

# THOMPSON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK



**2024-25**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS	2
PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE	2
NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION	2
BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ADMINISTRATION, STAFF	2
HEAD COACHES & ACTIVITY SPONSORS	3
STUDENT BODY OFFICERS	4
MISSION STATEMENT	5
ACADEMICS	6
ACTIVITIES	15
ATTENDANCE	17
BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE	21
BULLYING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND HAZING POLICY	29
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY	30
TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY	31
CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS	31
COMMUNICATION	33
COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS	34
COUNSELING	34
DRESS CODE	35
GENERAL INFORMATION AND SPECIAL SERVICES	36
ILLNESS / COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	39
INTERNET USE POLICY	41
MEALS	42
OFFICE PROCEDURES	42
SAFETY	45
SPECIAL EDUCATION	48
SPORTSMANSHIP AND SCHOOL SPIRIT	48
TECHNOLOGY	48
TRANSPORTATION	49
CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS	51
AUTHORIZATION TO PARK ON DISTRICT PROPERTY	54
LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING	55
THOMPSON FALLS SCHOOLS AND RBHI MENTAL WELLNESS SCREENING	56

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

District Office	827-3323
Elementary School	827-3592
Junior High School	827-3593
High School	827-3561
High School Fax	827-9463
High School Email	<a href="mailto:tfhs@tfalls.org">tfhs@tfalls.org</a> or <a href="mailto:nbattles@tfalls.org">nbattles@tfalls.org</a>
Special Education Cooperative	827-3007

## To Students and Parents:

The Thompson Falls High School Student Handbook contains information that students and parents/guardians are likely to need during the school year. The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please note that references to policy codes are included to help parents/guardians confirm current policy. The District's Policies can be found on the District website at [www.thompsonfalls.net](http://www.thompsonfalls.net).

## Principal's Message

Welcome to Thompson Falls High School. This handbook is to acquaint you with the organization, policies, and procedures of your school. You and your parents/guardians must read this handbook and sign the accompanying letter of understanding for return to the High School office. The rules governing our school are a result of the combined efforts of the Board of Trustees, Administration, faculty, students, and community. We sincerely hope that each of you will have a successful and enjoyable year.

*Jodi Morgan, Principal*

## Notice of Non-Discrimination

The 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:

**Len Dorscher, Title IX Coordinator 9-12; Jodi Morgan, Title IX Coordinator K-8**  
**206 Haley Avenue West**  
**406-827-3592**

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

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman	Sandra Muster
Member	Jeneese Baxter
Member	Ryan Frields
Member	Jake Helvey
Member	Mona Jacobson

### ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Bud Scully
High School Principal	Jodi Morgan
Elementary Principal	Len Dorscher

Junior High Supervising Teacher	Jase Miller
Activities/Athletic Director	Madison Wheeler
CO-OP Special Ed. Director	Taylor Salmi
District Clerk	Stacy Milner

**STAFF (~Alphabetical order by Assignment~)**

Business Education/Activities Director	Madison Wheeler
Communication Arts	Amanda Leichtnam
Communication Arts	Jeri Walker
Counseling	Rob Christensen
District Technology Coordinator	Ray Buchanan
Fine Arts - Art	Micah Grossberg
Fine Arts - Music	Brittany Nichols
GEAR UP Coordinator	Jodi Kenney
Health Enhancement/Reading	Trenna Ferris
Health Enhancement/Social Studies	Jake Mickelson
Industrial Arts	Bill McGuire
Library	Robin Miller
Life Sciences/Robotics	Eric Nygaard
Paraprofessionals	Denise Black; Bobbi Butler; Roseanne Lundberg; Jen Robins
Physical Sciences/Drones	Doree Thilmony
Mathematics	Chadd Laws
Mathematics	Katrina Nygaard
Social Studies	Cade Stiles
Special Education	Darcy Farlan; Chris Hart
STEPS	Vicky Susi

**OFFICE STAFF**

High School Secretary/Registrar	Nykolee Battles
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**HEAD COACHES AND ACTIVITY SPONSORS**

***Interscholastic Athletics***

Activities Director	Madison Wheeler
Head Cross Country Coach	Sarah Naegeli
Girls Volleyball Head Coach	Sandra Kazmierczak
Head Football Coach	Jared Koskela
Girls Head Soccer Coach	Nick Lawyer
Boys Head Soccer Coach	Michael Scharfe
Girls Head Basketball Coach	Mike Tessier
Boys Head Basketball Coach	Jake Mickelson
Head Wrestling Coach	Nate Block
Girls Head Softball Coach	Jared Koskela

Head Golf Coach  
Head Track Coach

Doree Thilmony  
Trenna Ferris

***Activities***

National Honor Society  
Robotics  
Science Olympiad  
SkillsUSA  
Student Council

Jodi Kenney  
TBD  
TBD  
TBD  
Roseanne Lundberg

**CUSTODIAL STAFF**

District Maintenance  
Custodian  
Custodian

Trent Lyght; Josh Schmidt  
Terri Dowell  
Jenny Garrison

**STUDENT BODY LEADERS**

***Student Council***

President  
Vice President  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Advisor

Peighton Kenney  
Gavin Godfrey  
Solveig Nygaard  
Roseanne Lundberg

***Senior Class Officers***

President  
Vice President  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Advisors

Kaiden Robins  
Olivia Naccarini  
Madison Chojnacky  
Trenna Ferris, Micah Grossberg & Jodi Kenney

***Junior Class Officers***

President  
Vice President  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Advisors

Gabi Hannum  
Peyton Pate  
Alexis Russell  
Chadd Laws, Amanda Leichtnam & Jake Mickelson

***Sophomore Class Officers***

President  
Vice President  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Advisors

Aubrey Baxter  
Ethan Burgess & Addie Traver  
Addy Deal  
Darcy Farlan, Cade Stiles & Doree Thilmony

### **Freshman Class Officers**

President	Carson Kenney
Vice President	Lila Adams
Secretary-Treasurer	Pierce Hutton
Class Reps	Shwan Pittman & Owen Frank
Advisors	Chris Hart, Bill McGuire & Jeri Walker

### **Mission of Thompson Falls Public Schools**

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

#### **Core Values**

- ***Excellence***
- ***Unity***
- ***Compassion***
- ***Respect***
- ***Integrity***

#### **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(s).*

*...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 life-long 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.*

## ACADEMICS

### **Class Rank**

Class rank is compiled each semester from semester grades. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) determines rank in class and is one of the criteria used to determine the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. No additional weight is given to accelerated or college-prep classes. Class rank information is available through the School Counselor. To be included in the semester class rank, a student must be enrolled full-time and planning on graduating from TFHS. Late graduates, early graduates, home-schooled, and foreign exchange students are not included in class rank. Special circumstances can be appealed to the administration.

### **Course Information**

#### Course Selection & Planning

The 2024-25 Registration Handbook will provide students and parents a starting point in planning a class schedule which meets the student's abilities, interests, and post-high school plans. A copy of the registration handbook may be obtained in the Counseling Office. In an effort to help students decide which courses they may wish to select, the following suggestions are offered:

1. study the registration handbook carefully;
2. give special attention to guidelines for schedule planning;
3. work closely with the counselor. The counselor will assist students in the following areas:
  - a. post-high school career planning;
  - b. career information gathering; and
  - c. course selections.
4. students should seek advice and information from teachers and parents in planning their courses.

#### Course Enrollment

Enrollment for courses will be made during the spring in preparation for the next academic school year. Students and parents will be permitted to have input into course selections. The counselor and principal, with input from teachers, will determine where students are to be placed based upon academic need or graduation requirements, individual and group dynamics, and student interest. Any change must adhere to the course change guidelines set forth in this handbook.

Transfer students will be assigned specific courses at the time of enrollment. Prospective non-resident students who arrive later than ten (10) school days after the beginning of the semester will not be permitted to enroll unless state law otherwise requires their enrollment or there is room under the nonresident cap.

All full time 9-11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Thompson Falls High School must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) ½-credit bearing classes, including a minimum of three (3) core classes. Juniors may seek a Work Release period.

Except as required by law where a senior may be experiencing educational disruption, must be enrolled in a minimum of five (5) ½-credit bearing high school courses, three (3) of which must be a core class. Seniors may fill their remaining schedule with a combination of teacher aide, School to Work period, dual-enrollment courses

or unscheduled (SKIP) periods. The Board of Trustees may award credit to a student who satisfactorily completes a course in a period of time shorter or longer than typically required by law.

### Work Release

Students in grades 11-12 will be released for the Work Release.

1. Students must verify employment or be serving in an internship. The student must remain employed or will be required to return to school.
2. Students must be on track to graduate. Attendance and GPA requirements will be established by the principal.
3. The student and parent/guardian must have the principal's approval (contract).

### Senior Privilege (Skip)

Seniors are permitted an unscheduled period(s). The unscheduled period(s) must have both administrative and parent/guardian approval (meeting required). During an unscheduled period, the senior is required to leave campus. Seniors must meet the following requirements to be granted a Senior Privilege (Skip).

- Senior students may take up to (2) Senior Privilege – Skip periods and must be enrolled in (5) ½ - credit high school courses each semester with (3) of those courses being in a core subject area (English, Math, Science or Social Studies). Any exceptions to this will be based on the status of the student's graduation requirements.
- Students with Senior Privilege must follow school guidelines for arrival and departure.
- Students must be on track to graduate in order to be eligible for Senior Privilege.
- Students must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA or achieve a 2.5 GPA for the semester prior, display appropriate behavior and maintain acceptable attendance (10 or less absences each semester) to be and remain eligible for Senior Privilege.

The building administrator has the authority to grant exceptions to the number of credit-bearing classes required based on extraordinary circumstances (part-time student, etc.).

### Course Change Policy

1. All student requests for schedule changes without penalty need to be made within the first five days of the start of each semester.
2. Students are discouraged from dropping classes after the fifth day of the semester. If dropped after the fifth day, the student will receive a WF – withdrawal fail grade on the transcript - except as provided below. This includes courses taken through the Montana Digital Academy and Flathead Valley Community College/Colleges.
3. All changes are dependent upon class size limits and graduation requirements.
4. A student may be removed from class, by the administration, under the following circumstances:
  - It is evident-the student cannot successfully pass the class; or
  - The teacher can demonstrate and document that the student is interfering with the educational process, and/or is not meeting class expectations.The student will receive a "WF" for the semester.
5. If a student is removed for the following circumstances, they will not receive a WF



- mechanical errors;
- overload classes;
- teacher endorsement due to incompatibility between teacher and student; (parent approval)
- lack of skills for success in class; and/or
- falls under IDEA/Section 504, Title I.

If a student completes a semester of a yearlong class, he or she will receive a .5 credit, but must make up the section of the course missed if it is a required subject.

The school counselor and the teacher(s) will discuss the relative benefits and negative effects the change will have with the student. If the staff involved mutually concurs for or against the request, the matter is ended. If approved, the recommendation will be carried out. If a controversy exists, the principal will review the request and the controversy. Additional information may be requested prior to giving final approval or denial. Parents are to be notified of any changes not made at their request. Final decisions on course changes rest with the Superintendent.

#### Montana Digital Academy & Distance Courses

Thompson Falls High School accepts credits earned through Montana Digital Academy (MTDA), institutions accredited by the Montana Office of Public Instruction or a respective state's Office of Public Instruction, the Northwest Accrediting Association or a similar accrediting agency throughout the United States. **The student must obtain approval from the counseling office & instructor of curriculum PRIOR to taking the course(s) from an agency in order to receive high school credit.** Credit may also be awarded for such courses if the student demonstrates content proficiency in accordance with **District Policy 2422**.

Proof must be provided that all coursework has been completed, or the prospective graduate will not be permitted to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. It is recommended all coursework be completed by the end of April to give time for the accrediting agency to grade assignments and tests.

If a school or program of study is not accredited, the credits will be evaluated in compliance with **District Policy 2413**.

#### Part-Time Students

Part-time students must declare part-time status upon entering. Students wishing to enroll part-time must have administrative approval.

#### Running Start:

Running Start is a dual credit program between Thompson Falls High School and Flathead Valley Community College or Montana colleges where sophomores, juniors, and seniors earn credit simultaneously for high school graduation and toward a college degree. The Running Start program enables an eligible high school student to seek an expanded educational challenge. The student enrolls simultaneously in high school and college classes for the purpose of earning credit to be awarded both by TFHS and the college. Classes taken at TFHS as part of the Running Start program are limited to college level courses numbered 100 or above. A student must take and

pass a placement test in reading, writing, and math to be eligible to take college classes. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and must not be chronically absent (10 or less days absent each semester). Any exceptions to this would need administrative approval. Students and parents will be responsible for all tuition and fees. Once students enroll under this program and begin attending college classes, they will be considered regular college students. The college faculty will expect the same level of classroom participation, study habits, and homework as they expect from all other students in the class.

### Dual Credit

**Dual Credit classes will be counted toward extracurricular eligibility rules and will be compiled as part of the GPA.** Credits earned at a college will be accepted in the TFHS credit system as follows

RS Credit	TFHS Credit
1.0	.25
2.0	.50
3.0	.50
4.0	.75
5.0	1.0

Students who take a dual credit class online will receive, at minimum, an elective credit on the high school transcript for the course if the student chooses to have the course posted to the transcript. If the course is a Social Studies course, students may elect to fill the Social Studies elective credit to meet College Prep diploma requirements. Students who successfully complete College Writing may elect to fill a half credit of English 12. **All dual enrollment final course grades will be posted to the TFHS transcript in addition to the college transcript.**

A college placement math test is offered online through FVCC. The college placement reading and writing tests are online and will be taken once a student has completed the enrollment process. Students should contact the school counselor for placement testing and for procedures to enroll in the Dual Enrollment programs. **Students must meet deadlines set by the high school to complete placement testing and registration. A Running Start agreement form must be submitted during the first week of class.**

### **Final Exams**

Students will take final exams during the last week of the semester. There will be a special schedule administered for two days to provide adequate time to complete exams without conflict. Seniors will take second semester final exams early prior to checkout day. Make up final exams will only be given at an alternative time with medical documentation of need or school sponsored activity. Students may not reschedule final exams, work, or final projects without teacher and administrative approval.

Students who check out early with administrative approval must remember that teachers will require work through the last day of the semester and should be sure to collect, complete, and turn in this work IN ADVANCE

of leaving and comply with deadlines. Students who check out early without administrative approval will not be allowed to take final exams or make-up work.

**Final Exam Schedule:**

**Day One**

1st Period	8:10 - 9:55 am
3rd Period	10:00 - 11:45 am
Lunch	11:45 - 12:15 pm
5th Period	12:20 - 2:05 pm
7th period - Part 1	2:10 - 3:15 pm

**Day Two**

2nd Period	8:10 - 9:55 am
4th Period	10:00 - 11:45 am
Lunch	11:45 - 12:15 pm
6th Period	12:20 - 2:05 pm
7th period - Part 2	2:10 - 3:15 pm

**Grading Scale**

TFHS will use the following grading scale based on rounding up to the nearest tenth:

<u>G.P.A.</u>	<u>LETTER GRADE</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
4.00	A+	96- 100
4.00	A	92- 96
3.77	A-	90- 92
3.33	B+	87- 89
3.00	B	83- 86
2.77	B-	80- 82
2.33	C+	77- 79
2.00	C	73- 76
1.77	C-	70- 72
1.33	D+	67- 69
1.00	D	63- 66
0.77	D-	60- 62
0.00	F	0- 59
0.00	WF	Withdrawal failing; no credit earned, included in grade point calculations
Not Counted	E	Below passing level but doing the best possible as determined by the teacher. An "E" grade does not count against sports participation; not counted in GPA. Credit toward graduation is earned for "E" Grade.
Not Counted	I	Incomplete grade. Any work due must be turned in within ten school days, or the "I" will be changed to reflect the active grade.
Not Counted	NG	No grade due to attendance.

Not Counted P Pass, not counted in G.P.A.  
 Honor Roll Semester honor roll will be announced at the end of each semester.  
 A student must have a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 to 3.49 to be placed on the “B” honor roll, and a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 to 4.0 to be placed on the “A” honor roll. **District Policy 2410.**

National Honor Society 3.50 cumulative G.P.A. or better. Complete application and requests for enrollment go through a screening process (refer to pages 31-32 for more information).

Academic Letter 3.70 G.P.A. or better during a school year and full-time in building attendance.

## Graduation

### Commencement

If a student is on track to meet all the requirements for graduation by the end of the student’s senior year including being registered for sufficient credits to complete the requirements by the end of the second semester, the student may begin plans for participation in commencement exercises.

Formal commencement exercises are conducted annually at the end of the regular school year. The ceremony is a dignified formal occasion held to honor the graduates. Should the goals of meeting all graduation requirements not be achieved during the second semester of that year, the student may not participate in the ceremony. Students are permitted to wear traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance at the commencement ceremony.

A student who has experienced educational disruption will be entitled to graduate with a basic diploma if the student has met the minimum credit requirements established by the Board of Public Education.

Participation in commencement exercises is a privilege not a right. Students may be denied participation based on misconduct. **District Policy 2333.**

### Class Standing

The number of credits earned towards graduation determines student class standing. Class standing clarifies what grade level the student is in, regardless of age or years in attendance. Additionally, class standing identifies which graduating class a student is a member of for the purpose of work release, class meetings, elections, class rings, etc.

	General <u>Diploma</u>	College Prep <u>Diploma</u>
Grade 09	0.0 - 5.0	0.0 - 5.5
Grade 10	5.5 - 10.0	6.0 - 11.5
Grade 11	10.5 - 15.0	12.0 - 17.5
Grade 12	15.5+ credits	18.0+ credits

### Early Graduation Requirements

Students may graduate early if they have demonstrated scholastic aptitude and vocational readiness, if there is a financial need for early entry into the labor market, if health or family concerns would best be served by completing educational requirements early, or if post-secondary education will be pursued immediately following early graduation.

To qualify for early graduation the student must:

- meet all requirements to earn either a General diploma (22 credits) or College Prep diploma (24 credits)
- submit a request to the high school principal during the semester prior to graduation. For January graduation, the letter must be submitted by the end of Summer. For May graduation, the letter must be submitted by the end of Fall semester. Special circumstances may be considered.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to recommend to the Board for early graduation students who have completed the minimum requirements for graduation in less than eight semesters. **District Policy 2410.**

Students graduating early will not qualify as Valedictorian or Salutatorian candidates.

### Graduation Requirements

A graduation diploma represents not only successful completion of high school studies but also life-long work habits to include appropriate behavior and attendance. Poor attendance and inappropriate behavior can be reasons for expulsion and/or the denial of a diploma. The Board of Public Education through the Montana Accreditation Standards stresses these two qualities within their mandated content and performance standards. Thompson Falls Public Schools will support the national, state, and local citizens in respect to high standards for student attendance and behavior. **District Policy 2410.**

Students shall be expected to earn a total of: twenty-two (22) credits (general diploma) or twenty-four (24) credits (college prep diploma) in order to complete graduation requirements.

- **General Diploma - 22 Credits**

**M.C.A. 10.55.905** (1) as a minimum, a school district's requirements for graduation shall include a total of 20 credits (units of study). TF School District requires 8 semesters of attendance unless otherwise approved by the administration. The following credits shall be required for all students to graduate:

*English – 4 credits*

English 9	1 credit
English 10	1 credit
English 11	1 credit
English 12	0.5
English Elective	0.5

*Mathematics – 2 credits*

Math ( <i>recommend Algebra I</i> )	1 credit
Math	1 credit

*Science – 2 credits, which include*

Physical Science	1 credit
Biology	1 credit

*Social Studies - 2 credits (including 0.5 credit of Government)*

World History	1 credit
Social Studies ( <i>recommend US History</i> )	1 credit

*Health Enhancement – 1 credit*

Health & Fitness ( <i>freshman year</i> )	0.5 credit
Health & Fitness ( <i>sophomore year</i> )	0.5 credit

*Fine Arts – 1 credit*

Art or Music	1 credit
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*Vocational/technical education – 1 credit*

Business or Trades & Industry ( <i>recommend Computer Apps</i> )	1 credit
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*Elective Credits* 9 credits

*\*0.5 credit of Economics or Financial Literacy within the 2 credits of Social Studies, the 2 credits of Mathematics, or the 1 credit of Vocational/technical education is required. (Economics, Personal Finance, or Consumer Math will meet this requirement.)*

For qualifying students with disabilities, graduation requirements may be determined by the student’s IEP team and be based upon completion of the student’s IEP goals; the student will receive a regular (general) diploma.

● **College Prep Diploma - 24 Credits**

Students earning a College Prep Diploma will meet the Montana University System (MUS) College Preparatory Core requirements for students entering a four-year campus. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be selected from among the College Prep graduates. To be eligible for the MUS Honor Scholarship please visit with the counselor about the MUS Rigorous Core requirements. MUS Rigorous Core includes an additional year of math and an additional year of science.

*English – 4 credits*

English 9	1 credit
English 10	1 credit
English 11	1 credit
English 12 or	1 credit
English 12 & College Writing	1 credit

*Mathematics – 3 credits minimum*

Algebra I	1 credit
Geometry	1 credit
Algebra II	1 credit

*Science – 3 credits minimum*

Physical Science	1 credit
Biology	1 credit
Other lab science (Chemistry, Physics, Anat & Phys, Bio-Tech)	1 credit

*Social Studies - 3 credits (including 0.5 credit of Government)*

World History	1 credit
U.S. History	1 credit
Government	0.5 credit
Social Studies Elective	0.5 credit

*Health Enhancement – 2 credits*

Health & Fitness ( <i>freshman year</i> )	1 credit
Health & Fitness ( <i>sophomore year</i> )	1 credit

*Fine Arts – 1 credit*

Art or Music	1 credit
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*Vocational/technical education – 1 credit*

Computer Apps	0.5 credit
Business or Trades & Industry	0.5 credit

*Elective Credits* 7 credits

*\*0.5 credit of Economics or Financial Literacy within the 2 credits of Social Studies, the 2 credits of Mathematics, or the 1 credit of Vocational/technical education is required. (Economics, Personal Finance, or Consumer Math will meet this requirement.)*

***It is recommended that a student pursuing a college prep diploma complete 2 years of foreign language, a course beyond Algebra II, a fourth year of lab science, and an additional one-half year of psychology or humanities.***

Recognition at Graduation

Graduates who have earned at least a 3.33 cumulative G.P.A. can wear a gold Honor Cord.

National Honor Society members who have remained in good standing and have met the 3.5 G.P.A. requirement may wear the NHS Honor Stole. Other recognition at Graduation must be approved by the principal.

Beginning with the Class of 2026, at the conclusion of the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, the senior(s) with the highest grade point average (to three decimal places) will be the Valedictorian. The senior(s) with the second highest overall grade point average (to three decimal places) will be the Salutatorian. Candidates for the honor of Valedictorian and Salutatorian must meet the TFHS College Prep graduation requirements, must be enrolled in an accredited high school for a minimum of six semesters, on campus and full-time attendance in core subject areas at TFHS for the final three semesters of high school, and must have the highest two scores of qualifying students. If a tie

exists among Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian candidates, the competing students will be declared Co-Valedictorians and/or Co-Salutatorians. If there are Co-Valedictorians, there will be no Salutatorian.

Concluding with the Class of 2025, at the conclusion of the 7<sup>th</sup> semester, the Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be determined by taking into account the number of credit hours earned, the GPA, Running Start / Advanced Placement courses, and ACT scores. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian must meet the TFHS College Prep graduation requirements, must be enrolled in an accredited high school for a minimum of six semesters, and must have the highest two scores of qualifying students using the following formula:

*Credit hours earned x GPA + Running Start/Advanced Placement Credits + ACT score + 0.33 for each A+ (on the TFHS transcript)*

## **Online Learning**

Thompson Falls High School provides an online learning classroom for students who:

1. would like to enroll in a Montana Digital Academy (MTDA) foreign language;
2. wish to enroll in a Running Start Course;
3. are severely credit-deficient and need remedial courses.

(Enrollment requirements must be met prior to enrolling in online courses. Please visit with the school counselor for more information.)

Students who are credit deficient may make arrangements with the principal for an alternative plan for credit recovery courses to meet graduation requirements.

## **ACTIVITIES**

Participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations is a worthwhile endeavor to enhance students' development and educational experience. Specific eligibility and conduct rules may be adopted regarding participation in activities, clubs, and organizations.

Thompson Falls High School offers the following extracurricular activities:

Cross Country, Football, Volleyball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Wrestling, Baseball, Golf, Softball, Track & Field, and Pep Band.

Please refer to the Thompson Falls Schools Athletic Handbook.

## **Athletic Policies**

The Activities Director will provide student-athletes and parents/guardians with a copy of the Athletic Handbook at the pre-season parent meetings, or upon request. It is also available on the school website. The policies include: *Chain of Command, Extra-curricular Eligibility Academic Policy, School Attendance, Participation Fees, Travel, Drug/Alcohol Policy, etc.*

## **Eligibility**



Students must meet the Montana High School Association (MHSA) rules to participate in MHSA sanctioned sports. Refer to the Thompson Falls Schools Athletic Handbook for further information or the MHSA Handbook Article II Section 2 for all eligibility rules.

### **School Athletic Events**

In order to obtain an excused absence to attend home athletic events as a spectator, students must submit written permission IN ADVANCE. Forms are available in the office. This policy is intended to reduce congestion at the office, keep telephone lines available, and assist teachers in class planning.

### **Season Passes**

Season Passes may be purchased at the office for admission to home events. Season passes do not include admission to MHSA culminating events hosted locally. Prices for season passes are as follows:

Family	\$ 125
Couple	\$ 100
Adult	\$ 75
Student	\$ 50

### **Spectator Rules for Activities**

The following rules are established to promote the enjoyment of activities, and provide a safe environment for parents, participants, officials, and others who attend any school sponsored events:

1. display respect for everyone at the event;
2. drugs, alcohol and tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products are prohibited;
3. follow all posted rules at each event;
4. follow all rules that are contained within board policy and school handbooks that apply towards behavior at activities;
5. at football games, children under high school age must be in the area below the paved road, adjacent to the south end of the high school gym;
6. the ambulance crew, administrators and staff on duty, football players, coaches, press, chain crew, are the only people authorized to be inside the track area during football games;
7. only the area west of the football field, away from normal spectator traffic and parking may be used to play. Students do so at their own risk and the school is not responsible for any injuries;
8. students who ride their bicycles to ball games should park them in the bicycle rack. They should not be ridden on sidewalks, track, or in areas used by the spectators and participants;
9. common sense, respect and courtesy should be used at all sporting events. Remember that walking around the court or playing field not only distracts the opposing team but also distracts our team. Please keep these types of distractions to a minimum; and
10. during games at the high school gym and/or field, individuals may play in the lawn area west of the gym in a manner that is respectful to other spectators and visitors who are entering the gym or field.

Sportsmanship is an expectation. Let the players play. Let the coaches coach. Let the officials officiate. Let the spectators be positive.

## Student Assemblies

Student assemblies are contingent upon the ability of students to conduct themselves properly at all times. During school assembly students shall:

- be courteous and attentive during the entire program;
- remain until dismissed by school authority; and
- refrain from whistling, talking or exhibiting other acts of discourtesy (including cell phone use).

Students in attendance at school on the day of an assembly must be present at the assembly unless given permission to do otherwise.

Students may lose the privilege of attending assemblies due to issues with behavior.

## Participation by a Student in a Nonpublic School or Home School

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 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.

## ATTENDANCE

### Attendance Policy

**MCA 20-5-103** "Any parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for a child...shall cause the child to attend the school in which he or she is enrolled for the school term and each school day therein prescribed by the trustees of the district until the latter of the following dates:

- 1.a the child's 16th birthday.
- 1.b the date of completion of the work of the 8th grade.
- 2.a 20-5-102.b. The child is absent because of illness, bereavement, or any other reasons prescribed by the policies of the trustees.
- 2.b The child has been suspended or expelled."

All pupils in the State of Montana are covered by the compulsory attendance law until they reach the age of 16 years. Thompson Falls Dist. #2 will continue tuition-free attendance of resident students. A student is not eligible to attend TFHS if they turn 19 years of age on or before September 10 of the year in which the student wants to enroll. A request for extended enrollment may be made to the Board of Trustees in exceptional circumstances. The Board of Trustees may also admit an individual who has graduated from high school but is not yet 19 years of age even if no exceptional circumstances exist or may admit a student who experienced educational disruption and was awarded a diploma as a result and seeks access to reasonable curriculum designed to advance postsecondary success.

Students who miss ten (10) consecutive days of school may be unenrolled for the remainder of the semester depending on the circumstances. Students will not be unenrolled if the consecutive absences are due to suspension, are medically required, are otherwise excused under District policy, or are related to a student's disability.

### **Purpose of Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of their education — to benefit from teacher-led activities, to build each day's learning on that of the previous day, and to grow as an individual. There is a direct relationship between school attendance and student achievement. The fewer school days students miss during the academic year, the more successful they are 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 opportunities are greatly affected by a good attendance record. Many high school teachers have participation grades as part of the grade for their classes, and **chronic absenteeism may negatively affect grades.**

A telephone call, e-mail, or note from a parent or guardian is necessary when a student is absent or late for any reason. When a student arrives late or after an absence, the student is required to report directly to the office before going to class. All absences and tardies will be recorded in the student information system.

### **Types of Student Absences**

#### **COVID (CO)**

An absence due to COVID illness or quarantine resulting from COVID exposure.

#### **Excused Absences (EA)**

An excused absence indicates a legal absence from school with parent/guardian permission. Students and parents/guardians need to monitor the number of absences a student has to ensure they are completing the necessary coursework to earn credit. All excused absences must be cleared within 48 hours of the absence.

Montana law states that a student is excused when absent due to: Illness; Bereavement; Parent request due to instruction regarding human sexuality; or other reasons prescribed by the policies of the Board, including medical or legal appointments, or family emergencies. The work is due when the student returns unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.

#### **Human Sexuality Instruction Absence**

A student may be absent from a class period, assembly, school function, or other instruction at the request of a parent/guardian responsible for care when the subject matter is related to human sexuality. The District will provide parents/guardians with at least 48-hours notice before such instruction is scheduled to occur.

#### **Medical Absence (DR)**

An absence for a medical appointment, counseling appointment, dental appointment, illness, or other medical needs that have been excused by a note from a healthcare provider.

#### **Pre-Arranged Absence (PA)**

A pre-arranged absence is a vacation, non-school district sponsored event, college visit, military physical, etc. The pre-arranged absence form is the proper way for students to miss school for any reason other than those listed as excused. It is the student's responsibility to notify the office and the teachers prior to being absent. Teachers may require the work to be completed and turned in prior to departure. Otherwise, the work is due when the student returns unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher and noted on the pre-arranged absence form. The pre-arranged absence form can be obtained from the office. Pre-arranged absence forms should be received 5 days prior to the absence. Any requests for pre-arranged absences after an accumulation of 10 absences during a semester will be subject to committee review. It may be required that the absence be related to education prior to approval.

#### School Related Absence (SR)

A school related absence is when the student is absent because the student is involved in a school sponsored extracurricular or co-curricular activity. ***It is the student's responsibility to check with each teacher and make sure their work is made up to the teacher's satisfaction.***

#### Unexcused Absence (UA)

An unexcused absence is considered avoidable by the school, even though it may be approved by the parent or is an absence that hasn't been properly cleared through the main office. The school has the final authority to accept or deny an excuse. ***It is the teacher's discretion how to handle the work/quiz/test to be made up from an unexcused absence. The class syllabus will outline the teacher's expectations for missed class work.***

Examples:

Failure to sign out of the building during the school day.

Leaving school without prior notification to the office by a parent/guardian or administrator.

Avoidable absences when a student has been chronically absent.

Failure of parent/guardian to clear an absence by phone or note within 48 hours of the absence.

Truancy/Skipping – unexcused absence without proper authorization through the office.

#### Chronic or Excessive Absences (XA)

Any student absent for more than 10 days per semester is considered chronically absent. Parents/guardians and students will be contacted by the school. Any absences that exceed 10 days in a semester will be coded as "XA" unless they are pre-arranged. Chronic absenteeism may result in academic penalties and loss of credit. Students who miss more than 10 days of any class per semester will be handled on an individual basis by the principal. This may include forming a team to include at least the principal, parents/guardians, student, classroom teacher(s), and counselor to determine a course of action to address the absences. Students may be required to attend Study Table hours to make up for lost instructional time. Students who are chronically absent may not be able to attend school sponsored events such as ski trips, pep bus trips, college visits, etc.

Circumstances taken into consideration to determine a course of action include:

- absences due to school activity;
- absences due to illness or family emergency;
- pre-arranged absences;
- impact of absences on classroom performance; and
- specific class(es) missed at school and/or time of day for absences.

The work missed due to chronic or excessive absences is due within the homework make-up time frame.

### **Homework Make-up Procedure**

For all absences excluding pre-arranged absences, to receive full credit, students have the number of days absent plus one additional day to make up assigned work for days absent (# of days absent + 1 day = # of make-up days). For example, if a student misses class on Monday, the work assigned will be due on Wednesday. If a student misses Monday and Tuesday, the work assigned will be due on Friday. For more than two consecutive days absent, students will have one week from the date of return to make up work. **No work will be accepted after two weeks of the absence.** Teachers may set definite due dates for long term assignments and projects. Tests, labs/class work, and long-term assignments due during an absence must be turned in on the day the student returns to school unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher. Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the office for pre-planned absences or to request homework for absences. ***It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the teacher regarding the work missed and to complete all work missed within the allotted time frame.***

Makeup work can be obtained by: Visiting the teacher before or after school; Emailing the teacher; Consulting with classmates; Google Classroom

A student who is absent should promptly make up specific assignments missed. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

### Out-of-School Suspension (OS)

A school assigned disciplinary absence where the student is suspended from school off school grounds to include extracurricular and co-curricular activities during the suspension.

### In-School Suspension (IS)

A disciplinary absence assigned by the principal where a student is assigned to in-school suspension.

### **Tardiness**

Being on time is an important life lesson we are trying to teach at TFHS. After five tardies in a semester, regardless of class period, the student may have a consequence (detention). The office will notify students by their school email of detentions related to tardiness. It is the student's responsibility to check their email regularly and to appear for assigned detentions. Failure to attend detention when assigned may result in additional detention time, meeting with the student and parent/guardian, or suspension. If tardies become habitual, the principal may create an attendance plan to help the student be more successful. Students who arrive late to school in the morning or are late following lunch must check in with the main office before reporting to class. A classroom teacher may assign an additional consequence for excessive tardiness to their class.

### Tardy Excused (T)

Late to class.

### Tardy with a Teacher (TT) or Tardy due to Safety Concerns (TS)

Late to class due to being with a teacher or due to unsafe driving conditions. These tardies do not count against the 5 tardies.

*Skipping an assigned detention may result in a suspension.*

## **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/guardian that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should report to the office. The school will notify the student's parent/guardian. 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.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Thompson Falls High school as both an employer and public school, is concerned with and interested in protecting the health, safety and welfare of students, employees and visitors. We recognize that school buildings, facilities, vehicles, grounds and other school property are best utilized in the educational process in the absence of negative behaviors and disruptive actions.

Pursuant to **MCA 20-4-302 and District Policy 3310**, students are subject to the control and authority of teachers, other school employees and contracted personnel, principal, and the superintendent:

- 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, function, or event which bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- traveling to and from school or a school activity, function, or event; or
- anywhere and anytime a student impacts the educational process at school by either harming staff or students (selling drugs, physically or mentally abusing staff/students, etc.)

“Discipline” constitutes all forms of corrective action or punishment, including brief exclusions from a class for not more than the remainder of the class period and exclusion from any type of activity. **District Policy 3300.**

Corporal punishment, to knowingly and purposely inflict physical pain on a student as a disciplinary measure, will not be used by any person employed by the district. Staff members have the right to place their hands on a student in a manner that is reasonable and necessary in order to quell a disturbance, provide self-protection, protect a student from physical injury, obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object on the person of the student or within control of the student, maintain the orderly conduct of a pupil, or protect property from serious harm.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

The immediate objective of the student code of conduct is to maintain a school climate of effective learning conditions. The ultimate objective is to establish discipline, which enhances student growth in abilities, attitudes, and habits essential for acceptable and self-controlled behavior.

State and federal law prohibit false statements, the use of vulgar language in school settings, and discriminatory acts as well regardless of the disruption. For example, the student may not, by speech or conduct, materially disrupt class work or educational programs, cause substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others, or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline.

All students shall submit to the reasonable rules of the school. Refusal to comply with written rules and regulations established for the governing of the school shall constitute sufficient cause for a discipline consequence that may include suspension by the administration or expulsion by the Board of Trustees. A staff member or administrator has the right to hold a student accountable for the student's behavior. The administrator may consider extenuating circumstances prior to dispensing disciplinary action. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- seriousness of the offense;
- program/placement;
- attitude and age of student;
- pattern of conduct;
- degree of cooperation;
- attendance record;
- grades; and/or
- other educationally relevant circumstances.

## **Discipline Offenses**

Discipline offenses are divided into minor and major offenses. Listed below are the probable consequences for violating school rules in each of these categories. The principal has the responsibility to determine the best way to bring about the desired change in the student's behavior and may, in special cases, select an option not listed. The student can also expect (1) the parent/guardian will be informed by phone for all out of school suspensions and by phone or other means for other types of suspension (2) where several options are listed the principal may choose any or all of these items (3) the student will be moved up on the discipline ladder for future offenses, and (4) a violation listed under one category may under certain circumstances be moved into a more severe category.

Teachers may assign school detentions for violations of classroom rules or school rules. The teacher will determine where the assigned detention (teacher room before or after school or lunch detention) and the time the detention to be served.

Detention includes lunch, before school or after school

ISS – In School Suspension

OSS – Out of School Suspension

Consequences may include community service, loss of privilege, etc.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Incident	2 <sup>nd</sup> Incident	3 <sup>rd</sup> Incident
Minor Offenses	Warning; Detention	Detention; ISS	ISS; OSS; Parent/Student Meeting
Major Offenses	ISS or OSS; Restitution; Police Contact	ISS or OSS; Restitution; Police Contact	OSS; Parent/Student Meeting; Discipline Hearing; Restitution; Police Contact

The following list of behaviors outlines activities that are never appropriate. The list may not cover all behaviors that could be considered serious violations of the student code of conduct.

### Minor Offenses

1. **Attendance.** Truancy, Unauthorized absence, or Chronic Tardiness from class or school.
2. **Dress Code.** In order to help provide a safe and orderly school environment, and to prevent any disruption to the educational process, the high school will enforce a dress code. Students have limited freedom of expression. See “Dress Code” for specific language, exceptions to, and consequences for violating the rules.
3. **Inappropriate Display of Affection.** Physical contact that is not generally acceptable in a school setting.
4. **Inappropriate Internet activity.** See “Internet Use Policy” for specific language, and consequences for violating rules.
5. **Inappropriate Vehicle Usage.** Reckless driving, speeding, or illegal parking. Students may lose parking privileges.
6. **Littering.** It is prohibited to litter on school grounds or in the buildings.
7. **Plagiarism/Cheating.** Plagiarism is the improper use of, or failure to give credit to another person’s writing, visual or musical representation or ideas. Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain or aiding another to obtain credit for work, or any improvement in evaluation of performance, by any dishonest or deceptive means. Cheating includes but is not limited to: lying, copying from another’s test, or taking copies of exams.
8. **Providing False Information.** It is improper to provide false information to school officials or hindering an investigation.
9. **Skateboarding.** Skateboards/hoverboards cannot be used on campus because of liability issues, with the exception of the tennis court area.
10. **Trespassing.** Any unsupervised pupil in school buildings after school hours will be considered trespassing. Students must remain in supervised areas at all times. Students may not use the weight room or the gym without an approved supervisor. Students may not go into the wooded areas or outside buildings without permission or supervision.
11. **Unauthorized Use of Telecommunication Devices.** See “Telecommunication Devices” for specific language,



and consequences for violating rules

**Major Offenses - *Major behavioral incidents may be referred to law enforcement.***

*\* Denotes major offenses with automatic minimum disciplinary action of Out-of-School (OSS) suspension for 3 days.*

*\*\*Denotes major offenses with recommendation for expulsion in a hearing in front of the Board of Trustees, but different procedures may apply to students with disabilities.*

1. **\*\*Arson.** Willful intent to set a fire.
2. **\*\*Assault of staff.** Striking a teacher, school employee, or other person lawfully permitted by the building principal to be on the school premises.
3. **\*Assault or Fighting** in school, on school property, or at a school. This could include pushing, pulling, tripping, etc. In addition, students at a fight and encouraging the fight will be disciplined.
4. **Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing.** See “Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, and Hazing Policy” for more information.
5. **\*Controlled Substance.** See “Controlled Substance policy” for specific language, and consequences for violating rules.
6. **Disrespect to School Personnel.**
7. **Disruption to the Educational Process.**
8. **Engaging in Any Activity Forbidden by Law.**
9. **\*Falsely Initiating Emergency Response.** False report of a threat to the safety of the school community (i.e. bomb threat, activating the fire alarm).
10. **False or Fabricated Charges.** Knowingly, and with malice, present false or exaggerated facts.
11. **Forgery.** 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, or making a fraudulent phone call.
12. **Lewd or Licentious Behavior.**
13. **Open Defiance of Authority.** Students must, upon request, meet with an administrator. School officials have the right to talk to a student without a parent present. Refusal to comply with a staff member’s directions **MCA 20-5-201.c.** Continuous violation of school regulations also constitutes open defiance of authority.
14. **\*\*Possession, Use of, or Sale of Explosive Materials or Devices**
15. **Possession, Use of, or Sale of Inflammable Materials or Devices.**
16. **Profanity.** This includes blasphemous, obscenity, racist remarks, prejudiced or sexist language or gestures.
17. **School Safety Issue.** Intent to harm (ex. Throwing rocks, reckless endangerment, improper physical contact).
18. **Sexual Harassment.** See “Title IX and Sexual Harassment policy” for more information.
19. **Stealing, Extortion or Attempted Extortion and/or Possession of Stolen Property.** Includes theft while on school-sponsored activities.
20. **\*\*Threatening and/or Verbally Abusing School Personnel.** Threatening any school personnel verbally, physically, or in writing including the use of profanity directed toward school employees.
21. **\*\*Weapons.** Using, possessing, or transferring any object that could reasonably be considered or used as a weapon, a look-a-like weapon, including pocket knives/multi-tool (regardless of blade length), 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.

22. **Willful Destruction and/or Defacement of Personal/School Property.** When a pupil defaces or damages school property, and the proof of such damage has been shown, the parent/guardian shall be liable for the cost of repair or replacement. Report cards, transcripts, and diplomas will be held pending payment of bills and fines. In addition, the Board may deny a high school pupil the honor of participation in the graduation exercise or exclude a high school pupil from participating in school activities. Such action shall not be taken until the trustees have investigated the incident and are reasonably certain the student was involved in the incident or infraction **MCA 20-5-201(2)-(3)**.

### **Cumulative Major Offense Resolution Sequence**

The resolution for the first major will be as previously mentioned.

Second major offense in a student's high school career may have a minimum resolution of a short-term OSS and up to long term OSS or possible expulsion.

Third major offense in a student's high school career may have a minimum resolution of long-term OSS and up to an expulsion.

Repeated majors past the 3<sup>rd</sup> major may lead to an expulsion.

Any student who has had an expulsion hearing and incurs another major offense may result in an additional expulsion hearing and possible expulsion.

Any cumulative major offense may result in a parent conference and may include notification of law enforcement.

### **Classroom Disciplinary Measures**

Teachers are charged with the responsibility of maintaining student discipline in the classrooms and are given discretionary powers for the enforcement of discipline. In addition to school wide rules, individual teachers may have classroom rules relating to drinks, food, cell phones, etc. Teachers will give each student a copy of the rules and review them as needed.

Teachers will personally deal with all student rule violations in the classroom in the following manner:

1. if your actions, dress, possessions, etc. cause a problem, you will be asked to solve that problem.
2. if you cannot solve the problem, or choose not to, staff members will do something. What he/she decides to do will depend upon the situation and the person or persons involved. Staff members will use their best judgment based upon the information they have at the time.

3. if the student and/or parents feel that the consequences are unfair, they should request a teacher-student-parent meeting. This will be an informal meeting. It is simply a time for concerned individuals to meet together and share information related to the situation in question. In the event that this discussion provides additional information that sheds different light on the situation, or shows the consequences to be unfair, the consequences may be changed or eliminated to better fit the unique situation.

### **Administrative Disciplinary Measures**

School administrators shall maintain discretionary powers to interpret the Student Handbook and issue corrective measures in each individual case and have final authority on discipline in the building. Not all misconduct is specifically mentioned (i.e. snowballs, laser pointers, matches, etc.). However, the Board of Trustees has established a set of district wide rules dealing with student safety, such as violence, drugs/alcohol/tobacco, bullying, etc. **District Policy 3310.**

School officials will consider the context of the situation when disciplining students. There are circumstances under which any of the violations indicated may lead to a recommendation for exclusion by way of suspension or expulsion. School officials will be considerate of a student's rights when implementing disciplinary actions and will strive to observe the tenets of due process.

For violations of school policy or procedure, disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

1. advisement/warning;
2. revocation of open campus privileges;
3. detention;
4. loss of student privileges;
5. restitution for damages to property;
6. conference;
7. temporary removal from class;
8. notification of juvenile authorities and/or law enforcement;
9. suspension;
10. loss of credit; and/or
11. expulsion

### **Student Due Process**

#### Procedures for Short Term (less than 10 days / out-of-school) / Long Term Suspension (up to 20 days)

1. Based upon the evidence presented, the building level administrator will determine the appropriate discipline to be imposed and will inform the student of the decision
2. The building level administrator will set up an informal meeting with the student where the student will receive notice, written or oral, of what he/she is accused of doing and the evidence of the alleged infraction. At this informal hearing, the student will be given the opportunity to explain his/her version of the incident. The student may present witnesses.
3. For all Out of School Suspensions (OSS), the parent will:

- receive notification by phone or in person;
  - receive copies of discipline referrals for students assigned Out of School Suspension; and
  - be allowed to give a written response at the time of the notification regarding rationale for appealing the suspension and directions regarding how to appeal.
5. The Superintendent will be notified of Out of School suspensions.
  6. Upon a finding by the school administrator that the immediate return to school by a pupil (after a 10-day suspension) would be detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of others or would be disruptive of the educational process, a pupil may be suspended for an additional period not to exceed another 10 school days and if the decision to impose the additional suspension does not violate the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act.
  7. A Parent Conference may be held prior to a suspended student's return to classes.

### 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.

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.

### **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.

### Review of Services and Behavior Complaint

This process, to include completing the "Review of Services/Behavior" form must be initiated within thirty (30) calendar days after knowledge of the incident(s) by the complainant.

1. There should be an informal meeting between the complainant and the individual responsible for the action or program, if possible.
2. The complainant fills out the "Review of Services" complaint form and returns it to the appropriate administrator (principal or superintendent). The form can be picked up at the office.
3.
  - a. The administrator receives the written complaint form.
  - b. The administrator shall give a copy of the form to the complainant.
  - c. The administrator shall investigate the complaint and take whatever action is needed. (Possible use of Title IX/504 Coordinators and Special Education Director, if appropriate)
  - d. Complaints not alleging violations of Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, or the Americans with Disabilities Act are subject to the District's Uniform Grievance Procedure. **District Policy 1700.**

### **Effect of Suspension**

Students may be required to disclose high school discipline on college applications. The following is an excerpt from the University of Montana – College Application: Disciplinary History (2017 The Common Application, Inc.) (ADA form):

*Common Application member colleges carefully consider all parts of your application. Information provided*

below will be considered in the context of the rest of your application and does not necessarily prevent you from being admitted to college. For more information on whether specific colleges choose to receive this information or how it may be considered, please contact the college directly.

*Have you ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at any educational institution you have attended from the 9th grade (or the international equivalent) forward, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct, that resulted in a disciplinary action? These actions could include, but are not limited to: probation, suspension, removal, dismissal, or expulsion from the institution.*

Yes                      No

*If you answered “yes” ... please attach a separate sheet of paper that gives the approximate date of each incident, explains the circumstances, and reflects on what you learned from the experience.*

*Note: Applicants are expected to immediately notify the institutions to which they are applying should there be any changes to the information requested in this application, including disciplinary history.*

### **Procedure for Special Education Students**

A student with a disability is entitled to certain procedural safeguards required by I.D.E.A and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1974. If the disciplinary action being considered includes removal from class, the principal must contact the person responsible for special education programs at the school and conduct a review of the student's special education placement to ensure state and federal laws are followed

### **BULLYING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND HAZING POLICY**

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.

Bullying is any harassment, intimidation, hazing or threatening, insulting or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe or repeated and that:

- causes a student physical harm, damages a student’s property or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student’s property;
- creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student’s access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
- substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom or school system.

Bullying also includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school-sponsored organizations or groups. 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.

Harassment, intimidation and bullying can take many forms - verbal, written, electronic, visual, physical and psychological - and is often, but not always, associated with race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or physical differences.

No person, including a district employee or agent, or student, shall bully, harass, haze or intimidate another based on the provisions of applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination or any other reason. It is the policy of the board to comply with all nondiscrimination laws.

The school district will not accept a reason for bullying, harassment, or intimidation as that someone did not "intend" to bully, harass, or intimidate another. The impact of unwelcome behavior on the subject will determine if the behavior constitutes bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

### **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY**

The use of controlled substances by students is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. This includes the use of, to be under the influence of, or the possession of alcohol, tobacco, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, illegal drugs, marijuana, herbal supplements or controlled substances, look-alike drugs, electronic cigarettes and possession of drug paraphernalia products (pipes, roach clips, syringes, needles, rolling papers, etc.). Additionally, the misuse of prescription drugs, herbal supplements, over-the-counter drugs, glue, paint, correction fluid, paint thinner and/or related substances is also prohibited. Legitimate use of prescription drugs is permitted, but the office must be notified and medications stored at the office.

Local law enforcement will be called in all cases where physical evidence of contraband is recovered during an investigation. A refusal to consent to a legal search as allowed by school law will result in an assumption of guilt and the appropriate consequences will still apply. **District Policy 3231.**

School authorities may contact local law enforcement when they have reasonable suspicion that a student has violated the controlled substance policy based upon such factors as alcohol on breath, impairment of speech and motor control, admission by the student, or reports of the student's consumption of controlled substances by reliable sources.

The parents/guardians will be notified for all cases involving the violation of the controlled substance policy. Parents/guardians may request a free drug test and the results will be kept confidential, unless the student is participating in an in-season sport in which case the student/athlete will be subject to the athletic policy rules.

As a penalty for the first offense, a student will receive 3-10 days OSS. A student who is caught vaping, found in the possession of vapor products or in the company of other students who are vaping may choose to complete a 6 hour vape awareness and prevention course in lieu of OSS. The student must complete the course within one week of the incident, otherwise the out-of-school suspension will be served. The student is responsible for the expense of the course. Subsequent offenses will result in OSS as stated below.

For subsequent offenses a student will receive: 5-10 days OSS and recommendation for long term OSS or expulsion; or 10 days OSS and completion of at least three (3) sessions with a counselor specializing in drugs, tobacco, and alcohol rehabilitation. The student is responsible for the expense of the counseling sessions and

has to follow recommendations. If the student does not complete the sessions or follow the counselor's recommendations within 30 days, long term OSS will be reinstated or expulsion may be recommended.

The principal will determine the number of OSS days.

The sale or distribution or possession with intent to sell or distribute any drugs in, on, or within a 1000 feet of school property will result in an automatic 10-day out of school suspension pending an expulsion hearing before the board of trustees.

Students with disabilities may be subject to different procedures.

### **TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

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 **District Policies 3210 and 3225** for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

### **CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **New Clubs / Groups**

Student council and the school administrator will meet to approve any application for new high school clubs / groups.



## **Blue Hawk Chapter of National Honor Society**

The purpose of this organization is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, stimulate a desire to render service, leadership, and develop character in students. Students can become eligible in the NHS in the fall of their sophomore year. Membership in the NHS is based on a minimum cumulative G.P.A. of 3.500. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, and character.

During the fall of the sophomore year those students meeting the scholastic requirements are invited to apply for induction into the National Honor Society. Juniors and seniors who are not members but meet requirements are also invited to apply for induction into the National Honor Society. Transfer students who have NHS membership may request to join the Blue Hawk Chapter. Interested students complete an application outlining their leadership and service activities. The completed applications are then reviewed by a committee composed of the NHS advisor, two teachers, and the principal. The committee considers student involvement in the areas of community activity, extra-curricular activities, and leadership qualities in approving applicants. Final membership selection rests with the committee. Students not selected for induction have the opportunity to go through an appeals process.

## **Student Council**

The purpose of this association, working through its Student Council and Student Executive Board, shall be:

1. To make certain rules and regulations in harmony with the faculty and the administration. These rules will be enforced by the Student Council;
2. To assist the school administration in working out certain regulations that will be part of the administrative policy of the school;
3. To assist the faculty in initiating and developing enterprises or projects for the good of the school;
4. To promote student activities;
5. To promote harmonious relations among the students, faculty, and administration; and
6. To develop attitudes of good school and community citizenship.

### Student Council Dance and/or Prom Guidelines

1. Doors to all dances will be closed one and one-half hours after the beginning of the dance (i.e. dance begins at 9:30 p.m. - doors close at 11:00 p.m.) After the doors close, no further students will be admitted.
2. Once a ticket for the dance is purchased there are no refunds.
3. All the school rules apply at the dance.
4. Adequate chaperones (at least two faculty members) must be in attendance at dances to ensure student safety and compliance with the rules. Chaperones must remain until all students depart at the end. A list of chaperones must be presented to the principal and student council adviser within one week before the dance.
5. If the dance is held in the Junior High Gym, students will not be permitted on the stage, behind the stage or upstairs. Students will be restricted to the gym, restrooms and the hallways. Once a student chooses to leave a dance, he/she may not return. This is to prevent use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, etc. The only exceptions: if a student wishes to get something from their vehicle, they may go with a chaperone escort. Also, if a parent needs to take a student from the dance they may return with parent escort.

6. High School dances are for the students of Thompson Falls High School and their guests. No Junior High school students may attend. The only exception would be if an end-of-the-year dance was held and the 8th grade students who were recently promoted to 9th grade were allowed to attend.
7. Any student who wishes to bring a guest must receive permission from the student council adviser or school principal one week prior to the dance and/or prom. The guest must be under the age of 21. Only one guest per person is permitted. Guests who have dropped out of school will not be permitted.
8. The purchaser of the ticket is held responsible for any indiscretion of his/her guest. If a student or guest is removed from the dance, they are prohibited at any future dances for the remainder of the school year. Any discipline of the student is at the discretion of the principal.
9. All guests admitted to a dance will be subject to all school rules (i.e. no drugs & alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, inappropriate behavior or dress). Anyone found in violation will be dealt with according to school policies.
10. Students and their guests are expected to behave appropriately at dances, including language and dance movements. "Dirty dancing" or disrobing is not acceptable.
11. If the chaperones find a couple dancing inappropriately at a dance or prom, they will be given one warning. If they are warned again at any point they and their guest will be asked to leave the dance.
12. TFHS students are responsible for their guest's behavior. Should a guest be removed from the dance, the student who brought them will be dismissed as well. Dances usually begin at 9:00 p.m. and end at 12:00 midnight, except the prom may run until 1:00 a.m.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Infinite Campus**

Infinite Campus is a web based, dynamic resource which allows the school to combine much of its 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 students' educational progress along with other important student information.

Infinite Campus also gives the school the ability to send general or emergency messages via email, phone and text to parents/guardians or the contact of their choice. Through the Parent Portal, parents/guardians can conveniently log on to update phone numbers, emails and contact information.

Infinite Campus tool "Messenger with Voice" provides:

1. emergency notifications – receive emergency messages for school closings, delays, etc;
2. message options – receive general messages regarding attendance, behavior, assignments, low lunch account balances and more; and
3. preferred communication – set preferences for how to receive general or emergency messages (choose from voice, text and email options).

### Recording Absences and Contacting Parent/Guardians

Each period of the day, the high school office will take attendance and post student absences into the Infinite Campus record keeping system. Parents/guardians are expected to contact the school regarding absences. If a student is truant or does not return after lunch, the office will make contact with the parent/guardian.

## **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 **District 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 **District 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](http://www.thompsonfalls.net) or any District or school office or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

## **COUNSELING**

### **Counseling Services**

The school counselor at the high school constantly updates and adds new services for students. The counselor maintains student academic files, conducts individual and group counseling sessions, assists students with college and career guidance, as well as numerous other services.

Student information is considered confidential and may only be released to the student, the parent or guardian, to individuals and organizations that have been granted written approval by a legal guardian to obtain them and to individuals and organizations as permitted by state and federal law. Students interested in college and career guidance should contact the school counselor as early as possible to examine opportunities in the student's areas of interest.

Most post-secondary institutions and scholarship programs require the student to qualify through entrance exams. The most frequently used tests for the admissions process are the Admissions College Testing Program

(ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Information on testing dates and registration is available in the Counseling Office and on the school website.

## Scholarships

Students and or parents seeking information on scholarships, financial aid and similar financial aid to assist in furthering their education should consult with the school counselor.

### DRESS CODE

It is recognized that parents and school personnel have a common interest in the education, physical and moral development of students. However, **the appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of the individual and his/her parents.** A connection exists between good grooming, personal attire, self-respect and student achievement. A similar relationship exists between student dress and acceptable standards of conduct. The dress code is designed to allow for student comfort while maintaining an environment conducive to learning and appropriate for school. Students should exercise good judgment in their choices of clothes for everyday school wear. During school hours, students are to be appropriately attired and groomed for the classroom. Clothing must be adequate to ensure a decent appearance, must be modest, and must be in accordance with community standards. The principal will make the final determination. In order to help provide a safe and orderly school environment free from violence, drug abuse, and harassment (ethnic, racial, religious, associated with gang activity or sexual), the following guidelines will be enforced:

1. students will not be permitted to wear any clothing or jewelry displaying drugs, alcohol or tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products; expressing obscenities or racism; sexual references; slurs; or associated with gang activity or unlawful violence; students wearing any article of clothing that is deemed inappropriate, offensive, or a distraction to the educational environment by the classroom teacher or principal will be required to correct the problem;
2. students may not wear pajamas or sleepwear (ie: flannel bottoms), boxer shorts;
3. students may not wear head coverings of any kind in the school building, including hats and hoods/hoodies, unless worn for religious, medical, or safety purposes and approved in advance by administration; sunglasses may not be worn during the school day; **head coverings should be removed upon entry to the building and kept in the locker;**
4. pants/shorts must be worn at the waist and completely cover the buttocks area; pants/shorts may not be worn in such a way as to expose undergarments or skin around the midsection; shorts must have a 3" inseam when standing and skin may not be showing above the 3" inseam; this includes pants with rips or tears; Spandex shorts are not appropriate for school;
5. dresses and skirts that are not longer than the end of the fingertips require wearing spandex or leggings underneath; wearing opaque tights or pantyhose is not an acceptable replacement of having spandex or leggings on underneath the dress or skirt;
6. clothing must cover one's stomach, underwear, and cleavage; no apparel that exposes the midsection of body below the armpits; no bare midriff may be seen during the normal student movements;

7. straps such as those found on tank tops, muscle shirts, halter tops, tube tops and/or spaghetti strap tops are not permitted; tops that expose the back or parts of undergarments, including racerback tops or similar articles, are not permitted; shoulder straps should be the width of a credit card;
8. transparent clothing, if worn, must have an additional garment underneath;
9. footwear must be worn at all times; slippers are not allowed;
10. no trench coats;
11. classroom teachers may have additional clothing requirements (for safety considerations).

### Consequences

A student who violates the dress code will be asked to correct the problem (ie. covering up the clothing, wearing clothing inside out, or changing into appropriate clothing). If the student cannot solve the problem, clothing is available at the office or parents will be notified to provide appropriate clothing. If the student appears to be non-cooperative or defiant in following a dress code rule or repeatedly violates the rules, then the student will face disciplinary action.

Exceptions to this policy would only occur with approval from the principal. Participation or attendance at an activity may require a different dress code such as physical education class, sports practice and competition, cheerleading, school dances, performing in a play, dress up days, etc.

### School Sponsored Activities

There should be an effort to demonstrate proper dress by students and staff when they represent the school district at athletic contests, music festivals, conferences, and meetings.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION & SPECIAL SERVICES**

### **Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT)**

STEPS is a school-based mental health service that provides counseling for students who struggle with a variety of life difficulties. STEPS contracts with the school to provide support to qualifying students. STEPS provides individual, group, and family therapy to help aid in the student's success in school as well as in the community. They work on a variety of issues such as: coping with grief or loss, anger management, impulse control, dealing with trauma, goal setting, adjustment to life stressors such as divorce or moving, self-esteem, confidence building, bullying, social skills, making and maintaining friendships, peer pressure, conflict resolutions, and more. Please contact STEPS or the school for more information regarding this program.

### **Decorations/Posters**

All decorations and/or posters must be approved by the organization sponsor and/or the building level administrator, and removed following the event.

### **Discretionary Non-resident Student Policy**

The residence of the parents or legal guardian determines a minor child's district of residence. Non-resident student applications may be made at the building level office. Individuals who are not the legal parents of a

student may be requested to provide proof of authorization to enroll a student. The high school has a 25% cap for nonresident students. The District will enroll any non-resident student required to be admitted under MCA § 20-5-321.

### **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. **District Policy 4331.**

### **Fundraising**

Student clubs or classes, school sports teams, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. A fundraising request form must be submitted to the Student Council Advisor at least 5 days before the event. The building level principal must approve all money making/fundraising projects.

Except as approved by the high school principal, fundraising by non-school groups is not permitted on school property. Please refer to **District Policy 4210** for additional information.

### **Library**

The library is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on regular days and closes at 2:10 p.m. on “Early Out” days.

#### Lending Services

Check Out Time - Most materials are lent for four weeks. A printed due date is included with items you borrow.

Renewals - You may renew most items twice. You may not renew an item if others are waiting to borrow it. Items may be renewed at the front desk.

The return area for books is at the high school library counter.

#### Requests for Materials

Placing a Hold on Materials - If an item is checked out, you may place a hold on it at the front desk. You will be notified when the item becomes available. If there is more than one hold on an item, the first person to place the hold receives it, then on down the list.

Transferring Materials Between Libraries - If you need an item located at another Thompson Falls School library, you may make a request at the front desk and it will be delivered to your school library. You will be notified when the item arrives.

Interlibrary Loans - If you cannot locate an item in our libraries, you may ask library staff to place an interlibrary loan (ILL) request. This service borrows books from other libraries. You will be notified when the item arrives. You are responsible for any charges or bills incurred from the borrowing library.

### Borrowing Issues

Overdue Reminders - If an item borrowed becomes overdue, you will receive a reminder after the due date. If one month has passed and you have still not returned the item, you will be billed for the replacement cost.

Missing Items - If you believe that you have returned an item that still appears as checked out, you may request a two-month grace period to locate it. During that time, you and the library staff will look for the missing item. If it is not found after two months, you will be billed for the item's replacement cost.

Lost or Damaged items - For lost items, you will be billed for the item's replacement. Charges for damaged library materials are determined on a case-by-case basis, with fees ranging from \$1 to the item's full replacement cost. Water is the most common type of damage so please protect your books well.

### Library Computer Services

Computers are available to all students and staff unless the parent/guardian has requested no computer access for a student. Requests must be submitted to the librarian. Temporary computer access for visitors may be requested at the library.

Additional technologies are available for check out through the Technology Coordinator.

The TFHS shared catalog can be accessed through the school's website.

### **Lost & Found, or Stolen Items**

If a student has lost an article of clothing, please report it to the office. Some items are stored by the library entrance or main floor laundry room. Periodically, the unclaimed items are washed and donated locally.

Students should either keep their valuables at home or on their person as the school district is not responsible for stolen items that occur while the pupil is at school or at school related activities.

The school is not at liberty to perform random search and seizure without "reasonable cause" in the event personal property is stolen.

### **Passes**

Students must have a pass anytime to leave a class.

### **Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals**

Parents may contact the district office regarding professional qualifications of teachers. The district only uses Title 1 aides that comply with federal requirements.

If a parent or guardian has any questions or concerns, then please contact the Superintendent at 406-827-3323.

### **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 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.

### **Title 1 Parent Input**

Thompson Falls Public Schools wants input from parents of the Title 1 students. Any parent of Title 1 students is invited to attend the District Title 1 Parent Advisory Committee. If you are interested, please contact Len Dorscher, K-8 Principal, at the elementary Office at 406-827-3592. Scheduled meetings of the advisory committee will be scheduled as determined by the K-8 principal.

### **ILLNESS / COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

If a student becomes ill during the school day, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the student or give verbal permission for the student to return home. Please make sure your contact information is accurate and that you have provided an emergency contact in the event that you cannot be reached by phone.

Many of our students experience illness or diseases during the school year. It is the policy of the school district to provide a safe, healthy environment for the students. Therefore, we ask parents/guardians to follow the guidelines below. Please work with a healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment if your student is ill.



## Communicable Diseases

To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who **may** have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

These diseases include, but are not limited to:

Amebiasis	Mumps
Campylobacteriosis	Pinkeye
Chickenpox	Ringworm of the scalp
Diphtheria	Rubella (German Measles)
Gastroenteritis	Scabies
Hepatitis	Shigellosis
Influenza	Streptococcal disease, invasive
Measles (Rubeola)	Tuberculosis
Meningitis	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
Coronavirus	

- **FEVER** - excluded 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 until 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. 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.”
- **HAND, FOOT, and MOUTH DISEASE** – This illness can cause painful sores in or on your mouth, and/or on the hands, feet and sometimes buttocks and legs. The illness lasts usually 7-10 days. Symptoms include fatigue, sore throat, or a high fever. In some cases, a rash appears before blisters do. The blisters may break open and crust over and usually last about a week. The disease is most likely to spread within the first week. Wash hands frequently and keep students home who have a fever or open blisters.
- **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 prescribed or recommended by a physician. The student is non-contagious after 1<sup>st</sup> treatment and may be in school after 1<sup>st</sup> treatment while sores are healing.

- **SCABIES** – Scabies is caused by a mite too small to be seen by the naked eye. Since the mites live underneath the skin, contagion takes rather prolonged contact. All that is required for safety is washing the hands after touching a person with scabies. Typically, the scabies mite makes a white bump that causes intense itching, particularly at night. As a result of scratching, a scab appears on the skin. The scab tends to be linear rather than round. Scabies is commonly found on the backs of the hands, the webs between the fingers, the inner side of the wrist and forearms, and the chest and abdomen. It can also be found on the upper arms and legs, and the neck. It is practically never on the face, on the small of the back, between the shoulder blades, on the palms of the hands, or on the soles of the feet. It will often be found on more than one family member. Diagnosis is usually done by a physician. Treatment consists of a prescription medication with repeated application 7-10 days later. A student with scabies presents no immediate emergency and need not be kept home.

- **CHICKENPOX** - Chickenpox is a highly contagious childhood illness. The child is contagious from 24 hours before the onset of fever until the drying of all crusts. Chickenpox first appears on the scalp, face, chest, and abdomen, and spreads to the arms and legs. You will see a tiny, clear blister with redness around it. The blisters rapidly form crusts and scab over. The child must stay out of school until all crusts are dry—usually 5 to 7 days.

- **FIFTH'S DISEASE** - **This** is a very mild skin disorder caused by a virus. A fine, red rash first appears on the face like a “slapped cheek”. It then spreads to the chest, abdomen, arms and legs. It is contagious 2 to 3 days prior to the onset of the rash. It is not contagious when the rash appears, therefore the student does not need to stay out of school unless he/she has a fever. If the student does have a fever, he/she should remain out of school until 24 hours after the fever is gone. There is no specific treatment for the rash. The rash may last a week or more and will appear worse when the child is exposed to heat, cold, or sunshine.

### **INTERNET USE POLICY**

Thompson Falls 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. The school recognizes the importance of Internet usage and provides access with the following guidelines: students are allowed to use the computers and Internet to complete school projects as assigned by teachers; and may use technology for personal use with teacher permission.

#### **Students shall not:**

1. 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 towards other people (hate literature). Under direct supervision and with parental approval, circumstances may allow investigation of hate literature for research purposes. Blackfoot Telecommunications is providing TFHS Internet filtering;
2. transmit obscene, abusive, or sexually explicit language;
3. purchase products or services using the school connection without prior faculty permission;
4. violate any local, state, or federal statute;
5. access other individuals' materials, information, or files without permission;
6. violate copyright laws or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual;
7. use chat rooms except under direct teacher supervision; and/or

8. play games or download music/video games without prior faculty permission.

For violations of the Internet Use Policy, disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

1. dismissal from the computer lab for minor offenses;
2. detention;
3. loss of computer lab privileges for at least nine (9) weeks or to the end of the semester; or
4. suspension.

## MEALS

### **Lunch Program**

During the noon period (11:45 am-12:15 pm) students are granted permission by the high school an "open campus" to leave the grounds to go home or downtown for lunch. ***The administration reserves the right to revoke this privilege given to a student.***

TFHS students will be offered breakfast and lunch at the high school campus. During the 2024-25 school year, meals will be free to all students. Students must sign up for lunch at the office each morning before 9:00 a.m. If you have any questions about the program, please call 827-3592.

## OFFICE PROCEDURES

### **Administering Medicines to Students**

Medication, if needed, should be given at home when possible. Parents should identify students requiring medication at school with written approval by a medical doctor who specifies the type, dosage, and purpose of the medication to the school secretary. Contact the building secretary for an application form to take medications at school.

### **Enrollment Procedure**

Parents/Guardians must do the following to enroll their student:

- present a copy of checkout sheet from previous school if transferring during the school year;
- complete the enrollment form;
- sign a release of confidential information form to request records from the sending school;
- present a copy of the student's immunization record; and
- present proof of age, residency, and identity.

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.

In compliance with **District Policy 3141**, parents/guardians must do the following to enroll a non-resident student:

- comply with the above requirements for resident students;

- complete non-resident application form; and
- provide academic and disciplinary records

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. Part-time students must declare part-time status upon entering. Students wishing to enroll part-time must have administrative approval.

Students whose home address and/or telephone change during the year should notify the office immediately.

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.

### **Fees**

There are no general registration fees for resident students attending TFHS. Some athletic programs, shop classes and other classes may require a nominal fee.

### **Lockers**

Lockers are provided to students for their convenience to keep necessary school materials. All students will be assigned a lock. There is no fee to use a school locker or a lock but if the lock is not returned to the office at the end of the school year, the student(s) will be assessed a \$5.00 replacement charge. Personal locks may not be used and will be cut off and returned to the student. Drug dogs will be used in searches of lockers on campus. The school accepts no responsibility for the safety of any items left in a locker, and further advises against leaving any valuable items in lockers since they are not constructed in a manner to provide total security.-The school maintains the authority to issue, reassign, or deny locker privileges when necessary. Students who abuse their locker privileges, by not keeping lockers reasonably clean, by slamming locker doors, by damaging lockers or

failing to treat school property appropriately will be subject to the school's disciplinary policy, repair costs and lose their locker privileges. Lockers must be clean and free of items or pictures that refer to illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, or of a profane nature. The fronts of the lockers are not to be decorated in any way unless authorized by the office. The use of tape is not allowed on lockers. All lockers will have a large magnet for student use.

### **Sign-Out /In Procedures**

Students must check out/check in with the office secretary prior to signing out of school or entering class. If the student becomes ill or has to leave school during the day, he/she must report to the office. If it is necessary for the student to leave, arrangements must be made at the office. A student may NOT leave school grounds under any circumstances until the student has checked out at the office. Failure to check out before leaving will result in TRUANCY. In addition, if a student is not returning from lunch, then a call to the office is required, with a note to follow the next morning.

Students who are eighteen or older and live at home are not classified as self-enrolled because the parents still act as guardians and provide support. These students are not allowed to excuse absences for themselves or check themselves out of school.

### **Use of Office Telephone and Copier**

Students should transact all business at the school office window counter. Students are not allowed in the office except when their presence is requested by the teachers or office personnel.

Phone calls may be made in the office with permission from the office staff. Students will not be taken out of class for calls except in an emergency situation. If a student receives a call during the day, a message will be posted on the student's locker. The student may return the call between classes, during lunch, or after school hours.

### **Visitors to School**

For the safety of those within the school, all visitors must report to the office to sign in. Visitors to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. **District Policy 4301.**

Visitors without an approved purpose from the office will be asked to leave the grounds and reported, if necessary, to local law enforcement. Recent former students, students who have been suspended/expelled from school, and young adults, when their visit is for the intent of socializing with current students are not welcome during school hours.

Students must obtain permission from the office to bring a guest to school.

## **Withdrawal from School**

A student who is going to withdraw from school must first obtain a withdrawal form from the office and have all his/her teachers sign the form, including the librarian and counselor. Parental/guardian approval must be received before the procedure is completed.

## **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. When the alarm is sounded, students must follow the directions of teachers and others in-charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. Teachers should exit the building with students, proceed to the meeting area, and take roll. Teachers must check for injuries and report missing students to the person in charge.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

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

### **Immunizations**

Montana State Law mandates that each student meet established immunization requirements and may not attend school unless requirements are met. Parents will be notified if a pupil is in need of one or more inoculations. A list of required vaccinations can be found at each school's office or by contacting the school nurse. 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.

Religious exemptions and conditional attendance may be used in accordance with the Immunization Law and administrative rules. The religious exemption must be notarized. The health care provider must sign medical exemptions. Persons who have any of the above exemptions may be excluded from school by health authorities during disease outbreaks. This exclusion will be in-force until the excluding authority is satisfied that the student no longer risks transmitting the disease.

Exemption forms are available at the local health department or school district.

## **SEARCH**

The administration will conduct routine, random, unannounced searches of the 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.**

### Canine Procedures

In order to ensure that drugs and weapons are not being brought, used, or distributed on campus, TFHS may bring in a trained canine onto school grounds to enhance the school's search for illegal drugs and weapons.

The following applies to all canine searches:

1. all school property is subject to search including the school parking lot.
2. the search will take place when students are in class or off grounds. The search will not happen when students are able to watch or in the area being searched;
3. if the canine identifies an area where drugs may be located, the area will be secured. (i.e. a lock placed on the locker or assign personnel to watch the area);
4. Areas designated as school property will be searched by the school administrator or designee;
5. if the area or property is not designated school property (i.e. cars), the administration may request police/sheriff's department involvement, who will decide whether or not to obtain a search warrant while the area or property is secured in the event permission is not given to conduct a search; and
6. searches may be conducted without prior warning to the students or parents.

## **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**

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



## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **Special Education Program**

Special education and related services are provided to qualifying students with disabilities. Contact Mrs. Darcy Farlan or Mr. Chris Hart at the high school with referrals or questions about the identification, evaluation, or provision of services. Taylor Salmi serves as the director for Special Education Cooperative and has an office located at 206 Haley Avenue West. Call 827-3007 for more information. Through these individuals, parents and teachers can learn more about the process and the laws that relate to these services.

### **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 high school principal is the 504 Program Director.

## SPORTSMANSHIP AND SCHOOL SPIRIT

Ethics, integrity, and respect are values important in our daily lives. On the playing field, they are translated into the word sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is one of the most important set of values taught by interscholastic athletics.

**STAND UP AND CHEER  
STAND UP AND CHEER FOR THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL  
PLEDGE YOUR LOYALTY  
FOR IT'S YOUR ALMA MATER TRUE  
OUR TEAMS ARE FIGHTING AND WE WILL HELP  
TO SEE THEM THROUGH  
WE'VE GOT THE TEAM RAH – RAH  
WE'VE GOT THE STEAM RAH – RAH  
SO THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL HERE'S TO YOU  
T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N  
(Repeat above)  
B-L-U-E-H-A-W-K-S  
BLUEHAWKS - - - - - FIGHT!**

## TECHNOLOGY

### **Computer Lab**

The computers at TFHS are provided for the students to use as a tool in their academic work. Students are provided with their own user ID and directory for storing their work. Student work may be saved to the appropriate shared folder on the network or in the cloud. A password protected folder is advised.

All equipment and software must be used responsibly. Students who cause deliberate damage or change settings on the computers will have their computer privileges revoked. No software may be installed on the school's computers.

## **Telecommunication/Electronic Devices**

The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or while otherwise under the supervision and control of District employees is a privilege.

The following rules apply to telecommunication devices on campus:

- at no time will any student operate a cell phone or other electronic device with video capabilities in a locker room, bathroom, or other location where such operation may violate the privacy right of another person;
- cell phones, earbuds, and other listening devices may not be worn, possessed, or used in the classrooms during instructional time without permission from the teacher;
- teachers will decide when technology may be used in the classroom and for what purpose(s). If a teacher does not give permission to use technology, the device usage is not allowed;
- teachers may have individual classroom policies and procedures, which may include placing phones in holding bins/areas;
- devices are allowed for educational purposes and only to enhance the classroom experience;
- personal devices must be in silent mode while on school campuses and while riding school buses,
- devices cannot be used to take unauthorized pictures or videos within the school or classroom. Posting of unauthorized pictures or videos on the internet may be considered a major violation of technology use;
- Devices cannot be used to disrupt the educational and learning environment;

The school district has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of being involved in/used for harassment and bullying, causing classroom disruptions, or is believed to be in violation of student guidelines outlined in this handbook.

A violation will result in the device being confiscated, kept at the office, and returned to the parent/guardian. Consequences may include detentions, and ultimately suspension for repeated violations (defiance of authority).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Bus Conduct**

The bus driver is in charge of all students from the time they enter the school bus until they leave it at the approved destination. He/she is responsible to report to the school principal the names of students who violate any of the bus conduct rules. The principal upon such notification may assign the appropriate school disciplinary sanctions. Willful violation of the rules by any student may result in the student being removed from the bus. Bus transportation is furnished for students at the expense of the school district.

### **Field Trips**

Certain classes and clubs participate in school-sponsored field trips in order to enhance their curriculum and to enrich the lives of students. If a student wishes to participate in a field trip, he/she must present written parental permission, dress and behave as directed by the instructor and/or chaperons in charge, and travel with the group at all times unless given specific permission from the instructor in charge and the school office.

In deciding to attend a field trip, the student accepts full responsibility for his/her actions while on the trip. In addition, the student assumes all responsibility for making up missed work and seeking extra help as needed. A student may be denied attendance on a field trip if his/her behaviors warrant it or if their absence from school would further place them behind in class work or study.

The high school participates in community events during the school year (Homecoming Parade, Beautification Days, etc.). To participate in these events, students may be transported by school transportation within the community. Parents/guardians who do not want their child to participate in such events must notify the high school office.

### **Parking, Reserved Parking**

While on campus, students are subject to all Montana motor vehicle laws.

Students must park properly in the parking lot to ensure safety and the maximum space for vehicles. Students who park improperly in fire lanes, no parking zones, designated visitor's or faculty parking areas, will be disciplined (including ticketed or towed at student expense) and may lead to the loss of privileges such as parking on campus.

Parking on District property is a privilege for all students. Students may not use, transport, carry, or possess alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, illegal drugs, marijuana, or any weapons in their vehicles on school property. While on school property, vehicles may be inspected at any time by staff, or by contractors employed by the District utilizing trained dogs, for the presence of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or weapons. Any student seeking to park on District property shall sign the authorization form contained in Appendix D. Students who park on District property without signing the authorization form may be subject to discipline.

In the event the school has reason to believe that alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, drugs, marijuana drug paraphernalia, or weapons are present, including by alert-trained dogs, the District is authorized to contact law enforcement to conduct a search of the interior of the student's vehicle. A student who removes a vehicle prior to a search by law enforcement when staff have reason to believe that alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, drugs, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or weapons are present, may be subject to discipline and is prohibited thereafter from parking on District property.

Students are not permitted to drive while school is in session except when excused from school.

Front row parking is reserved for high school staff.

## **THOMPSON FALLS 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 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 to 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 30, 2024. Thompson Falls School District has designated the following information as directory information:

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

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<sup>1</sup> These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

## Thompson Falls High School Student Authorization to Park on District Property

### *Parents and Students:*

Please read together and after signing, return this document to the school.

By exercising the privilege of parking on District property, including school parking lots, I acknowledge that I do not have any expectation of privacy in the odors emanating from my vehicle which may alert a human or a canine to the presence of alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia or weapons. I acknowledge that I have received notice from the District that it may use trained dogs to sweep for the presence of alcohol, tobacco/vapor products/alternative nicotine products, illegal drugs, marijuana, drug paraphernalia or weapons.

By exercising the privilege of parking on District property, including school parking lots, I consent to the District's unannounced deployment of trained dogs around my vehicle while parked on District property, including school parking lots.

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

### *For students under the age of 18:*

I have read this Agreement and have discussed it with my child:

Parent/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**THOMPSON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL**  
**LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am aware that the **2024-25 Student Handbook** is available on the high school page of the Thompson Falls School District [www.thompsonfalls.org](http://www.thompsonfalls.org) and that hard copies are available upon request at the high school office. I understand that my signature is required and indicates that the information contained in the handbook is accessible to me. I further understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to disciplinary consequences outlined in this handbook.

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

***NOTE: It is the responsibility of the student to share the handbook information with his or her parent/guardian.***

***\*Notification***

*The high school participates in community events during the school year (Homecoming Parade, Beautification Days, etc.). To participate in these events, students may be transported by school transportation within the community. Parents/guardians who do not want their child to participate in such events must notify the high school office.*



## 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 the consent form is not returned to the high school office. 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 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 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 log on 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 experienced 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 a student had them, if ever
  - Anxiety is a major risk factor for suicide.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - RBHI and MERET Solutions will never have access to the identities associated with the data.
  - 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 support 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 an 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 found in the 2024-2025 TFHS Student Handbook or call Rob Christensen 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.

**CONSENT FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 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 section 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).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provider	Name of Preferred Physician / Counselor / Provider
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Example Agency</i>	<i>Dr. Example Practitioner</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Counselor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CSCT Staff	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Health Partners	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private-Practice Counselor Name & Phone	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Provider: Name & Phone	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Provider: Name & Phone	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Provider: Name & Phone	