

Dear Parents and Students,

As we begin the 2011-2012 school year I would like to take an opportunity to discuss with you a few our concerns and stipulations we have concerning proper use of technology, and efforts that we make to ensure a safe, academically focused, and friendship building environment.

The accompanying Mediawise parent guide is included in this mailing as a tool to help you stay abreast and up-to-date with the latest parent tips to help you monitor and guide your family's technology use. I also recommend their web site, [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org), as a rich resource for the latest research and outcomes on other topics concerning media and their families.

Students at Hillcrest Academy are given opportunity to access the internet, email friends and family, and use their cell phones. We believe that it is important for them to be technologically literate in a highly evolving technological world. However, we don't want them to be so dependent on their technology that they stop developing social skills and relationships that are enjoyable as well as a necessity for a healthy life. When speaking about electronic and screen dependency in students, The MediaWise Parent Controls Guide states that students are turning to the Internet, cell phones, and ipods for everything from shopping to hanging out with friends. In that last few years we have seen a rise in students coming to Hillcrest Academy who would display actions and describe their use of technology (Internet, cell phone, video games) as a need. They usually chaff initially at the planned social activities, especially ones in which we have them go technology free.

There is a balance and we believe with your help they can achieve it. As a dormitory school we are in the enviable position of being parent to as many as 90 high school students from around the United States and from several different countries. If you speak with many of our graduates they will testify to the life changing experiences they had and the many life long friendships that were made as they participated in the resident experience.

However, what must accompany so many teenagers living in one location is a firm set of rules, expectations, and guidelines that make living together in a Christian community all that it can be. Hillcrest Academy sets resident living policies that enhance the dorm environment. For this reason students should anticipate the resident life staff to make decisions concerning technology use that may limit their time with a machine and encourage their time with their peers.

Resident students with cell phones and/or laptops will check them in with the RA on duty at 10:30pm. All parents may reach any student at anytime of the day or night through the Resident Life Staff or the school's main office. It has been our experience that students who continually call friends back home have a difficult time bonding to a new set of

friends. This in turn leads to longer bouts of homesickness and a general feeling of loneliness. As difficult as it may seem, you will not do your son or daughter any favors by enabling them to be in constant contact of all their friends back home.

For this reason the following stipulations are in place:

1. All electronic devices (Cell phones, ipods or music player, etc.) remain in the dorm rooms until the school day is completed at 3:00pm. Off campus students may leave their electronic devices in their cars or put away in their lockers until the end of the school day.
2. Internet access is available after school in the dorm lounges until 10:00pm on school days and throughout the weekends (Internet access and lab hours are expanded the last two weeks of each semester to allow for increased academic need)
3. Laptops will be checked in to the resident office at 10:30pm.
4. Internet access is available for academic use during the school day in the computer lab when class is not in session and in the library from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Please discuss this letter with your son or daughter prior to their arrival at Hillcrest Academy. We have an exciting and fun filled school planned and we look forward to arrival of our students.

In Christ,

Jeff Isaac  
Principal, Hillcrest Academy