

Highcrest Handbook

A Resource for Parents
From Your PTO

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Phone Numbers and Safe Phone

Highcrest Phone Number: 847/853-2900
Safe Phone Number: 847/853-2900, ext. 1

Call the safe phone when your child will be absent or late to school. When your child returns to school, please send a note along to formally excuse his/her absence.

HMS House & Team Assignments 2010-2011

5th Grade classes are arranged into groups of four classrooms, called a House. 6th grade classes are arranged into groups of two classrooms, called a Team. The following tables summarize the Houses and Teams for each grade.

5th GRADE

House	
1	Gontovnick, Konicek, Eakley, McNeece
2	Biggs, J. Taylor, Rizman, Grishaber
3	Towson, Belconis, Cummins, K. Taylor
4	Fisk, Davis, Wasson, Dobson

6th GRADE

Team		Team	
1	Malstrom, Straub	2	Neill, Bassett
3	Gavin, Jansyn	4	Wierzbinski, Rosborg
5	Racugglia, Resis	6	Heyde, Flintz
7	Flanigan, Kline	8	Gayle, Utynek

Classes in the same house have the same Physical Education period (except House 1 in 5th grade). They also have Foreign Language during the same period. Foreign language classes are made up of a mix of students from all four classes in the house.

HMS Lunch Schedule 2010-2011

Period	Time	Classes
4a	11:21-11:41	Gontovnik, Konicek, Eakley, McNeece, J. Taylor, Biggs, Rizman, Grishaber (5 th) Recess at 11:41 a.m. (4b)
4b	11:41-12:01	Cummins, K. Taylor, Belconis, Towson, Fisk, Davis, Wasson, Dobson (5 th) Recess at 11:21 a.m. (4a)
5a	12:06-12:26	Straub, Malstrom, Bassett, Neill, Gavin, Jansyn, Rosborg, Wierzbinski (6 th) Recess at 12:26 p.m. (5b)
5b	12:26-12:46	Resis, Racugglia, Flintz, Heyde, Kline, Flanigan, Utynek, Gayle (6 th) Recess at 12:06 p.m. (5a)



Bell Schedule

Monday/Tuesday/Friday

Arrival Bell	8:35am
Warning Bell	8:44am
Homeroom	8:49am - 9:09am
Period 1	9:12am - 9:52am
Period 2	9:55am - 10:35am
Period 3	10:38am - 11:18am
Period 4	11:21am - 12:01pm
Period 5	12:06pm - 12:46pm
Period 6	12:51pm - 1:31pm
Period 7	1:34pm - 2:14pm
Period 8	2:17pm - 2:57pm
Period 9	3:00pm - 3:40pm

Wednesday/Thursday

Arrival Bell	8:35am
Warning Bell	8:44am
Homeroom	8:49am - 9:09am
Period 1/2 Block	9:12am - 10:35am
Period 3/4 Block	10:38am - 12:01pm
Period 6/7 Block	12:51pm - 2:14pm
Period 8/9 Block	2:17pm - 3:40pm

All doors are locked after 9:00am. If there is a delayed opening, the day begins at 9:49am.

Transportation, Drop-Off and Pick-Up Guidelines

The PTO wants to make sure your child is safe at Highcrest. The Village of Wilmette, District 39 and the Civics and Safety committee have developed guidelines for the school driveway, drop-off and pick-up procedures, as well as parking policies. These procedures may seem like a hassle especially when you are in a hurry to get your child to school, or if you are running late for a “quarterly special,” but they are there for the safety of all children. **Please follow the rules – our children’s well-being is at stake.**

Parking: Parking is a no-brainer. Parking for staff and visitors is available in the lots immediately north and west of the main school building. Handicapped parking and short-term parking (30 minutes or less) are available for parents and teachers in the lot just outside the main entrance of the school. Park in spaces that are designated on the asphalt. Do not park in the fire lanes. **Once again, do not park in the fire lanes.** Not only does parking in a fire lane create a potentially dangerous situation for the children and staff, but more than likely you will be ticketed by the Wilmette Police.

Morning Drop-Off and Afternoon Pick-Up: Vehicles are not allowed to enter the north driveway in the morning from 8:15-9:00 a.m. and in the afternoon from 3:00-4:00 p.m. Only school staff and those vehicles which have been given a medical clearance from school administration are allowed to enter at these posted times. Children can be dropped off and picked up in the following designated locations:

- 1) Illinois Road west of Hunter (north and south sides of street)
- 2) Illinois Road east of Hunter on east side only
- 3) Washington Avenue on the south side
- 4) Hunter Road north of Birchwood
- 5) Hunter Road on the west side (this tends to be very congested)
- 6) Southeast parking lot (please follow arrows and do not linger in the entrance. You may only turn right when exiting from this area).

Whenever possible let your child walk, bike, skate or scooter to school. And remind them to wear a helmet!

Please remember the new Illinois State Law prohibiting the use of cell phones in school zones. Wilmette Police will issue tickets for violators.

Please keep in mind it is difficult to drop-off and pick-up your child next to the building. Therefore plan ahead with your child about where to meet him or her; have your child be prepared for bad weather so they can walk to meet you; and consider carpooling with other families.

Reminder:

Children are not expected to arrive at school before 8:35 a.m. unless they are in instrumental music or chorus in which case they are not to arrive before 7:45 a.m. on their lesson days. Children are not supervised before school. In extreme weather, children are allowed into the building before the arrival bell at 8:35.

Bus Behavior

Bus behavior should be the same as classroom behavior. The bus driver reviews the rules during the first week. Help your child remember the rules. Bus rules are written for the safety of all the students and adults on the bus. Please also discuss “bus stop” behavior before and after school. Make sure your kids “play nice.”

Special Events and Activities, School Tips and PTO Information

Band/Orchestra/Chorus

Hugely popular at Highcrest is the Band/Orchestra/Choral Department. Over the first several weeks of school both 5th and 6th graders are introduced to different instruments. After a student has decided what he or she would like to play, the student can join the Band or the Orchestra. No need to buy the instrument though, there are many places here on the North Shore that offer short-term rentals. Parents will receive information from the Music Directors about specific places that offer rentals. Practices for 5th graders are held one morning each week (before school – bus service available) and one period during the week. Sixth graders practice two to three times a week before school and again during one class period during the school day. Choral practices are also held before school. The music department is so special and popular at HMS that in 5th grade more than 80% of all students participate. Encourage your student to give it a try! Concerts are held in December, February and May at Regina High School.

Birthday Books

Commemorate your child’s special day by purchasing a book for the Highcrest Library Media Center (LMC). This is a PTO-sponsored (once again self-funded) activity that builds the richness and variety of our school library. The average cost of a new library book is \$22. After your check has been received, your child will be notified via his/her classroom teacher to go to the LMC to select his/her book. A personalized bookplate with the message you choose will be placed inside. The Birthday Book form is on the Forms page at www.highcrestpto.org.

Book Fair

The Book Fair will return to Highcrest November 8 - 12. Details will be forthcoming. But look forward to a broad selection for all ages. All funds raised benefit the Library Media Center.

Clubs

Your PTO sponsors after school activities throughout the year. We offer a wide variety of clubs to give our kids a chance to expand an interest, try something new, or just have fun with the guidance of Highcrest's own teachers. From dance and drama to running, chess, and reading, there are many clubs to explore. Each club meets one day a week after school from 3:45 – 4:45pm. A session runs for 8 weeks. Registration information for the Fall session will be available on the PTO website at the end of September. There are two sessions of Clubs – fall and spring with the exception of Broadcast Club. We offer a mid-winter Broadcast Club because of its popularity and we want to accommodate as many students as possible. Because of its popularity, a lottery is done with registration. There is a small charge associated with each Club. Club scholarships are offered through the Principal's office and are covered by your PTO.

Communication

Email, Email, Email! Make sure your email address has been correctly entered when you register your child each year. In an effort to reduce paper/printing expense communication is done primarily through email. Each week Luke Pavone, Highcrest Principal, will email parents with important reminders for the week to come and highlights from the prior week. Included in this email is the Highcrest Headlines, a PTO published weekly newsletter that serves as the primary means of communicating school-related events and for updating you on volunteer opportunities at the school. If you haven't received any emails from Principal Pavone during the first week, check your junk mail, then contact the school to make sure they have the correct email address. The Headlines is also posted to our PTO website. This site contains helpful information about the school and PTO. Check it out at www.highcrestpto.org.

Dress

Dress and appearance are an individual decision. As parents, we've all had our battles, i.e., shorts when it is 28 degrees outside with a foot of snow or shorts that are TOO SHORT. The school has the right to send your child home if dress is inappropriate. Help your child make wise decisions each morning. Hats are not to be worn during the school day.

District 39 Educational Foundation

The D39 Foundation is a non-profit organization that acquires and grants resources to expand, enrich, and complement educational opportunities for the students, staff, and District 39 community. The group administers Gripp Grants and the Sam Mikaelian Fine Arts Fund. D39 Foundation is an all-volunteer organization. For more information visit the website www.wilmette39.org/d39foundation/index.htm.

Family-to-Family

The PTO sponsored Family-to-Family committee is here to support those in the Highcrest community who are in the midst of medical or other kinds of emergencies.

Our volunteers can provide assistance with meals, errands, childcare or whatever is needed.

Family Awareness Network (FAN)

FAN helps parents by connecting them with other parents, their children, the schools and the community through effective educational programs, active parent networks, and other practical parenting resources. FAN presents a periodic speaker series and encourages parent networks. FAN is also an all-volunteer organization. Your HMS PTO supports FAN. For more information visit the website at <http://fan-ntts.ntnow.org/>.

Field Day

What would the end of school be without a really big day of running around outside, having fun, hanging with friends, and a tug-of-peace (pc you see)? Well it wouldn't be any fun! HMS has two separate Field Days - one for 6th and one for 5th graders at the end of the school year. The gym teachers sell t-shirts for around \$10 each. Your child is either on a "blue" or a "gold" team and can purchase the respective-colored shirt. The PTO provides popsicles to all at the end of the day. Field Day ranks up there with Freaky Friday on the Fun-O-Meter!

5th Grade Connections

This year, 5th Grade Connections will be held on Friday, September 3 at 2 pm. The children play games and do "team building" exercises. It is a great way for our new HMS students to get to know their classmates and to get to feel more comfortable around the school. If you're interested, sign up to volunteer at the Parent Meet & Greet. It's a great way to see your child in action that first week of school.

Freaky Friday

For the kids, let's just say that this is the biggest event of the year. This PTO-sponsored party will be held on Friday, October 22. There are carnival games held in Gym C (aka the Big Gym), a DJ playing music in one of the smaller gyms, and refreshments in the cafeteria. This incredibly fun party is usually an hour and one-half. Approximately 90% of the kids attend. Costumes are not required, but many kids will add a little something "funky" to their attire for the evening—whether it is a funny hat or adding an unusual hair color—after all, it is Freaky Friday! This is an HMS tradition and not a fundraiser. The \$10 ticket price funds the event. Many, many parent volunteers are needed to pull this off. Hint #1: Parents have as much fun as the kids and Hint #2: Parents can dress a little funky themselves.....

Gift Wrap

The Innisbrook Gift Wrap Sale will be held this year from September 17 to October 8. Check the catalog for a great assortment of birthday, holiday, and all-occasion gift wrap as well as other special gift items. Purchases will be delivered November 19.

Highcrest Logo Merchandise

You'll have an opportunity to purchase really cool Highcrest logo merchandise at Meet and Greet Day, so plan ahead for the holidays, birthdays and school spirit days! Highcrest Logo wear is not sold in the School Store.

Ice Cream Social

On August 19 from 1-3 pm, all 5th grade students are invited to Highcrest to informally tour the school and to have a scoop of ice cream in the cafeteria. This is not the same as the Meet and Greet scheduled for Wednesday, August 25, the day before school starts. Teachers may not be present and parents are not required to attend. Our PTO Presidents will be present in the lobby of the school to answer any questions you may have.

Kids Are Key

The Kids are Key Campaign is the PTO direct solicitation to raise funds for enrichment. This year's theme is **Twist! Turn! Open!** Twist: How's this for a twist – no fundraising party, no auctions, no stopping at the thrift shop to find something to wear to the 1980s/medieval/hippie-themed benefit! Turn: Turn in your tax-deductible contribution of \$60 or more at Meet & Greet or use PayPal (visit www.highcrestpto.org) to make your donation to the Kids are Key campaign. Open: Open your child's mind to all the possibilities enrichment presents, from a visit with a NASA ambassador to a performance on cyber-etiquette. **Just \$60 per child is all it takes to fund Highcrest's enrichment programs. Please respond generously to the Kids are Key letter you will receive in August with your child's back-to-school packet. We strive for 100% family participation at any giving level, and look forward to receiving your gift.**

The Kindness Connection

The Kindness Connection is a non-profit organization that works with local charities to define service projects that can be completed by students in their classrooms. With financial support from the PTO and under the leadership of an HMS teacher, each teaching team will guide their students through the process of discussing needs in our community and choosing one of over twenty possible service activities. The projects students may choose include packing lunches for a homeless shelter, creating fleece pillows for children in foster care and constructing birdhouses for facilities serving the elderly. Students learn about the charitable organization they are helping and complete the project with their team. This will occur on Friday, January 28, an early release day.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a hall locker with a combination lock to secure belongings. It is the students' responsibility to keep their lockers locked at all times and to keep the combination confidential. Believe it or not, lockers are supposed to be kept clean (just like closets at home – huh). If your student loses his/her lock, a replacement must be purchased from the school.

Make a Difference Day

Held on October 22, Make a Difference Day is a day of service in which volunteers collect items needed by various agencies in our area. In the past, agencies served by this event have included the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the New Trier Food Pantry, Childserv of Evanston and the Hadley School for the Blind. Our 5th and 6th graders are given the opportunity to participate by soliciting and collecting items from neighbors and friends here in Wilmette in the weeks preceding the Day. This event is coordinated by the New Trier Township and here at HMS by one of our own parents.

Room parents help coordinate these efforts. Other parent volunteers are also needed to organize the collections and transport them to the consolidation point, usually the Indian Hill train station on Saturday, October 23.

Math Fair

Let's see... "What would it cost to redecorate my bedroom, including of course, the big screen TV, hot tub and pink shag rug?" or "What is the average ticket price for all Major League Baseball teams?" or "If I plant ten acres of apple trees, how many apples will I sell over a 20 year period taking into account starter seedlings, fertilizer, average growth rates, property taxes and labor costs?" (Note: stay away from that one!) These are just a few of the things our 5th graders ponder. Each year, starting after Spring Break, 5th graders start putting their math skills to work and create a presentation answering these questions. Presentation boards are sold through the Math Department and order forms are sent out shortly after the project begins. Prices average around \$3. Parents are invited into the classroom to see all the presentations mid-May.

Meet and Greet

Held on Wednesday, August 25 from 8:30 – 9:00 am for students with last names beginning with the letters A-L and from 9:15-9:45 am for last names beginning with the letters M-Z . Students and parents come to meet their teachers and go to GYM C (aka the Big Gym) to purchase Highcrest spirit wear, join the PTO (only way to get a directory), purchase a birthday book and the all important yearbook for their student, donate to the Kids are Key campaign (to fund enrichment activities) and to sign up for volunteer opportunities throughout the year, such as the cafeteria and the garden.

Outdoor Classroom (a.k.a., Jewel of the North Shore)

The Outdoor Classroom is a wonderful interactive garden in the center courtyard at HMS. Students can visit the garden during their lunch period to read, draw, paint, dig, water, help with maintenance (such as turning the compost), bird watch or just relax. Students love it! The Outdoor Classroom is a 15,000 square foot area that includes gorgeous tall prairie grasses with a great variety of flowers and a woodland garden with pathways throughout. The Outdoor Classroom is used by teachers for all kinds of classroom activities - reading, writing, math projects, science, and art—all through the year. It is open for the first eight weeks in the fall and for the final eight weeks in the spring. If you haven't checked it out, do so. It is truly the Jewel of the North Shore. Parent volunteers are always needed to lightly supervise in the Outdoor Classroom.

Parent Party

This fun night will take place on Wednesday, November 10. It is a self-funded parent party where everyone gets together and sees old friends while meeting new friends from the Highcrest community. Remember those parents you miss whom you haven't seen since the last Pre-school Benefit you attended? Scrumptious food and really good beverages are served along with a lot of fun. There is a band or DJ playing music. Each year the location changes, and each year fun is had by all. You will be mailed an invitation soon after the start of school.

Personal Belongings

Kids should leave their really cool, hip things at home. Although it is fun to bring the latest gadget to school, there is always the chance that it won't make it home. Obviously it is not the school's responsibility when a cool MP3 player goes missing. Cell phones are never to be used (or on) during school hours. Please help your child adhere to these rules.



PTO Volunteer

Insert your name and picture here! We need you. It takes many volunteers to make the many great programs at Highcrest happen—programs that wouldn't happen without the support of a strong parent community. Some activities might just take one hour, others require more. There will always be a spot for you.

PTO Website = <http://www.highcrestpto.org>

Click around this web site and you'll find a wealth of information: current issues of the Highcrest Headlines, volunteer schedules, PTO Board Member contact information, PTO Meeting dates, D39 Virtual Backpack, Forms, announcements—everything you ever wanted to know at your fingertips! Make sure you bookmark the link as one of your favorites. This website is a great resource. You too can “be in the know.”

School Store

The school store is open on Wednesdays during lunchtime. PTO volunteers staff the store each week. We sell pencils, pens, notebooks, and lots of neat little things that 5th and 6th graders love! Items typically sell for 25 cents to a dollar. This is not a fundraiser. Parent volunteers are always needed and along with volunteering to do cafeteria duty, it's a great way to get into the school and see all the kids.

Science Expo

Science Expo is an opportunity for your 6th grader to explore his or her scientific curiosities. Gosh, “What is the average distance a ping pong ball will fly launched from a home-made catapult under different atmospheric conditions?” or “How does soda consumption affect our bones?” Research for the Science Expo usually starts mid-January with presentations right before Spring Break. Presentation boards are around \$3 and order forms are distributed by the science teachers at the start of the project.

TGIF Mardi Gras

TGIF Mardi Gras is a Youth Connection sponsored event held at Highcrest. It is a fun event for both 5th and 6th graders with a DJ, dancing and healthy refreshments. There is usually a nominal charge for this event.

Variety Show

The Highcrest Variety Show was started in 1996 as a fundraiser for the new school. Now it is a highly anticipated tradition each year (no longer a fundraiser) when a multitude of different acts are performed by 5th and 6th graders just for fun, with a 5th & 6th grade technical crew providing professional assistance. Acts, each two minutes in length, consist of skits, songs, dances, mimes, comedians, bands, musical recitals,

gymnasts, jugglers, magicians and other entertainment. Almost anything age-appropriate the kids can think of can be an act. The show is open to all; there are no “cuts.” About 175 kids take part in the show and almost all the other Highcrest students come to watch. The show is performed twice on a Friday night, once at 4:30 pm (the performers and audience can walk over after school) and once at 7:30 pm. It takes place at the Wilmette Jr. High School Auditorium and tickets are \$5.00. Sign-up takes place in December and rehearsals start in January. The 2011 Highcrest Variety Show will take place at 4:30 pm and 7:30 pm at the Wilmette Junior High School on Friday, February 18th. Check out the website: <http://www.hmsvarietyshow.com>.

Visitor Sign-In

Just that. All adult visitors are welcome but are required to sign in at the office. Grab a name tag and head on about your business. On days when there is a lot of traffic thru the school, i.e., “quarterly performance days” or PTO meeting days, you will be asked to grab a name tag and bypass the sign-in at the office. Sign-in is a safety procedure. Remember we are all trying to keep our kids safe. All who enter must be identified.

Youth Connection/RAD

Youth Connection is a non-profit organization that helps 5th thru 8th grade youth living in the Wilmette area rise to the challenges of early adolescence by providing social, recreational, and academic programs and community service opportunities. Youth Connection offers a lot of programming at Highcrest. RAD is an after-school drop-in program where kids can go to start homework, have a snack and play, supervised, at school. RAD is held in the cafeteria and runs until 6pm most days. RAD is a great alternative to having your child go home to an empty house. Youth Connection also sponsors Youth Plays as well as TGIF—a fun night held in the Big Gym at Highcrest with a DJ, dancing and healthy refreshments. This programming is free... but please know that Youth Connection accepts and needs donations. Many of the great things that this organization does are implemented on a very tight budget. Your HMS PTO subsidizes Youth Connection throughout the year. Check out the website at <http://www.youthconnectionwilmette.org>.

Your PTO

Throughout this document we have referred to the PTO as “your PTO”. It takes all of us to make this programming successful. It is amazing the impact a group of parents, collaborating with teachers, can have on our children’s educational experience. Please join your HMS PTO.

As an organization, our mission is to act as a valuable resource for families in the community and as a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

The Values that make our PTO strong are:

- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Inclusivity
- ❖ Integrity

Highcrest History

In the fall of 1995, grades 5 and 6 of District 39 returned to their historic home at Highcrest. Facing east on Hunter Road, the original 1928 building had just five small classrooms serving fewer than 100 students in grades K-4. It was operated by Gross Point School District 40, which was annexed to District 39 in 1932 following the earlier consolidation of the two villages. Highcrest underwent two major expansions in the post-World War II era, reaching its all-time high enrollment in grades K-6 in 1957-1958. The construction of Romona School, the opening of Wilmette Junior High School and the transfer of 6th grade students there, and finally the opening of Bell School allowed the Highcrest population to settle at the 400 student range the following decade. As the “Baby Boomers” moved through their elementary school years, however, declining enrollment led to Highcrest’s closure following the 1976-1977 school term. After the closure in 1977, the Wilmette Park District used Highcrest for its recreational programs. The original 1928 building, however, served as the Wilmette Historical Society Museum, which has been relocated to the restored Gross Point Village Hall on Ridge Road.

This comprehensive facility now contains classrooms for academic teams, foreign language, related arts, computer labs and music. Its special facilities include a cafeteria, auditorium, library media center, teachers’ lounge, administrative offices, health office, three gymnasiums, and areas for students requiring special services such as social work, psychology, occupational therapy, assistance with learning disabilities, speech and language, and more intensive special education programs. Enrollment for the 2010-2011 school-year is expected to near 850. My how times have changed!