abide by classroom or Hillsdale Academy rules is subject to expulsion. After meeting with parents, the student and involved faculty, the headmaster will decide if expulsion is warranted.

All disciplinary actions are conducted at the discretion of the headmaster.

### **Prohibited Items**

Any introduction of a weapon, an illegal drug, tobacco, alcohol or sexually explicit material will be treated as grounds for immediate expulsion. Any use of the same either at school or outside school will similarly be treated with utmost gravity and may be grounds for immediate expulsion.

### **School Uniform**

Our school uniform seeks to achieve a handsome, business-like appearance for our students and to free them from fashion trends and peer pressure. In our choice of the McIntyre tartan theme, we pay tribute to our patrons, Dr. and Mrs. Charles S. McIntyre.

The only authorized emblem on clothing is the Hillsdale Academy emblem, which is available at the Hillsdale College bookstore or Academy office. No other decoration or designation is allowed. Sports caps, with or without insignia, are unacceptable.

A full description of the school uniform, including P.E. uniform and outerwear, may be obtained from the office. Uniform is to be worn at all times during the school day and on field trips unless special instructions are sent home. Dress uniform is required every Wednesday and on special occasions. Dress code infractions will result in a policy reminder and may require that a parent bring approved clothing to the Academy office before a student may rejoin his class.

### **Jewelry, Makeup and Hairstyle**

Neck chains and watches should be removed for P.E. and sports.

Hair is to be neat and clean. Boys' hair should be off the collar and of uniform length. All questions of jewelry, makeup and hairstyle are at the discretion of the headmaster. (See Uniform Code for details.)

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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### **Arrival Procedures**

Children in Grades kindergarten through 7 are to arrive at school no earlier than 8:00 a.m. Opening ceremony begins at 8:20 a.m. In the event of inclement weather, Grades kindergarten through 7 will hold opening ceremony in the upper lobby. Eighth Grade students are to proceed directly to the Academy lobby for opening ceremony.

### **Departure Times and Procedures**

Kindergarten ends at 12:30 p.m., Lower School at 3:25 p.m. Kindergarten dismisses from under the front porch, Grades 1 through 8 from the lower parking lot. Students who have not been picked up by 3:30 p.m. may be picked up from the library.

When a child is to ride home with someone other than the customary driver, the parent must turn in to the front office, in advance, signed written permission. This must specify both the driver's name and a description of the vehicle.

Children who walk or ride a bicycle to school are encouraged to go directly home following dismissal.

### **Recess**

Children need and want a time during the day to engage in self-directed activity. Recess is provided for exercise, games and conversation. When playing games, children are encouraged to include everyone who wants to participate. Children are not permitted to leave the designated area during recess.

An adult always oversees recess. Accordingly, children are not permitted to use playground equipment while waiting for school to begin or while waiting for rides following dismissal.

### **Parent Envelope**

Each Tuesday, students return home with an envelope that contains timely information. Parents are asked to read this information and then sign and date the envelope. Parents are encouraged to send correspondence of their own in the envelope. The deadline for the return of the envelope is Thursday morning.

## **Messages to Students from Parents**

Messages of an emergency nature only are delivered to students during the school day. All other messages are delivered after the school day ends.

## **Delivery of Items by Outside Vendors**

Students are not to disrupt the school day by ordering and arranging for the delivery of items from outside vendors, such as food, flowers, balloons and the like. Parents are asked to have such orders delivered to the students' homes; otherwise, items delivered to the Academy will be kept at the front office until the end of the school day.

## **Food**

Aside from the luncheon period, students are allowed to partake of food and drink only during specified times. Kindergartners have a short food break once a day. Students in Grades 1 and 2, with teacher approval, may have a short food break occasionally. When permission has been granted in a prior announcement, students may bring food for consumption during school events and activities that occur after school. Parents should note that chewing gum is never permitted on campus.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost items should be reported to the front office, and found items should be turned in to the front office.

## **Telephones**

Students must obtain permission at the front office for using the Academy's telephone. Outgoing calls should be of an urgent nature and should be kept brief. Students do not have permission to use cellular telephones during the school day.

## **Electronic Equipment**

Students are not to bring electronic equipment to campus, except for class use as authorized by the teacher.

## **Fire Drills**

When the fire alarm sounds, all students go quickly and quietly by class to the approved exit displayed in the classroom. The last person exiting the classroom turns out the lights and closes the door. Students proceed to the back of the parking lot nearest their exit. They stand

silently while the teacher takes attendance. When the return signal sounds, everyone returns to class quietly. In case of an actual fire, students will remain in a designated area on the Academy campus until they receive further directions and parent notification has taken place.

A copy of the fire emergency procedure with evacuation plan is posted in each classroom.

## **Tornado Drills**

When an announcement is made, all students go quickly and quietly by class to the approved school location displayed in the classroom. Students then position themselves on their hands and knees, facing the exterior walls. Students are told when to return quietly to their classrooms. In case of an actual tornado, students will remain in their approved locations until they receive further directions and parent notification has taken place.

A copy of the tornado emergency procedure with evacuation plan is posted in each classroom.

## **Inclement Weather Announcements**

Delayed openings and school day cancellations are announced by 6:30 a.m. on local radio stations WCSR (1340 AM and 92.1 FM) and WMXE (102.5 FM). Parents and students are requested not to call the Academy office or Academy personnel for this information.

## **Visitors**

All visitors, including parents, must report to the front office prior to entering a classroom.

## **Special Occasions**

**Birthdays:** Students may present a book in honor of their birthday. A bookplate bearing the student's name will be placed in the book and formally presented to the Academy during the opening ceremony on the student's birthday. Suggestions of approved titles by grade level are available from the headmaster.

**Halloween:** There is no formal observation of Halloween at Hillsdale Academy. Uniforms are worn as usual, and face masks are not permitted.

**St. Valentine's Day:** Children in Grades K through 4 are permitted to exchange homemade valentines with their classmates. Class lists are provided, and children who choose to make valentines include everyone on the list, so that each child receives the same number.

Children in Grades 5 through 8 make valentines to share with

children in the local hospital, senior citizens or members of the armed services.

### **Age-Grade Placement Guide**

Normal placement of incoming students should follow the age schedule shown below. Exceptions to this schedule will only be considered after consultation with the headmaster and relevant teachers. A careful review of the child's placement test results, previous education and curriculum, standardized test scores and assessment of personal readiness must be accomplished before any exceptions will be considered.

<u>Age of Child as of August 15 of current academic year</u>	<u>Grade of Placement</u>
5	Kindergarten
6	First Grade
7	Second Grade
8	Third Grade
9	Fourth Grade
10	Fifth Grade
11	Sixth Grade
12	Seventh Grade
13	Eighth Grade
14	Freshman
15	Sophomore
16	Junior
17	Senior

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## NOTES

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