

THOMPSON FALLS JUNIOR HIGH



2024-25 STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Board, Administration, and Staff	4
Belief Statements	5
Mission Statement	6
Core Values	6
Welcome	6
Attendance Policy and Guidelines	7
Activities and Preplanned Absences	7
Excused Absences	7
Human Sexuality Instruction Absences	8
Attendance Matrix	8
Tardy Matrix	8
Release of Students from School	8
Communication / Infinite Campus	9
Complaints by Students and Parents	9
Discipline	10
Category A: Classroom Discipline	11
Category B: School-Wide Discipline	11
Disciplinary Measures	13
Gun-Free Schools / Firearms	14
Bullying / Harassment / Intimidation / Hazing	15
K-8 General Level Behaviors	17
K-8 Bullying Level Behaviors	18
Category C: Title IX and Sexual Harassment Policy	19
Procedures For Board Expulsion	19
Distribution and Posting of Materials	20
Dress Code	20
Electronic Devices and Toys	21
Extracurricular Participation	21
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	21
Field Trips, Excursions, and Outdoor Education	25
General Information	25
Instruction in the U.S. Constitution and Pledge of Allegiance	25
Religious Practices	25

Bus Routes	25
Computer and Internet Use	26
Grading Scales	27
Immunizations	27
Childhood Illnesses	28
Library Policies	29
Lockers	29
Lunch	29
Non-Discrimination Policy	30
Office Procedures	30
Administering Medicines To Students	30
Enrollment Procedure	30
Checking In at School / Signing Out of School	32
Use of Telephones and Copier	32
Visiting School	33
Promotion Policy	33
Safety	33
Accident Prevention	33
Emergency Medical Treatment and Information	33
Drills	34
Emergency School-Closing Information	34
Search	34
Law Enforcement	34
Video Surveillance	35
Skateboards	35
Special Services	36
Guidance and Counseling Services	36
Title I: School-Wide Program	36
Special Education	37
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	37
Stolen Items	37
Understanding	Attachment
School – Parent Compact	Attachment
RBHI Mental Wellness Screening Information	Attachment
RBHI Informed Consent	Attachment

Board of Trustees

Mrs. Sandra Muster
Mr. Ryan Fields
Mrs. Mona Jacobson
Mrs. Jeneese Baxter
Mr. Jake Helvey

Board Chairperson
Board Vice-Chairperson
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member

District Administration

Mr. Edward 'Bud' Scully
Mrs. Jodi Morgan
Mr. Len Dorscher
Mr. Jase Miller
Mrs. Taylor Salmi
Mrs. Stacy Milner

Superintendent
High School Principal
Elementary Principal (K-8)
Supervising Teacher (7-8)
Special Education Coop Director
District Clerk

Junior High Faculty & Staff

Mr. Jase Miller
Mrs. Danice Toyias
Mr. Doug Padden
Mrs. Karissa Snead
Mrs. Chris Kelly
Mrs. Melissa Wilson
Mrs. Brittany Nichols
Mrs. Lisa Mickelson
Mrs. Karli Thomas
Mr. Jake Mickelson
Ms. Taylour Freed
Mr. Micah Grossberg
Mr. Bill McGuire
Mrs. Sandra Kazmierczak
Mrs. Melissa Adams
Ms. Lilly Buchanan
Mrs. Sherri Helvey
Mrs. Lisa Anderson
Mr. Josh Schmidt

Supervising Teacher / Math
Social Studies / Drama
Science / Robotics
Language Arts
Special Education Teacher
Secretary
Band
Choir
Physical Education (7)
Physical Education (8)
Counselor
Art
Shop
Library
Para Professional
Para Professional
Para Professional
Custodian
Maintenance

District Telephone Numbers & Addresses

District Administrative Office	406-827-3323	307 3 rd Avenue W.
Special Education Coop	406-827-3007	207 3 rd Avenue W.
Elementary School	406-827-3592	315 Columbia Street
Junior High School	406-827-3593	306 Haley Ave. W.
High School	406-827-3561	601 Golf Street
STEPS	406-827-3594	307 3 rd Avenue W.

AT THOMPSON FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We believe:

.. students learn in different ways and at varying rates; we respect and support those differences.

..with the support of the community we can provide a respectful, safe, and caring school environment.

..certain district and societal rules require immediate student consequences.

..with appropriate adult guidance, discipline should be considered an opportunity for student personal growth.

..keeping in mind a student's self-respect and dignity, a student should be provided an opportunity to learn to solve his/her own problem.

..in updating our district curriculum to keep pace with the changing world.

..in integrating technology within every academic area at all levels.

..in the school improvement process to maximize student learning.

..it is important to have ongoing training and in-service for staff so that educational practices will be based upon research, information, and proven procedures.

..with parent, community, and school support, students can become contributing members of society.

..learning is a lifelong process and is a key to success.

..the school must provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking by respecting and concentrating on academic, cultural, and life skills as outlined under state standards.

.. in celebrating success.

Mission of Thompson Falls Schools:

To work together as a school and community to provide every child an educational experience that will empower them to grow as a person and discover their individual potential.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on August 18, 2014



Thompson Falls Schools Core Values

Established 2013



EXCELLENCE

UNITY

COMPASSION

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

Welcome

Welcome to Thompson Falls Junior High, home of the Blue Hawks. We are looking forward to you becoming a part of the outstanding tradition that was started over 100 years ago.

Work hard in classes and take advantage of all the extra-curricular activities that interest you. Participation in all aspects of Thompson Falls School life will give you a richer school experience. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. All of the staff at Thompson Falls Junior High are here to help you. Have a great year!



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Policies and Guidelines

The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. The regular contact of the students with one another in the classroom and their participation in instructional activities under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose. This is an established principle of education which underlies and gives purpose to the requirement of compulsory schooling in this and every other state in the nation. The good things that schools have to offer can only be presented to students who are in attendance. With continued emphasis regarding Excellence in Education, all parties involved in attendance can better strive for quality in the classroom. Attendance reflects a student's dependability and is a significant factor on the student's permanent record. Future employers are as much concerned about punctuality and dependability as they are about academic record. School success, scholarship, and job opportunity are greatly affected by a good attendance record.

A telephone call or a note from either parent or guardian is necessary when a student is absent or late for any reason. Notes must be given immediately to the attendance secretary. Teachers will have a list of admits. When a student arrives late or after an absence, the student is required to report directly to the office for an admittance or tardy slip. All absences and tardies will be recorded on the report card.

Activities or Preplanned Absences

It is the student's responsibility to notify teachers prior to being absent. Teachers may require the work to be completed and turned in prior to departure or immediately upon return to school. The timeline for accepting student make-up work will be done at the building level by the school administrator.

Absences for school-sponsored activities are excused, but students are held responsible for the work missed. In order to participate in an extracurricular activity, including practice, students must be in school during the afternoon of the date of the event. Exceptions may be made by the administration.

Excused Absences

Montana law states that a student is excused when absent due to:

1. Illness
2. Bereavement
3. Parent request due to instruction regarding human sexuality
4. Other reasons prescribed by the policies of the Board, including medical or legal appointments. The school administrator will determine other exceptions that would be accepted as being an excused absence. Verification should be available prior to requesting an admit slip. School work missed during an excused absence can be made up at full credit; even those beyond ten (10) days (see Ten-Day Policy). Time allotted for make-up work is stated in each school's student handbook.

Human Sexuality Instruction Absences

A student may be absent from a class period, assembly, school function, or other instruction at the request of a parent/guardian/other person responsible for care when the subject matter is related to human sexuality. These absences do not count toward the student's discretionary 10-day total. The District will provide parents/guardians with at least 48-hours notice before such instruction is scheduled to occur.

THOMPSON FALLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATRIX

Number Of Absences	Action
Every Absence	Documented by school and call home from office if parent has not notified the school
10 total yearly absences	Letter to parent/guardian from principal w/copy going in student file and to counselor. Parent/guardian will be contacted for a meeting to discuss the cause of excessive absences and to develop an attendance plan.
20 total yearly absences	Student is considered chronically absent. Letter to parent/guardian from principal w/copy going in student file, to counselor and mailed to County Superintendent of Schools.

THOMPSON FALLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TARDY MATRIX

Number Of Tardies	Action
Every Tardy	Documented by school and student sent to class w/tardy slip
10 total yearly tardies	Letter to parent/guardian from principal w/copy going in student file, counselor, and school resource officer. Parent/guardian will be contacted for a meeting to discuss the cause of excessive tardies and to develop an attendance plan.
20 total yearly tardies	Student is considered chronically tardy. Letter to parent/guardian from principal w/copy going in student file, to counselor and mailed to County Superintendent of Schools.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent. When in doubt as to custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student's records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial parent to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

COMMUNICATION

Infinite Campus

Infinite Campus is a web-based dynamic resource which allows us to combine much of our information into one system. The Infinite Campus Portal is a communication tool for parents/guardians, students, and the school to use to share pertinent information about our student's educational progress. The Campus Portal connects parents/guardians to student data and food service information online, anytime, from anywhere there is internet access. Our system also gives our district the ability to send general or emergency messages via e-mail, phone, and text to you and/or your contacts of choice. Through the parent portal, you can conveniently log on to update phone numbers, e-mails, and other contact information. This ensures messages get to the right person, at the right time.

Messenger with Voice provides you with:

1. Emergency Notification - receive emergency messages for school closes, delays, etc.
2. Message Options - receive general messages regarding attendance, behavior, assignments, low lunch account balances and more.
3. Preferred Communication - set your preferences to indicate how you would like receive general or emergency messages (choose from voice, text, and e-mail option).

COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply — by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a Uniform Complaint Procedure policy for most complaints (Policy 1700) with the exception of complaints/concerns regarding involving challenges to educational material, those governed by a specified procedure in state or federal law that supersedes a uniform grievance process, and those about sexual harassment and/or disability discrimination. A written copy of the Uniform Complaint Procedure can be obtained at the Superintendent's office.

If a student or parent believes that the Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights, he or she may file a written complaint with any District Principal or Supervisor under the applicable grievance procedure. If still unresolved, the matter generally may be referred to the Superintendent. Under some circumstances, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees in the event the matter cannot be resolved at the administrative level.

Some complaints require different procedures. Any building office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for filing complaints. Additional information can also be found in Policy 1700, available in any principal's and Superintendent's offices.

Students shall use the Title IX Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about sexual harassment. A copy of the Title IX Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website www.thompsonfalls.net or any District or school office or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator, Jodi Morgan.

Students shall use the Section 504 Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about disability discrimination. A copy of the Section 504 Grievance Procedures can be

obtained on the District's website www.thompsonfalls.net or any District or school office or by contacting Principal Len Dorscher.

DISCIPLINE

A teacher or principal has the authority to hold a pupil to strict accountability for disorderly conduct in school, on the way to or from school, or during intermission or recess (MCA 20-4-302.1). Students and parents are notified that violations will invite consequences that are based upon several factors, including, but not limited to the severity of the act, the situation in which it occurred, the frequency of the behavior problem, and the needs of the child.

The "9 Essential Skills" of Love and Logic and **District Policy 2000**, District Mission/Belief Statements, will be used as guidelines for district staff in working with students. Also, Love and Logic principles empower the teacher with input from the students and parents about the process for managing student misbehavior. "Recovery Area" should be a common non-disciplinary term that is used in grades K- 12.

The Board of Trustees has established a set of district expectations dealing with student safety, such as violence, drugs, alcohol, bullying, etc. All students will be treated as individuals. In the event that the actions of the staff appear to be unfair, the student/parent should visit with the staff member involved and present his/her case. In the event that the case has merit, the consequence will be adjusted accordingly. This is the school's written guarantee that the right of due process will be observed and respected at school. (See **District Policy 3210** for Uniform Grievance Procedures)

The successful teacher uses the "90-10 Goal" of using preventative strategies 90% of the time, and 10% of the time using intervention strategies as developed by Charles Fay. Examples of preventative strategies are:

- Building positive relationships with all students
- Teaching routines and procedures
- Setting enforceable limits in respectful ways
- Sharing control limits
- Modeling enthusiasm, compassion, character, and respectful dress
- Providing high levels of friendly supervision and unstructured settings
- Using instructional strategies and content that maximizes engagement and learning
- Intervening with preventative interventions when misbehavior is still small
- Speaking to students as we would want someone to speak to us
- Communicating to students that we value them more than their academic achievement, athletic ability, or appearance
- Guiding students toward solving their own problems and making restitution when they create problems for others
- Reacting with empathy instead of anger, frustration, or sarcasm
- Short term recovery

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Each teacher, and any other school personnel when students are under his/her charge, is

authorized to impose any disciplinary measure, other than suspension, or expulsion, corporal punishment or in-school suspension, which is appropriate and in accordance with the policies and rules on student discipline. Teachers may remove defiant students from a classroom to be sent to the office for disruptive behavior that is serious enough to hinder the teaching process.

The following infractions are grouped into categories and not intended to be all inclusive. Some infractions may not be included here and modifications may be made if necessary at the discretion of the administration.

CATEGORY A: CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Classroom Offenses:

1. Unexcused tardiness.
2. Minor disruptive behavior (excessive talking, disrespect, disruptive behavior, note writing, etc.).
3. Nonparticipation.
4. Cheating, copying, and forgery.
5. Inappropriate language.
6. Food and drinks in class without permission.
7. Other rules that violate posted classroom rules.

Teachers will document all offenses and their consequences. Serious or repeated misbehavior may be referred to the building administrator. Parents will be notified of repeated misbehaviors and parent conferences may be requested before referral to the building administrator.

CATEGORY B: SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE

1. Any clothing displaying drugs, marijuana, alcohol, nicotine, tobacco or vapor products, which expresses obscenities, pornographic, or suggestive material, or which immodestly exposes a student's chest, abdomen, buttocks, or undergarments is prohibited. This includes spandex garments, pajama bottoms, sweat pants, spaghetti straps and see-through materials. Pants must be worn above the hips; no sagging pants allowed. Caps are not to be worn in the building, and are subject to confiscation. (District Policy/Students 3224)
2. Vandalism. Damaging or defacing any private belongings or school property, including books. Parents will be held liable.
3. Theft of personal or school property. This includes stealing while on any school-sponsored activities.
4. Trespassing: Any unauthorized entry into school buildings before, during, or after regular school hours.
5. Littering on school grounds or in buildings.
6. The use, possession or selling of alcohol, illegal drugs, marijuana, tobacco, vapor products, alternative nicotine products or controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia while at school or at a school-sponsored activity. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: Over-the-counter or prescription drugs, glue, paint, paint thinner, correction fluid, or other similar substances. Distribution of any type of pills tablets, capsules, or other materials, regardless of actual composition, will be grounds for disciplinary action. Students who must take a prescription medication during school hours must do the following:
 - a) Have parents fill out the school's prescription medication form. (District Policy/Students

3416)

b) Provide a doctor or pharmacist's authorization specifying the type, dosage, and purpose of the medication.

c) All medications must be kept in the office and taken under office supervision.

7. The sale or distribution, or possession with intent to sell or distribute, any of the substances listed above in item 6.
8. Displaying slogans or drawings promoting drugs, marijuana, alcohol or tobacco/vapor product/alternative nicotine product use on school property, including lockers.
9. Forgery of absence notes, or tampering or altering of school records.
10. Providing false information to school officials or hindering an investigation.
11. Truancy
12. Inappropriate displays of affection. Physical contact that is not generally acceptable in a school setting, dictated by common sense and decency.
13. Harassment. This includes bullying (verbal or physical), sexual harassment, hazing, threatening others in any manner or retaliation and reprisal. Definitions can be found in Board Policy/Students 3225.
14. The use of profanity, spoken or written, and including inappropriate gestures. In addition to the automatic detention for each offense, beginning with the third violation, students will receive one day of In-School Suspension for each subsequent offense during a given semester.
15. Profanity directed toward teachers
16. Throwing objects, including rocks and snowballs, or any other objects. Fighting in school, on school property, or at a school function, to include pushing or shoving matches. Being present during a fight, including observing, encouraging, or assisting in any way. Assault on another student, or on any staff member, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity.
17. Tripping the fire alarm system
18. Using, possessing, transferring, any object that could reasonably be considered or used as a weapon, a look-a-like weapon, including (but not limited to) knives (including pocket knives) and firearms (loaded or unloaded) on school grounds. In accordance with the Gun Free School Act, any student who brings a firearm onto school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year unless the Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis. Board Policy 3310. **Students are not allowed to possess a knife of any blade length on school property.**
19. Harassment, assault or threatening of any school personnel, including teachers, administrators, substitute teachers, custodians, lunch room workers, bus drivers, parent volunteers, or any other persons working in any capacity within the district., on-or off campus. Any and all threatening statements will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.
20. Any person, including an adult, who behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner during an athletic or co-curricular event may be ejected from the event and/or denied admission to school events for up to a year, after a Board hearing. (Board Policy/Community Relations 4315)
21. Engaging in any activity forbidden by law while on campus or at any school-sponsored activity.
22. Defiance towards any district employee.
23. Students shall not access or transmit obscene, abusive, or sexually explicit material on

computers and internet.

Engaging in any of the following will lead to consequences at the classroom/building level:

1. Involved in any activity that constitutes disorderly conduct, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or any disruptive activity.
2. Unexcused absenteeism, tardies, and leaving the school grounds without obtaining permission at the school office.
3. Cell phones cannot be taken in the locker room/bathroom. Violators will have the device taken from them and kept in the office until a parent picks it up. Repeat offenders will be considered as defiant and will be treated accordingly.
4. Not dressing appropriately as outlined in building level handbook.
5. The forgoing of any signature, or the making of any false entry, or the authorization of any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of the school.

The grounds for disciplinary action apply whenever the student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including, but not limited to:

- On, or within sight of school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity, or event, or any activity or event which bears a reasonable relationship to school
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function or event
- Anywhere at any time during the calendar year, if the conduct may be considered to be a threat to the educational process at school by either harming staff or students (selling drugs, physically or mentally abusing staff/students, etc.)

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to these intervention strategies:

- Logical and natural consequences
- Detention, including Saturdays
- Clean-up duty
- Student grade (for unexcused absence, suspension)
- Loss of student privileges
- Loss of bus privileges
- Restitution for damages to school property
- Suspension
- Notification of juvenile authorities and/or police/school resource officer
- Expulsion

No person who is employed or engaged by the District may inflict or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include, and District personnel are permitted to place their hands on a student in a manner that is reasonable and necessary to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense.

The Board of Trustees has established a set of district expectations dealing with student safety, such as violence, drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco/nicotine/vapor products, bullying, etc. All students will be treated as individuals. In the event that the actions of the staff appear to be

unfair, the student/parent should visit with the staff member involved and present his/her case. In the event that the case has merit, the consequence will be adjusted accordingly. This is the school's written guarantee that the right of due process will be observed and respected at school. (See District Policy 3200 Student Rights & Responsibilities/3300 Student Due Process Rights)

Engaging in any of the following activities will result in at minimum an out-of-school suspension, and possibly, expulsion by the Board of Trustees (See District Policy/Students 3300 Corrective Action and Punishment):

1. Using, possessing, under the influence of, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcohol, tobacco, alternative nicotine products, vapor products, illegal drugs, marijuana, or controlled substances, look-alike drugs, and drug paraphernalia products.
2. Possessing a weapon in a school building or on the school grounds.
3. Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person's property.
4. Bullying (See District Policy/Students 3225 on Bullying)

Different procedures may apply to students with disabilities are required by law.

GUN-FREE SCHOOLS / FIREARMS

An administrator may immediately suspend a student if there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school prior to any board hearing on a recommendation for expulsion. If there is a recommendation to expel a student for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, the trustees shall notify the adult student or parent/guardian of a minor student in a clear and timely manner that the student may waive his or her privacy right by requesting the hearing be held in public and may invite other individuals to attend the hearing.

At a due process hearing on the recommendation for expulsion due to a student bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, there shall be a presentation of a summary of the information leading to the allegations and an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations. The Board of Trustees is permitted to expel a student only when the trustees determine that the student knowingly (had knowledge of the facts) brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

The Board of Trustees is not required to expel a student who has brought a firearm or possessed a firearm at school as long as the firearm is secured in a locked container approved by the District or in a locked motor vehicle the entire time the firearm is at school unless the firearm is in use for a school-sanctioned instructional activity.

If a student is determined by trustees to not have knowingly brought or possessed a firearm at school, the student's record will be expunged of the incident.

If a student violating this policy is identified as disabled, either under the IDEA or Section 504, a determination must be made whether the student's conduct is related to the disability.

If the violation of the policy is due to a disability recognized by the IDEA or Section 504, lawful procedures for changes in placement must be followed.

Any student subject to an expulsion shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board, in accordance with § 20-5-202, MCA, and Policy 3300.

BULLYING / HARASSMENT / INTIMIDATION / HAZING

The Board will strive to provide a positive and productive learning and working environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Definitions

1. "Third parties" include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors or others engaged in District business, such as employees of businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the District and others not directly subject to District control at inter District and intra-District athletic competitions or other school events.
2. "District" includes District facilities, District premises, and non-District property if the student or employee is at any District-sponsored, District-approved, or District related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events, where students are under the control of the District or where the employee is engaged in District business.
3. "Hazing" includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment, including, but not limited to, forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed, or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.
4. "Harassment" includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior or a nonverbal, verbal, written, or physical nature, on the basis of age, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, ancestry, disability, or marital status.
5. "Intimidation" includes but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper with, substantially damage or interfere with another's property, cause substantial inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact, or inflict serious physical injury, on the basis of age, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, ancestry, disability, or marital status.
6. "Bullying" happens when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power over and over again. Power may be physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or another resource.

REPORTING

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any student, employee, or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels

he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the building principal or the District Superintendent. A student may also report concerns to a teacher, counselor, or online via the school's web site, who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate District official. Complaints against the building principal shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or District Administrator shall be filed with the Board.

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation and, as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken. Whenever an employee sees a violation of this policy then that employee should visit with the parent(s) of the violated student(s) and that employee's immediate supervisor ASAP and preferably that same day.

When appropriate, law enforcement will be notified when a person violates this policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The District Superintendent shall be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, staff, and third parties and for the development of administrative regulations, including reporting and investigative procedures, as needed.

CONSEQUENCES

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Third

parties whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the District Administrator or the Board. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

RETALIATION AND REPRISAL

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, whether or not a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

Thompson Falls K-8 General Behaviors

GENERAL BEHAVIORS (not limited to this list)	MENU OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES (not limited to this list)
LEVEL ONE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom disruptions such as running, noises or gestures, out of seat during instruction, visiting during instruction, or anything else that interrupts the learning. • Throwing items/rough housing • Unprepared for class • Not following teacher's classroom expectations • Disrespectful to others • Unproductive, passing notes or inappropriate pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reteach expectations • Reminder / warnings / recovery • Phone call home by adult or students • Loss of recess / lunch • Ask student to solve the problem • Student picks Kelso Choice • Apologize • Time out at recess on wall / bench / shadowing
LEVEL TWO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate language or tone with an adult or peer • Cheating / lying / stealing / vandalism • Computer / internet violation • Use of cell phone / electronic device without permission • Minor physical altercation • Non-compliance • Dress code violation • No assignment notebook (5th – 8th grade) • Chronic level one behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call home by adult • Loss of recess / lunch (could be consecutive days) • After school time • Development of behavior plan • Parent / teacher / student meeting • Counseling referral if appropriate
LEVEL THREE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting (mutual) • Drugs / weapons / tobacco • Leaving school grounds without permission • False reporting (i.e. fire alarm) • Accessing inappropriate internet sites • Insubordination • Arson • Throwing dangerous objects • Disorderly conduct • Indecent behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of school suspension • Restitution • Law enforcement • Team meeting with parents/teacher/administration/counselor • Expulsion • Office referral

Thompson Falls K-8 Bullying Level Behaviors

Verbal Bullying	Non-Verbal Bullying	Physical Bullying	Possible Consequences
LEVEL ONE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gossiping Starting or spreading rumors Teasing about looks, clothes, possessions, etc. False reporting (in regards to other's behaviors) Name calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing notes Insulting gestures Mean looks Excluding others Take or hide items from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushing/showing/poking In other's space Blocking another's path Mean gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder/warning/recovery Time out on bench/wall/shadowing Phone call home by adult/student Loss of recess/lunch Ask student to solve problem Student picks Kelso Choice Apologize
LEVEL TWO			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insults based on size, race, ability, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. Fighting words or threats Intimidation through continued teasing, gossiping, or destructive humor. Threats Chronic level one behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playing tricks to embarrass others. Threatening gestures Intimidating posturing Using internet/phone/other electronic devices negatively against others. Chronic level one behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting fights Threatening physical harm Tripping/kicking/hitting Purposeful scratching/spitting/headlocks/biting Other physical altercations Throwing another person to the ground Holding someone against their will Chronic level one behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phone call home by adult Loss of recess/lunch (could be consecutive) After school time Development of behavior plan Parent/teacher/student meeting Counseling referral if appropriate
LEVEL THREE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prolonged verbal harassment Encouraging total group exclusion of someone by threatening others if they don't comply. Sexual harassment Retaliation/retribution Chronic level two behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing graffiti with a bias against others. Making repeated or graphic gestures Obscene gestures Arranging public humiliation Chronic level two behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practicing extortion Physical cruelty Repeated acts of violence Major physical assault Retaliation/retribution Threatening to keep someone silent Chronic level two behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office referral Out of school suspension Restitution Law enforcement Team meeting with parents/teacher administration/counselor Expulsion

CATEGORY C: TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Any concerns regarding equality in educational opportunities and treatment with regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability shall be directed to the Title IX and Non-Discrimination Coordinator(s) for Thompson Falls School District No 2.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the District's Title IX coordinator.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense.

Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure. Please refer to Policies 3210 and 3225 for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

PROCEDURES FOR BOARD EXPULSION

Expulsion is any removal of a student for more than twenty (20) school days without the provision of educational services. Only the Board may expel a student from school. After the administration has investigated the alleged misconduct and made the decision to recommend an expulsion of the student to the Board, the administration shall send notice to the student and the parent of the following:

- the intent to recommend an expulsion;
- the specific charges against the student;
- what rule or regulation was broken;
- the nature of the evidence supporting the charges;
- the date, time and place where the hearing will be held;
- a copy of the procedure that will be followed by the Board; and
- a reminder of the rights the student and parents have, including the right to counsel, the right to cross examine witnesses, and the right to present witnesses.

A formal hearing will be held before the Board of Trustees. This hearing must meet the following minimum requirements.

- a. The student may choose to utilize legal counsel at his/her own expense, without prejudice.
- b. The student may present witnesses.
- c. The student or his/her counsel may ask questions of witnesses presented by the school district administration or its counsel.
- d. The administration also has the right to cross-examine witnesses and to be advised by legal counsel.
- e. The burden of proof of the offense lies with the school district.

District Policy 3300

The hearing may be rescheduled by the parent/guardian by submitting a request showing good cause to the Superintendent at least 3 school days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. The Superintendent shall determine if the request shows good cause.

Expulsion of a student for bringing or possessing a firearm at school must follow the procedures set out in the "Gun-Free Schools/Firearms" section above.

Students with rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act may be expelled under certain circumstances, and the District must follow all procedural requirements of those Acts, including holding a manifestation determination meeting, prior to moving forward with an expulsion.

DISTRIBUTION AND POSTING OF MATERIALS

Organizations and individuals must have the approval of the administration before materials may be posted or presented to students in any manner. This includes, but is not limited to, announcements, posters, handouts, and flyers. Material must provide information valued or needed by the school. Permission will be denied to post any material that would disrupt the educational process, violate the rights of others, invade the privacy of others, infringe on a copyright, or be obscene, vulgar, and indecent.

DRESS CODE

It is recognized that parents and school personnel have a common interest in the physical, educational, and moral development of students. However, the appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of the individual and his/her parents. Student dress and appearance has a definite influence on classroom atmosphere and achievement. Students should exercise good judgment in their choice of attire for everyday school wear. During school hours, students are to be appropriately clothed and groomed for their work day. School also believes it has the responsibility to teach that proper dress is a reflection of the student's pride in themselves and the school. Part of the school's mission is to prepare students for life after junior high and high school.

Clothing must be adequate to ensure a decent appearance, must be modest, and must be in

accordance with community standards. The building level administrator will make the final determination. In order to help provide a safe and orderly school environment please adhere to the following guidelines:

The student and clothing must be clean.

Students will not be permitted to wear any clothing or accessories displaying drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products/controlled substances, which expresses obscenities, racism, pornographic, or suggestive material, or which immodestly exposes a student's chest, abdomen, buttocks.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TOYS

All electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, iPods, etc.) are to be turned into the office at the start of the academic day unless the classroom teacher has given permission to use said device(s). Devices may be picked up at the office at the end of the student's academic day. Failure to comply will result in the electronic device(s) being kept at the office until a parent/guardian can pick it/them up. Students are not allowed to have laser lights at school, and they will be subject to confiscation. Students are also requested to leave playthings at home, as they will not be allowed in classes.

EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION: SEE ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

A student attending a nonpublic school or home school that meets the requirements under MCA § 20-5-109 may participate in extracurricular activities offered by Thompson Falls Junior High School subject to the student's eligibility as set out in the Athletic Handbook. The student's academic eligibility must be verified by the head administrator of the nonpublic school or educator providing the student instruction in the home school as verified by the principal.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

THOMPSON FALLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Notification to Parents Regarding Confidentiality of Student Educational Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Thompson Falls Junior High School ("School") receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to

amend their child's or their education record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:
 - Student Privacy Policy Office
 - U.S. Department of Education
 - 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed

- in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
 - To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
 - In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
 - To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
 - To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
 - To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
 - To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
 - To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
 - Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
 - To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
 - To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Thompson Falls School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Thompson Falls School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Thompson Falls School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Student directories;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Thompson Falls School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by September 10th or within 5 days of enrollment. Thompson Falls School District has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Honors and awards received

FIELD TRIPS, EXCURSIONS, AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Board recognizes that field trips, when used as a device for teaching and learning integral to the curriculum, are an educationally sound and important ingredient in the instructional program of the schools. Such trips can supplement and enrich classroom procedures by providing learning experiences in an environment beyond the classroom. The Board also recognizes that field trips when the educational objectives achieved by the trip clearly outweigh any lost in-class learning opportunities.

Building principals have the authority to approve all field trips.

Building principals shall develop procedures for the operation of a field trip. Each field trip must be integrated with the curriculum and coordinated with classroom activities which enhance its usefulness.

Written parental permission must be obtained for each approved trip. Teachers are expected to submit the signed forms showing parental approval and acknowledgment of the student conduct guidelines, to the office prior to departure for the scheduled activity.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instruction in the U.S. Constitution and Pledge of Allegiance

The District will provide instruction to students regarding the United States Constitution and pledge of allegiance. Thompson Falls Junior High School will recite the pledge of allegiance daily at the beginning of the first class, which may be followed by a moment of silence. Any student who, for any reason, objects to participating in the pledge exercise will be excused from participation. A student who declines to participate in the pledge may engage in any alternative form of conduct so long as that conduct does not materially or substantially disrupt the work or discipline of the school.

Religious Practices

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. Students may also pray in groups and discuss their religious views with other students as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. Student prayer, even if nonsectarian or non-proselytizing, will not be broadcast over the school public address system. Students may study religions ancillary to the studies of human history and development and various national, cultural, and ethnic groups. This study will give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any religion or religious belief. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings during instruction or in school programs or performances may occur where the religious content has a historical and/or independent educational purpose consistent with the approved curriculum.

Bus Routes

Buses are owned and operated by Mosher Transportation and not the school district. The District will work with Mosher transportation to ensure there is communication about route delays. Parents themselves should be aware of road conditions and call Mosher Transportation at 406-827-4794 for information about bus routes.

COMPUTER & INTERNET USE

Computers are available in the computer lab and classrooms for use for assigned work. All equipment and software must be used responsibly. Anyone causing deliberate damage, changing settings, or access inappropriate web sites on school computers will be subject to having their privileges revoked and/or restitution. No software may be brought from home to install on school computer. Students will be allowed on the Internet only for assigned work. A staff member must supervise all internet work. Students will not be allowed to visit chat rooms, and no on-line gaming will be permitted. (District Policy 3612)

Computer Lab and Classroom Internet Decorum

Thompson Falls Junior High School has actively pursued making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to students and staff by providing computer technology and Internet access. Access to the internet is advantageous to students and teachers alike. The school recognizes this and provides this access with the following guidelines:

Appropriate Use

1. Students are allowed to use the computers and Internet to complete school projects as assigned by teachers.
2. Projects (research, teacher approved) during school hours with permission.
3. Use of personal e-mail activities and/or visiting appropriate web sites with teacher permission only.

Offense

1. Students shall not access or transmit material that is profane or obscene (pornographic, etc.) that advocates or condones the commission of unlawful acts (illegal) or that advocates or condones violence or discrimination toward other people (hate literature). Under direct supervision and with parental approval, circumstances may allow investigation of hate literature for research purposes. First Call is providing TFJH Internet filtering to eliminate most of these problems.
2. Transmission of obscene, abusive, or sexually explicit language.
3. Purchasing products or services using the school connection with teacher permission only.
4. Violation of any local, state, or federal statute.
5. Accessing other individual's materials, information, or files without permission.
6. Violation of copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual. Keep track of your sources.
7. Uses that involve waste of time or resources (paper, toner, etc)
8. Students may not use the internet to access networking/social media sites such as Facebook, Snap Chat, Xanga, Instagram, games (without permission) etc.

Disciplinary Measures

For violations of the Internet library or classroom policy disciplinary measure include, but are not limited to:

1. Students will simply be asked to leave the computer lab for minor offenses and a record will be made of the time and problem.
2. Detention

3. Loss of computer lab privileges for at least nine (9) weeks or to the end of the semester.
4. Recommended suspension.

GRADING SCALE

All grades at the junior high are based on the following grading scale:

90% - 100%	A		
80% - 90%	B	HONOR ROLL	
70% - 80%	C	3.25 – 3.32	Honorable Mention
60% - 70%	D	3.33 and above	Honor Roll
Below 60%	F		

Grade and Point Value

- A – 4
- B – 3
- C – 2
- D – 1
- F – 0
- E – Effort grade (Below passing but doing as well as possible)
- I - Incomplete Grade. Any work due must be turned in within ten school days following the end of the grading period. After that time no further makeup work will be accepted for credit, unless special arrangements have been made. the final grade will reflect the percentage that the student earned after considering all complete makeup work.

Report cards are mailed out the week following the end of each quarter. In addition, mid-quarter reports are mailed home halfway through each quarter showing the current grades in each class. Students who have library fines, lunch fees, or other overdue expenses will have their grade reports held until those fees have been brought up to date. Please note: parents and students can access grades via the [Infinite Campus grade portal](#).

Assemblies are held following the end of each quarter to recognize high achievement and perfect attendance. Students receive certificates noting their areas of academic success. Parents are welcome to attend these assemblies.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Montana State Law requires that all students meet established immunization requirements before entering school in the fall. Those students whose immunizations are not up-to-date will not be allowed to attend classes until all shots are administered except in the case of a medical or religious exemption.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized,

the student must present a form signed by the student (or by the parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the religious tenets and practices of the parents and student. This form will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records.

The school nurse maintains all records and will inform the secretary of any students in need of inoculations. (District Policy 3410) A list of required vaccinations can be found at each school's office or by contacting the district's school health professional. Except for those vaccinations required by law, the District will not discriminate against a student by denying or withholding educational opportunities based upon the student's vaccination status.

CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

Many of our youth acquire childhood illness or disease during the school year. It is the policy of the school district to provide a safe, healthy environment for the students. Therefore, we ask the following cooperation from the parents/guardians. Please work with a healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment if your child is ill. If your child has:

FEVER – exclude from school with re-entry 24 hours after fever has subsided.

VOMITING during the night – stay home the following day

STREP THROAT – Symptoms are fever and sore throat. Treatment consists of antibiotics as prescribed by a physician. Child must remain out of school until 24 hours after medication is started.

PINKEYE – (Conjunctivitis) is an inflammation of the thin, transparent outer tissue layer of the eyeball and the inner surface of the eyelids. The inflammation causes redness, tearing, and occasionally the formation of a pus discharge. The student may complain of “itching or burning” eyes. The most common causes are bacteria, viruses, and allergies. If your child wakes in the morning with eyes “crusted and matted”, you should have him/her checked by a physician before sending him/her to school. Treatment consists of antibiotic eye drops or ointment obtained from a physician. The child should remain out of school for 24 hours after treatment has begun.

MONO – exclusion is not indicated for cases or exposed students.

HEAD LICE – Obtain “Nix” or “RID” from the store and follow specific instructions for treatment. Be sure to fine comb hair after treatment. The best way to get all nits out is by hand. It is necessary that your child be “Nit-free” before returning to school. You will need a note from the school nurse, clinic nurse, county health nurse, or any qualified professional stating your child is “Nit-free”.

RINGWORM – Ringworm appears on the arms, chest, abdomen, and more rarely, the face. It starts as a tiny red spot that slowly grows in a circular fashion, clearing in the center as it enlarges. The edges remain reddish and scaly. No scabs, pus, or crusts are formed. Treat with medications such as Tinactin or Lotrimin as prescribed by a physician. Student is non-contagious after 1st treatment and may be in school after 1st treatment while sores are healing.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) – Symptoms include: cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, headache, new fatigue, nausea or vomiting, congestion or runny nose.

The county health department may provide additional guidance and rules for conditions not listed. The school will notify parents in the event such conditions and rules arise.

LIBRARY POLICIES

Books and materials in the junior high library may be checked out for two weeks, except for encyclopedias, current magazines, and reserve books, which must remain in the library. Materials may be renewed weekly as long as they have not been requested for use by staff or other students. Students are financially responsible for any damaged or lost materials they have borrowed from the library. Lists of overdue materials will be posted periodically. Report cards will be held until all materials are either returned or replaced. (District Policy/Instruction 2309)

LOCKERS

Students will be assigned a hall locker for storing personal belongings and school materials. Lockers may be inspected at any time for cleanliness, and should be kept clean and orderly. They may be decorated, but all decorations must be kept inside the locker and should be of appropriate nature. With office approval, students may change lockers during the year. Students may use only one locker each. Locker use is a privilege. Misuse or abuse of lockers may result in the loss of this privilege, and any damage to lockers will be charged to the student(s) responsible. (District Policy/Students 3231 on Searches and Seizure)

LUNCH

The school offers a hot lunch program to its students. Lunch money is given to the lunchroom clerk. It is required that lunch fees be paid ahead of time. Notification will be given to students who reach three charged meals. Upon reaching five charged meals, the food service program will send out information regarding the number of charges to the parents/guardians. Our system sends automated phone, e-mail, and text for any balance of more than \$5 or more every two weeks. If excessive charges start to accumulate the administration will be notified.

Thompson Falls Junior High is a closed campus. Students who wish to eat lunch at home must bring a note from parents/guardians at the beginning of the year and must sign out at the office each day before leaving for lunch. Students may only eat lunch off campus at the home of their parents/guardians; they may not eat with other students unless special arrangements have been made.

An adult will be on duty during recess. Students are to remain outside during recess unless given permission to enter the building for a specific purpose. On days that the weather may not permit recess outside, students will be taken to an alternative setting. **Inappropriate lunch and recess behavior will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.**

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Thompson Falls School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, in the educational programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. The District is required by federal law, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and their regulations, to not discriminate against individuals in violation of these laws. The District also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints under Title IX (sex discrimination and sexual harassment) and all other non-discrimination policies.

Mrs. Jodi Morgan, (K-8) Title IX Coordinator
206 Haley Ave. West
406-827-3561
jmorgan@tfalls.org

Inquiries may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

OFFICE PROCEDURES

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Medication, if needed, should be given at home when possible. Parents should identify pupils requiring medication at school with written approval by a medical doctor who specifies the type, dosage, and purpose of the medication for the school nurses use. Students observed by school personnel self-administering unauthorized medication are reported to the principal. Contact the building secretary for an application form to take medication at school.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

Parents/Guardians must bring the following documents to the JH office to enroll their student:

- Completed enrollment forms
- Sign a Release of Confidential Information form to request records from the sending school
- Present a copy of the student's immunization records
- Provide proof of residency, proof of age, and proof of identity.
- Provide the office with the student's home address and relevant contact information.
*Please notify the offices of any address/contact changes as they occur throughout the year
- There is a 24-hour waiting period in order to allow adequate processing time for the office staff

Students who are homeless or in foster care will be enrolled without presentation of all required documentation.

A student whose parent or guardian is being relocated to Montana under military orders may be preliminarily enrolled in classes and may apply for programs offered by the District prior to arrival and establishing residency.

If the individual enrolling the student is not the parent, the individual may be required to provide documentation establishing the authority to enroll the student.

In compliance with District Policy 3141, Non-Resident students must also:

- Comply with the above requirements for resident students and provide transcript records
- Complete the Non-Resident Application Form
- Provide a copy of temporary guardianship
- Enrollment paperwork for non-resident students is due 10 days prior to the beginning of the semester in order to allow adequate processing time for the office staff

The District will enroll any non-resident student required to be admitted under MCA § 20-5-321.

Homeless Students

In accordance with federal and state law and regulations, the District will provide homeless students with access to the instructional programming that supports achievement of the content standards and to other services for which they are eligible. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall they be stigmatized in any way.

The District will determine, according to the best interest of the child whether the child will be enrolled in the school of origin or in the public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best interest of the child the District will, to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.

If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless liaison will assist in placement and enrollment decisions, with the views of the child taken into consideration.

The District shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child into the selected school even if the parent/child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, evidence of residency, or other documentation.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs. Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

Students in Foster Care

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability under Title I for the duration of their time in foster care. "Foster care" means "24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care

responsibility.” This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive home.

The District will take efforts to ensure that a child in foster care:

- Remains in his or her school of origin (school last enrolled in at the time of placement in foster care) unless it is not in the child’s best interest; or
- If the school of origin is not in the child’s best interest, the child must be immediately enrolled in a new school regardless of being able to produce records otherwise required.

The District will collaborate with the child welfare agency involved in a particular student’s case to make the “best interest” determination as quickly as possible. The District will also collaborate with the child welfare agency regarding the provision of transportation to the selected school for the student.

CHECKING IN AT SCHOOL / SIGNING OUT OF SCHOOL

A telephone call or a note from either parent or guardian is necessary when a student is absent or late for any reason. Notes must be given immediately to the attendance secretary. Teachers will have a list of admits. When a student arrives late or after an absence, the student is required to report directly to the office for an admittance or tardy slip. All absences and tardies will be recorded on the report card.

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day. A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher’s permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student’s parent. When in doubt as to custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student’s records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial parent to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

Parent/Guardian must sign their student out at the JH office.

USE OF TELEPHONES AND COPIER

Except for the purpose of dropping off or picking up electronics, students are asked to obtain permission prior to entering the office. If students need copies for a class they must have permission from the teacher of that class. Copies for personal use will cost 25 cents per copy (this includes class notes). Students may use school phones upon obtaining permission from a staff member.

Students are asked to keep all telephone conversations to the minimum length necessary. Students will not be taken out of class to come to the telephone except in cases of emergency. In other circumstances a message will be taken and passed to the student as quickly as convenience allows. Excessive phone use may result in use being restricted.

VISITING SCHOOL

All visitors must sign in at the office when they arrive. Visitors to classrooms during instructional time must obtain prior approval of the administrator.

JUNIOR HIGH PROMOTION POLICY

Students will be expected to demonstrate a satisfactory level of performance during their junior high years in order to earn promotion to the next grade. Each student's case will be given individual consideration. Parents will be notified of concerns as early as possible. To help the student progress at a satisfactory level/pace for the remainder of the course the parents, student, and staff will develop a plan for improvement jointly. In addition, students who fail two or more core classes in a given year and/or have a high degree of absences may be denied the opportunity and privilege to participate in the promotion ceremony. Students who are on suspension the day of the 8th grade promotion may be denied the opportunity to participate in the promotion ceremony, depending on the nature of the offense. The junior high staff will make the final decision regarding participation.

8TH GRADE TRIP

The spring trip taken as part of the end-of-year activities for the 8th grade class is considered a privilege earned through good behavior, current on coursework, no failing grades, and/ or excessive absences. All cases will be evaluated on an individual basis.

SAFETY

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent

cannot be reached, the school will need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the office to update any information.

DRILLS

From time to time students, teachers, and other district personnel will participate in drills of emergency procedures.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL-CLOSING INFORMATION

Emergency school closing information will be sent out through School Messenger, (Infinite Campus), posted on District social media pages, and the Thompson Falls School District website, www.thompsonfalls.net.

SEARCH

The administration will conduct routine, random, unannounced searches of building, including lockers, and sweeps of the high school parking lot. The school may utilize the services of a canine detection service or law enforcement to conduct the generalized searches of lockers or of vehicles parked on-campus. If contraband is suspected or found, the student and parent will be notified and the matter may be turned over to law enforcement authorities to further investigate. District Policy 3231.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Questioning of Students

Law enforcement or social service workers must contact students through the administrative office. Students will not usually be questioned or interviewed by law enforcement or other lawful authorities while at school. When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities, however, wish to question or interview a student at school or the principal requests that the student be interviewed at school:

- The principal shall verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority.
- If the interview is not at the request of the principal, the principal shall ascertain the authority of law enforcement to question or interview the student at the school. If the interview is by court order or other exigencies exist (concern about loss/damage of evidence, flight from jurisdiction, or health, safety, or welfare of the student or other students or staff), the principal has the discretion to allow the interview to take place. Otherwise, if law enforcement can reasonably interview the student at a time when the student is not in school, the principal may, absent a court order or warrant, deny the request for an immediate interview of a student.
- The principal will make reasonable efforts to notify parents unless the officer produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents.
- In the event that a parent cannot be present or cannot be reached, the principal will

observe the interview.

- Law enforcement must comply with all legal requirements regarding notification of parents and consent prior to interviewing students.
- Social service workers may be permitted to interview students at a school consistent with Montana law. The principal will observe the meeting if the social service worker declines to notify the parents.

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody by a law enforcement officer or probation officer to comply with a lawful court order, a warrant for arrest, or a law enforcement determination that probable cause exists for the arrest. To the extent practicable, the arrest should be conducted out of the view of other students in the administration offices. A social service worker may take custody of a student with a lawful court order or under the powers of MCA § 41-3- 301.

The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will make reasonable attempts to notify a parent unless the officer or official produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

Service of Process

At times, law enforcement may seek to serve a student with a subpoena or other legal documents (i.e., complaint, summons). Absent a court order, the principal has the discretion to determine whether service at school is disruptive to the educational environment. If service is directed by a court or is not disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents regarding the service. Where the principal has determined that service would be disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make a reasonable attempt to coordinate with law enforcement to serve the student when school is not in session. Service on a student will be accomplished out of the view of other students in the administration offices.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Cameras are used to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors on District property, as well as safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video recordings may become part of the student's educational record. (District Policy 3600)

SKATEBOARDS

Skateboards will not be allowed on school property during school hours (8-4) or during after school activities and may be confiscated.

SPECIAL SERVICES

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING SERVICES

District counselors Taylour Freed and Rob Christensen are available for those students desiring social, emotional, academic, or career counseling or guidance. These services are available on a one-time or continuing basis. All services are confidential and private, except in cases of abuse, suicide or homicide, which must be referred to the proper authorities. (District Policy/Instruction 2140)

ADDITIONAL COUNSELING SERVICES

STEPS is a school-based mental health service that provides counseling for qualifying students who struggle with a variety of life's difficulties. STEPS contracts with the district to provide support to these students. STEPS provides individual, group, and family therapy. They work on a variety of issues such as: coping with grief or loss, anger management, impulse control, making and maintaining friendships, peer pressure, conflict resolution, and more. Please contact STEPS or the school for more information regarding this program.

TITLE I: A SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM

A school-wide program is a strategy for implementing comprehensive school change. A school-wide program permits a high poverty school (40% or more) to use funds from Title I, Part A and other federal education program funds and resources with regular and state resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all students. Research has shown that for lowest achieving students in highest poverty schools to meet high standards of performance, their entire instructional program, not just a separate Title I program, (or other programs) must be substantially improved.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The special education program exists in order to serve students who have been identified as having specific learning disabilities or physical impairments that affect their education. Each student that qualifies for special education services will be placed on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that addresses the specific needs of that student. Special education students may be offered assistance with class work and tests, individualized instruction, or other services as decided upon during the Evaluation Report Team meeting and by the IEP team. The goals of the program are success in school, and acquiring lifetime learning skills to enable students to become successful members of society. (District Policy/ Instruction 2161)

The Special Education Referral Process

The Special Education Referral Process consists of several steps, all of which must be followed in order to comply with federal and state law. Documentation of academic or behavioral difficulties.

Referrals or questions about special education, eligibility, or services may be handled through the junior high special education instructor, Mrs. Chris Kelly or by contacting Mrs. Taylor Salmi, who serves as the director for the area special education cooperative and who has an office located in the Dorm building.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Special services are in place to assist students with disabilities who may be in need of accommodations. Assistance with class work and tests, or receiving course work in a more individualized setting, are the primary ways students are served in this program. Success in school, working at one's ability level, and acquiring lifetime learning skills to be a productive member of society are the program goals. The building Principal is the 504 Coordinator.

STOLEN ITEMS

It is suggested that students keep valuable items at home, as the school cannot be responsible for items that are lost or stolen while the student is at school or at school-related activities. Please be aware that the school cannot perform random searches without reasonable suspicion in the event personal property is stolen.

Understanding
2024-25 Student/Parent Handbook

Please remove this form from your handbook and return it to your teacher as soon as possible.

I have received a copy of the 2024-25 Thompson Falls Junior High Handbook and am aware of its contents. I have discussed it with my parents/guardians. I further understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to disciplinary consequences outlined in this handbook.

Student _____
(Print full name)

Student _____ Grade _____ Date _____
(Signature)

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____
(Signature)

Communication plays a very important part in educational success. Our school uses a variety of ways to communicate, including Infinite Campus Parent Portal, available on our website, www.thompsonfalls.net. Please mark all communication methods that work for you:

Phone Text Message Email at _____
Preferred Email Address

I give permission for my child's photograph, name, and/or work to be published on Thompson Falls School's web site and in the local newspaper.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____
(Signature)

In case of serious illness or injury, if parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, I give permission for the school, any doctor or emergency medical technician to do whatever is deemed necessary. I understand that the school does not carry insurance coverage for students and the school will not assume responsibility for fees for services.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____
(Signature)

Thompson Falls School District 2 School-Parent Compact

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We value your role in working to help your child achieve high academic standards. The following is an outline of some of the ways you and school staff can build and maintain a partnership to share the responsibility for supporting your child's learning.

School's Responsibility:

- Provide high quality curriculum and learning materials
- Provide you with assistance in understanding academic achievement standards and assessments and how to monitor your child's progress
- Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between you and teachers through, at a minimum:
 - annual parent-teacher conferences,
 - frequent reports regarding your child's progress, and
 - opportunities to talk with staff, volunteer in class, and observe classroom activities.

Parent's Responsibility:

- ❖ Encourage your child to attend school regularly
- ❖ Encourage your child to show positive school behavior
- ❖ Review your child's homework
- ❖ Monitor television watching and encourage positive use of your child's extracurricular time
- ❖ Volunteer in your child's school and classroom if time or schedule permits
- ❖ Attend parent-teacher conferences and participate, when appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of your child.

Please review this School-Parent Compact with your child. This School-Parent Compact may be discussed with you during a parent-teacher conference as it relates to your child's school progress.

Thank you for your support and involvement in your child's education. Please contact the person listed below for more information.

Name: Len Dorscher Title: Principal

Telephone Number: (406) 827-3592 Email Address: ldorscher@tfalls.org

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you have read and received this information and return the entire form to your child's teacher.

Student Name _____ Homeroom _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY				
Student ID #	Student Name	Date Distributed	Faculty Name	Faculty ID #

Parent and Caregiver Letter

Thompson Falls Schools and RBHI Mental Wellness Screening

INTRODUCTION

Thompson Falls School District aims to maintain authentic school, community, and family partnership in the development of an effective, confidential screening program for students' mental well-being. This letter talks about the purpose of mental health screening. It describes the screening survey. There is a separate informed consent letter that is an invitation to participate in the mental health screening described here. Your child will not be asked to participate if you opt your child out of screening. Your child's participation is voluntary. Our school and healthcare partners hope that mental wellness screening will become another essential and valuable part of school health and academic screening for all students. Mental health challenges are no different than physical health or academic challenges a child might face. They are discoverable via screening. They are treatable, especially when detected early.

Individuals with good mental well-being have energy, happiness, pride, healthy relationships, and resilience. These are traits that our school tries to foster in students. Persons with lower mental well-being may experience anxiety, fear, depression, sadness, or shame. Some may feel a burden to others. Some may feel life itself is difficult or impossible. This may place them at higher risk of suicide. Our school wants to help these students have a better life experience. First, we must identify which students need extra support.

WHY SCREEN FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING?

Schools often use validated screeners to measure a student's skills and knowledge. Academic and health screenings help students, families, and providers learn how well school and health care programs are working. They also identify students who might need extra help. Without routine screening, teachers often would not know that a particular student or group of students needs extra help with a particular aspect of learning. For example, dividing fractions or hearing the sound breaks in words are more difficult for some students. Likewise, screening for height, weight, vision, hearing, and dental screenings help determine if students are physically healthy.

Screening for mental health issues measures a critical aspect of children's overall health. It can help measure the effectiveness of the school's approach to mental health. It also provides an effective way to find out if a student is in need of help. This is important because not all students experiencing mental health issues have outward signs. Many do not tell anyone they are struggling. Such issues negatively impact happiness, relationships, behavior, health, safety, and academic performance.

Many of our students experience social, mental, and emotional well-being. However, here, and nationwide, at least 1 in 5 students experience a significant mental health issue during their school years. In Montana, rates of youth suicide have regularly been among the highest in the country. We need to do more to help our children live their fullest lives. The good news is that mental health issues are like any other health issue, such as learning healthy eating habits or taking insulin to treat diabetes. They are usually very treatable, especially if detected early. Additionally, students experiencing mental health issues can be taught skills that will help prevent or lessen the severity of future mental health issues.

Our school carefully examined whether screening poses any risk to students. For example, we looked into whether asking about students' mental health could cause a student to become suicidal, make thoughts of suicide worse, or increase the risk of suicide attempt. This is called "iatrogenic risk." All 17 studies looking at iatrogenic risk among those with suicidal thoughts or behaviors have shown that there is no risk associated with mental health screening. Just as math screenings do not cause math learning difficulties, mental health screening does not cause mental health issues.

HOW DOES SCREENING WORK?

Our school is working with a local nonprofit, Rural Behavioral Health Institute (RBHI), which specializes in digital school-based mental health screening. RBHI works closely with MERET Solutions, a leader in

mental health screening for the medical industry. RBHI and MERET Solutions received a grant that will provide free computerized mental health screening to all 6th -12th grade students in our school in the 2024-2025 school year.

Our school will also provide opportunities for students and their families to give feedback about their experience. Please see the consent form attached to this letter. The form requests your permission for your child to participate in the screening. The consent forms will be collected by the school secretaries. School and healthcare officials hope that all families will want to be a part of the screening. It will help identify and offer help to any students who may need extra support. It will also help the school determine how well programs are working.

Each student will be assigned a unique code. This will keep results strictly confidential. The day of screening, students will logon with a computer or smartphone and enter their codes to access the screener. The screener takes about 5 to 15 minutes. Any student who wishes to stop during the process of screening will be told they can before screening starts. Only the school counselors will have access to the codes associated with the students' names. They will only access an individual student's results if the results indicate the student could benefit from additional support. Parents and guardians may request their child's results. The parent or guardian may also grant permission for the school to share their child's result with their doctor or therapist. In the unlikely event that a student is in danger of self-harming and the parent or guardian is unreachable, the school counselor will alert the Crisis Response Team. The team will begin working with the student to further assess risk and maximize the student's safety.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS THE CONSENT FORM GOOD FOR THE WHOLE YEAR?

Yes, the consent form is for the 2024-2025 school year. Parents and guardians or the student may decide at any time not to participate. If time allows and in coming school years, we may ask students to take the screener twice during the year. This will probably be once a semester. The reason we want students to take the screener more than once is that it will give us a better idea of how students are feeling over time. Sometimes a student has a bad day, goes through a breakup, or has a fight with a friend. A student may indicate they have symptoms of anxiety or depression or thoughts of suicide when under stress. Later, the student may feel much better. Screening will help us find the students who aren't feeling better to make sure they receive the support they need.

IS SCREENING SAFE?

Yes. There has been a lot of research on screening for mental health in children and adolescents. All the research shows that asking whether someone is experiencing thoughts about depression, anxiety, or suicide does NOT cause suicide or make a youth feel worse. To the contrary, students often report they feel better knowing support is available if they need it.

WHAT IS IN THE SCREENER?

There are 4 assessments, all validated for youth 6th grade on up.

- **Suicide risk** – eC-SSRS (electronic Columbia – Suicide Severity Risk Scale)
 - Recommended by the FDA as gold standard suicide risk survey
 - Varied number of questions (number depends on answers) about suicidal thoughts, suicidal plans, and suicide attempts
- **Depression symptoms** – Patient Health Questionnaire (Adolescent Version)
 - 9 questions about common symptoms of depression and how frequently in the past 2 weeks a student had them, if ever
 - Depression is a major risk factor for suicide.
 - 11% of adolescents will have had depression by the time they are 18.
- **Anxiety symptoms** – General Anxiety Disorder Scale
 - 7 questions about common symptoms of anxiety and how frequently in the past 2 weeks

- o a student had them, if ever
- o Anxiety is a major risk factor for suicide.
- o 32% of youth have had anxiety by age 18.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS MIGHT MY CHILD HAVE DURING SCREENING?

We are using proven methods for screening students and collecting and storing data. We think the likely benefits far outweigh the possible risks. Here are some of the potential risks:

- It is possible your child might feel uncomfortable or tired answering some of the questions in the screener. Your child may refuse to answer any of the questions, take a break, or stop taking the screener at any time.
- Any time information is collected there is a small potential risk of unplanned sharing of an individual’s personal information. Every effort will be made to keep your child’s information confidential. Your child will be given a code to use instead of her/his name. All data will be anonymous unless there is immediate risk of self-harm. If this occurs, your child’s screening will be shared with the crisis response team. There will be no way for anyone outside the designated person(s) at the school to link your child’s name to the data your child provides in the questionnaire.
 - o The school, RBHI, and MERET Solutions will make every effort to protect your child’s privacy using one-way encrypted data. This is like the system used by healthcare providers for patient records.
 - o RBHI and MERET Solutions will never have access to the identities associated with the data.
 - o Your child’s data will never be sold.

WHO DO I CONTACT ABOUT THIS INTERVENTION IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact Rob Christensen at rchristensen@tfalls.org or 406-827-3561.

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE TO TAKE PART IN SCREENING?

No. This screening is considered part of the school’s health program. While we view this as one of several helpful health screenings and encourage all students to participate, if you do not want your child to participate in screening, they do not have to.

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE USE OF DATA AND RE-CONTACT?

The screener data will not be kept in the student’s cumulative file or on the student information system. However, there will be a flag placed in Infinite Campus that alerts the school and parents that a record of the data exists on the MERET server.

Our school district may do different analyses using grouped data. No individual students will ever be identified except to provide them care. For example, we may want to know how many students show signs of depression. We may want to determine if depression symptoms improve after an intervention is done in the school. We may share grouped data with other school districts in Montana to compare how our students are doing and how our programming compares. RBHI may share summarized data from schools with funders or in public talks about the program but will NEVER use our school’s name or the name of any student.

If you change your mind and do not want us to keep your child’s screening information, please call or email the school office. You and your child will not be identified in any report about the intervention. Your child’s data can be deleted permanently at any time.

PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Thompson Falls High School is pleased to offer families the opportunity to have their students participate in a computerized screening for mental wellness through the Rural Behavioral Health Institute. Here is some brief information:

- Participation in the screening is encouraged, but completely voluntary. Even if a parent or guardian signs the consent, students can ask to stop testing at any time.
- The screener is used in many other elementary, middle, and high schools in Montana and elsewhere.
- Much like our other health and dental screenings, this mental health screening will be managed by our school counselors, with assistance from local health care and mental health professionals.
- The screening will be used to identify students who need additional mental health supports at school or in the community.
- Screening may identify a small percentage of students who are struggling with urgent, difficult issues such as suicidal thoughts or behaviors (planning or trying to kill themselves), but who have not said anything or shown outward signs. In these few cases, the school will make every attempt to immediately contact parents or guardians. The school will also immediately alert an interagency team of professionals trained to support a student in emotional health crisis, even if parents or guardians cannot be reached.
- Screening is safe and effective. It detects mental health issues but does not cause them. Past participants in computerized mental health and suicide risk screenings reported they appreciated being asked the questions.
- The web-based screening is accurate and takes less time to complete than paper versions. Most students will finish the screening in 5-15 minutes.
- Every effort will be made to protect students' privacy. Students will be issued a code that they will use when they login to the survey or they may use their student IDs. Only the school counselor will have access to those codes. Results will be shared ONLY with the student and parents or guardians and the mental health provider except as allowed by parents or guardians on this consent form.
- The consent form is for the 2024-2025 school year. Depending on timing, students may be screened twice.
- The school will follow up with parents/guardians and students to find out how the screening went and what could be made better. The school hopes to make the mental health screening one of the standard health screenings offered each year. It will continue to invite parent and community partnership in the development of the screening program.

For more detailed information about the project, please see the Parent and Caregiver Letter, attached or by calling the school counsel at 406-827-3561.

I agree to my child's participation in the mental health/suicide risk screening during the 2024-2025 school year. I also agree a mental health provider may meet with my child if they report they have been thinking about dying or tried to kill themselves recently even if the school cannot reach me on a screening day.

Printed Full Name of Student

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Please print your name on the line above (only one parent or guardian needs to sign)

Please fill out the next page if you would like your child's results to be shared with a specific medical provider.

Some students may already work with a therapist, counselor, or physician, or the family or guardian may have a trusted one. If screening indicates my child would benefit from follow-up care, I give the school permission to share my child's screening result with the following providers (please check the boxes for all that apply, see the example).

	Provider	Name of Preferred Physician / Counselor / Provider
X	<i>Example Agency</i>	<i>Dr. Example Practitioner</i>
	School Counselor	
	C SCT Staff	
	Community Health Partners	
	Private Practice Counselor: Name & Phone	
	Other Provider: Name & Phone	
	Other Provider: Name & Phone	
	Other Provider: Name & Phone	