

# **Executive Summary of Updates to the 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook January 9, 2024**

Recommended revisions submitted by:

Ms. Kathleen Tomei, Principal, Pleasantdale Elementary School

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The Pleasantdale School District #107 Parent/Student Handbook is a very comprehensive document. It is clear that many hours have been spent reflecting on the practices, expectations, and legal mandates required in a Parent/School Handbook and aligning these to school board policy. Previous administrators and school boards should be commended for their work on this document.

Over the past several years, we have been reviewing and updating the document to reflect our current practices, policies, and laws. As you will see in the changes reflected in the proposed 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook, they continue to be very minor in nature. The recommended changes are a result of the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) model handbook. These changes meet new legal requirements and have been vetted by the IPA legal team.

Updating the Parent/Student Handbook involved a three-step process:

1. The handbook was read by administrators, staff, and a parent representative.
2. A meeting occurred to discuss any needed changes or lack of clarity in the language. This meeting occurred on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. Thank you to our review committee this year, which consisted of Lindsay Hosanna, PTO Board Member, Kara Mulder, Kindergarten teacher, Kathleen Tomei, Pleasantdale Elementary Principal, and Jeanine Arundel, Pleasantdale Middle School Principal.
3. Ms. Tomei and Dr. Arundel worked together to propose the final document.

The proposed changes to the Parent/Student Handbook generally fell into three categories outlined below:

1. The majority of the recommended updates come from the Illinois Principals' Association (IPA) Model Student Handbook (MSH) in which the IPA provides legal updates and suggestions based upon the laws enacted within the State of Illinois over the past year. This Model Student Handbook verbiage also aligns with the PRESS board policy recommended updates.
2. The second category of updates continues the process of cleaning up the handbook and aligning it with changing practices.

3. The final category of updates are simple grammar edits and updates to reflect current year and staff/Board members.

Specific changes to the Parent/Student Handbook:

1. The most meaningful changes included the addition of new language. These new sections help protect students and better outline standards for staff.
  - a. 1.200 - Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide
  - b. 2.130 - Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs
  - c. 7.50 - Use of Artificial Intelligence
2. Language was added to existing sections to reflect current mandates or laws. Some examples of these changes are included below.
  - a. 1.170 - Provides that students shall not be prohibited from accessorizing the student's graduation attire with items associated with the student's cultural, ethnic, or religion identity or any other protected characteristic of category identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act
  - b. 3.10 - Updates to language regarding waiver of fines for loss or damage to school property.
  - c. 6.40 - Expands the list of students who are protected under the handbook procedure and requires schools to attempt to notify parents/guardians within 24 hours of the school's administration becoming aware of an alleged bullying incident.