

2024-2025



Thompson Falls  
Elementary

Student-Parent  
Handbook

## Mission of Thompson Falls Public Schools

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees on August 18, 2014



### We believe

- .. students learn in different ways and at varying rates; we respect and support those differences.
- .. with the support of the community we can provide a respectful, safe, and caring school environment.
- .. certain district and societal rules require immediate student consequences.
- .. with appropriate adult guidance, discipline should be considered an opportunity for student personal growth.
- .. keeping in mind a student's self respect and dignity, a student should be provided an opportunity to learn to solve his/her own problem.
- .. in updating our district curriculum to keep pace with the changing world.
- .. in integrating technology within every academic area at all levels.
- .. in the school improvement process to maximize student learning.
- .. it is important to have ongoing training and in-service for staff so that educational practices will be based upon research, information, and proven procedures.
- .. with parent, community, and school support, students can become contributing members of society.
- .. learning is a 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.

## Core Values

**Excellence / Unity / Compassion / Respect / Integrity**

### District Goals

#### Goal 1 – Provide a safe, positive environment that is focused on learning

ATTITUDE

- Objective Maintain district wide commitment to professional development by providing training and resources to staff and incorporating essential skills into the daily operation of schools.
- Objective Implement core values through writing, speech, and action at all levels in the district.
- Objective Minimize classroom interruptions and focus on student academic engagement
- Objective Provide opportunity for collaboration and professional development through the district leadership team and the curriculum COOP.

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#### Goal 2 – Set high expectations for learning and behavior

AIM HIGH

- Objective Students will meet or exceed projected growth targets during the school year as determined by local assessments and schools will meet or exceed state averages and national norms.
- Objective Teachers will be evaluated using the McREL instrument focused on continual improvement.
- Objective Prioritize curriculum and plan instruction to meet state standards at each grade level and in all subjects. Emphasize the importance of Reading in all subjects and at all levels in the district.
- Objective Incorporate character building and social skills in the school environment.

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#### Goal 3 – Increase awareness of the great things happening in our schools

COMMUNICATION

- Objective Reach out to the community to inform people about the good things happening in our schools.
- Objective Staff and students will use available media to showcase school events and student achievement.
- Objective Communicate with parents about their child’s learning and behavior, classroom curriculum, and opportunities available through the school.

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#### Goal 4 – Use data to target needs, develop interventions, and increase achievement

RESPONSIBILITY

- Objective Data will be used at all levels as an essential component to the decision making process.
- Objective Schedule time for staff to use data in a formative manner, collaborate with colleagues, and develop instructional plans for increased student achievement.
- Objective Use data to target needs, develop interventions, monitor and communicate student progress and adapt instructional practice.

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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 designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints under Title IX (sex discrimination and sexual harassment) and all other non-discrimination policies:

**Mrs. Jodi Morgan**  
406.827.3561

**206 Haley Ave W Thompson Falls, MT 59873**  
jmorgan@tfalls.org

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**VIII. Letter of Understanding, Parent Permission**

**IX. School – Parent Compact**

**Insert  
Back Cover  
Attachment  
Attachment**

## 1. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Superintendent	Mr. Edward 'Bud' Scully
Board of Trustees	Mrs. Sandra Muster, Chairperson Mrs. Jeneese Baxter Mr. Ryan Fields Mr. Jake Helvey Mrs. Mona Jacobson
District Clerk	Mrs. Stacy Milner
Elementary Principal	Mr. Len Dorscher
Co-op Special Education Director	Mrs. Taylor Salmi
Co-op Psychologist	Ms. Pamela Gannon Mrs. Nievencitas McGuire

### STAFF

Kindergarten	Mrs. Angelene Rackham Mrs. Lacey Scharfe
Grade 1	Mrs. Julie Detlaff Mrs. Lindsey Franklin
Grade 2	Mrs. Amy Laws Ms. Kim Milnor
Grade 3	Ms. Lynette Elliott Mrs. Sierra Lilly
Grade 4	Mrs. Amy Gilbert Mrs. Sarah Naegeli
Grade 5	Mr. Cory Kump Mrs. Rebecka Sawyer
Grade 6	Mrs. Kaela Burgess Ms. Jessica Lewis
Special Education	Mrs. Chris Kelly Mrs. Erin Traver
Counselor	Ms. Taylour Freed
Nurse	Mrs. Rebecca Beckman

Music	Mrs. Lisa Mickelson
Librarian	Mrs. Robin Miller
Physical Education	Mrs. Karli Thomas
Band	Mrs. Brittany Nichols
Technology Coordinator	Mr. Ray Buchanan
Webmaster	Mrs. Diane Hedahl
Paraprofessionals	Mrs. Melissa Adams Mrs. Therese Bershee Mrs. Shannon Brown Mrs. Mariah Davis Mrs. Erica Franck Ms. Tiana Goatley Ms. Penny Hopkins Mrs. Susan Jacobson Ms. Natausha Jones Mrs. Sandra Kazmierczak Mrs. Sherri Koskela Ms. Emily Moore Mrs. Charlene Ribeiro Mrs. Lisa Ruen Ms. Trena Sanders Mrs. Lacey Scharfe Ms. Desirea Styger Ms. Madison Toyias Mrs. Shawni Vaught
Elementary Secretary	Mrs. Diane Hedahl
Co-op Special Education Secretary	Ms. Jennifer McPherson
Lunch Clerk	Mrs. Lindy Cooper
Head Cook	Mrs. Samie Helvey
Cook	Mrs. Patti Lyght
Servers	Mrs. Pam Brophy Mr. Luis Garcia Ms. Haley Johnson
District Maintenance	Mr. Trent Lyght Mr. Josh Schmidt
Custodians	Mrs. Lisa Anderson Mr. Trent Lyght
Bus Service	Mosher Transportation

## 2. CALENDARS, SCHEDULES, AND BUS INFORMATION

### 2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

#### AUGUST

19 **No School** – Staff Orientation  
20 **No School** – Teacher Development  
21 **No School** – OPEN HOUSE  
22 **No School** – Teacher PIR  
22 **No School** – OPEN HOUSE  
26 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS  
30 **No School** – Teacher PIR

#### JANUARY

6 SCHOOL RESUMES  
10 Early out: 2:05PM  
16 END OF 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER  
17 **No School** – Teacher PIR  
24 Early out: 2:05PM  
31 Early out: 2:05PM

#### SEPTEMBER

2 **No School** – Labor Day Weekend  
6 Early out: 2:05PM  
13 Early out: 2:05PM  
20 Early out: 2:05PM  
27 **No School** – Teacher Development

#### FEBRUARY

7 Early out: 2:05PM  
14 Early out: 2:05PM  
16 Early out: 2:05PM  
21 **No School** - Vacation  
28 **No School** - Vacation

#### OCTOBER

4 Early out: 2:05PM  
10 Picture Day by Legacy Photography  
11 Early out: 2:05PM  
17-18 **No School** – Teacher Convention  
25 Early out: 2:05PM  
25 END OF 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER

#### MARCH

7 Early out: 2:05PM  
14 **No School** – Vacation  
17-21 Missoula Children’s Theater  
21 Early out: 2:05PM  
21 END OF 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER  
28 Early out: 2:05PM

#### NOVEMBER

1 **No School** – Teacher Development  
5 Parent/Teacher Conferences 5-8PM  
7 Parent/Teacher Conferences 5-8PM  
8 Early out: 2:05PM  
15 Early out: 2:05PM  
22 Early out: 2:05PM  
27-29 **No School** – Thanksgiving Vacation

#### APRIL

4 Early out: 2:05PM  
11 Early out: 2:05PM  
28 Early out: 2:05PM  
21-25 **No School** – Spring Break

#### DECEMBER

6 Early out: 2:05PM  
11 Early out: 2:05PM  
16 K-8 Christmas Concert 6:30PM  
20 Early out: 2:05PM  
23-31 **No School** – Winter Break

#### MAY

2 Early out: 2:05PM  
9 Early out: 2:05PM  
16 Early out: 2:05PM  
23 Early out: 2:05PM  
26 **No School** – Memorial Day  
30 Early out: 2:05PM  
31 High School Graduation

#### JANUARY

1-3 **No School** – Winter Break

#### JUNE

3 8<sup>TH</sup> Grade Promotion Parade  
6 END OF 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER  
6 11:00AM Dismissal



## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:55	Playground supervision begins
7:55	Cafeteria opens for breakfast
8:10	1 <sup>st</sup> bell rings – classes begin
8:15	Tardy bell rings
9:45-10:00	Morning recess – Grade 3
10:00-10:15	Morning recess – Grade 1-2
10:15-10:30	Morning recess – Grade K
11:00-11:35	Grades 1-2 Lunch / Recess
11:15-11:50	Grade K Lunch / Recess
11:30-12:05	Grades 3-4 Lunch / Recess
11:40-12:15	Grades 5-6 Lunch / Recess
1:30-1:45	Grade K Recess
1:45-2:00	Grade 2 Recess
2:05	Early dismissal time – EVERY Friday
3:15	Regular dismissal time – K – 6

## **ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE**

**Students not riding the bus should not arrive at school before 7:55 AM.** Supervision of students begins at 7:55 AM. Students are expected to leave immediately upon dismissal and may return after 4:00 PM. School staff will notify parents if there is a need to detain a student after school. Parents should properly instruct their children as to the safest means of walking or biking along any roadway. Students being picked up by parents should remain in a prearranged location so they can be located easily.

## **BUSES**

The Thompson Falls School District contracts its bus services to a private company. If you need information about route schedules, please call John Mosher at 406.827.4794 or 406.827.4911.

## **3. PARENT – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

### **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;
- provide transcript and behavior 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. The District will enroll any non-resident student required to be admitted under MCA §20-5-321.

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

### **Homeless Students**

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

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

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

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

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services, educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and

talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

### **Students in Foster Care**

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability under Title I for the duration of their time in foster care. “Foster care” means “24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility”. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive home.

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

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

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

### **COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

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

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

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

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

Students shall use the Section 504 Grievance Procedure to address complaints/ concerns about disability determination. A copy of the Section 504 Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website [www.thompsonfalls.net/policies](http://www.thompsonfalls.net/policies) or any District or school office or by contacting Mr. Len Dorscher.

### **BULLETINS AND NOTES TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Notes brought to school by your child are to be given to the classroom teacher or elementary office. Remember to notify the elementary office of any upcoming absences at least three days in advance.

Please send a note with your child if there is a change in home route including bus, car pool arrangements, etc. ***Remember, we do not release children from school into the charge of any adult who is not that child's parent or guardian, unless we receive a phone call or note from the parent or guardian authorizing us to do so.***

**Important information is sent home on Thursdays.** Encourage your child to be responsible for delivery of messages and materials to and from school. Take time to read the notes, newsletters, and student work. If a note requires a signature, please be sure that you know what you are signing and return promptly.

### **INFINITE CAMPUS PORTAL**

Infinite Campus is a web-based dynamic resource which allows us to combine much of our information into one system. The Infinite Campus Portal is a communication tool for parents / guardians, students, and the school to use to share pertinent information about our students' educational progress. The Campus Portal connects parents / guardians to student data and food service information online, anytime, from anywhere there is internet access. Our system also gives our district the ability to send general or emergency messages via e-mail, phone, and text to you and/or your contacts of choice. Messenger with Voice provides you with:

- Emergency notification of school closures, delays, etc.
- General messages regarding attendance, behavior, assignments, low lunch account balances and more

- Preferred communication allows you to set your preferences to indicate how you would like to receive general and emergency messages with voice, text, and email options.

## **PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students are permitted to use the school phone for an emergency or **if the teacher has given permission for a legitimate reason**. Calls to request permission to say with a friend, etc. will not be allowed. Please make all after school arrangements before sending the child to school.



**Student cell phones and other electronic devices must be off and put away at all times during the school day, unless the classroom teacher has given permission for the student to use it. Failure to comply will result in the device being kept in the office until after school at which point the student may pick it up. A second offense of the phone/electronic device rule will result in the device being kept at the office until a parent can pick it up.**

## **CONFERENCES**

One Parent-Teacher Conference will occur at the end of the first quarter in November. However, conferences are encouraged at any time throughout the year. Parents may request a conference on their child's progress or to communicate events at home that may impact their child's learning or behavior. This may be done by phone or by coming to school. Teachers can be reached at school between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM daily.

## **ACADEMIC SUCCESS & PROGRESS REPORTS**

A **report card** is sent home for each child four times a year. Report cards are an overview of your child's performance for the prior quarter. Quarterly writing assessment results will be included with report cards. Mid-term reports may be sent home when students experience academic and/or behavioral difficulties.

## **RETENTION**

Repeating a grade may be reasonable and an appropriate replacement when there is a good chance that retention will result in improving academic performance in the subsequent years of that student's school career. Although the probability of a successful retention is an important consideration, students will not be promoted solely for social or emotional reasons.

When a child is considered for retention, a child assistance team that includes the parents, counselor, principal, special education teacher or other specialist, and the classroom teacher will reach a team decision regarding retention or promotion. Board policy allows the final decision regarding retention to be made by the principal. Among those factors considered in making the decision are grade level, attendance, emotional and social stability, chronological age, language development, and academic skills. Positive

parental attitude toward retention or promotion is an important ingredient for success, but parental opposition by itself will not reverse a decision for or against retention made by the child assistance team. A plan for retention or promotion to help support the student and ensure success will be developed for said students. Parents will be involved as a critical part of the plan.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

The Thompson Falls School District provides support personnel and special services to help the classroom teacher and/or the individual student. Children with special needs may be found in any school classroom. Teachers are well trained and capable of helping most children in the classroom, but they need support and assistance of Special Education programs in teaching children with learning disabilities, speech and hearing impairments, and other learning handicaps.

Students may refer themselves to special services, or may be referred by parents, school administrators, or teachers. Parents will be informed as to the progress of the referral and will become part of the child study team if such should be deemed necessary. Decisions regarding placement of a student into a particular program are determined by the recommendations of the evaluation team, including the classroom teacher(s), and state and federal laws. Decisions regarding individual educational goals and objectives for the child are determined by the IEP team of which the parent is also a member.

## **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 principal is the 504 Coordinator.

## **TITLE I**

Thompson Falls Public Schools are designated Schoolwide Title I schools. A Schoolwide Program is a strategy for implementing comprehensive school change. A Schoolwide Program permits a high poverty school (40% or more) to use funds from Title I, Part A and other federal education program funds and resources with regular and state resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all the students. We want input from parents of the Title I students. If you have further questions about Schoolwide Title I, please contact Len Dorscher, K-8 Principal, at the elementary office at 406.827.3592.

## VISITING SCHOOL

When picking up students after school, parents are asked to meet students outside. Too many visitors inside at the end of the school day causes hallway congestion and raises privacy concerns at the main office. All visitors must register in the elementary office and obtain a visitor's pass prior to visiting any area of our campus. Visitors to classrooms during instructional time require prior administrator approval.



## HOMEWORK

All students in grades 3-6 will have an assignment notebook detailing the day's assignments. Assignment notebooks should be signed by teacher and parent daily. Students with incomplete assignments may be kept after school. A 24-hour notice will be given to parents to give them time to make transportation arrangements. Doctor appointments will be accepted as a reason to delay after school time. Failure to stay may result in result in an out-of-school suspension.

## ELEMENTARY WEBSITE

Activities, lunch menu, permission forms, and pictures are available on the school website. The website may be accessed at [fes.thompsonfalls.net](http://fes.thompsonfalls.net). Teachers have email accounts at school which are available on the District website as another means of communication.

## PARKING



When picking up and dropping off students:

The streets directly above (**3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**) and below (**Haley Street**), our campus, are designated for pickup and/or drop off.



Please **DO NOT drive up Columbia, north of Haley Avenue**, for pick up and/or drop off. This is a serious safety issue.



Please park with the direction of traffic when dropping off and/or picking up students. **DO NOT park on the wrong side of the street.**



Please **DO NOT drive on the maintenance road** through the campus.



Please honor crosswalks.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Instruction (2320) – Field Trips, Excursions, and Outdoor Education

The Board recognizes that field trips, when used as a device for teaching and learning integral to the curriculum, are an educationally sound and important ingredient in the instructional program of the schools. Such trips can supplement and enrich classroom procedures by providing learning experiences in an environment beyond the classroom.

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

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

## **4. ATTENDANCE, CONDUCT, AND DISCIPLINE**

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absences and tardiness. Specific rules and regulations regarding attendance and tardies are as follows:

For the purpose of this policy “truant” or “truancy” means non-attendance, without excuse, for all or any part of a school day equivalent to the length of one class period of a child required to attend a school under §20-5-103, MCA. “Habitual truancy” means recorded unexcused absences of 9 or more days or 54 or more parts of a day, whichever is less, in one (1) school year.

Thompson Falls School District has appointed its Building Level Administrators as the attendance officers of their buildings. The attendance officer shall have the powers and duties as stated in law.

### **ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

A telephone call or a note from either parent or guardian is necessary when a student is absent or late for any reason. Notes must be given immediately to the school secretary.

**When a student arrives late, the student is required to report directly to class upon being issued a tardy slip from the office.** All absences and tardies will be recorded on the report card.

Parents should **contact the office** to arrange for make-up work when a student is **absent more than two consecutive days**. Students may have the number of days absent plus one additional day to make up work for excused absences. Make-up work for unexcused absences shall be assigned at the teacher’s discretion. **Teachers will try to send make-up work with a student leaving mid-day for an illness, but they may require until**



**the end of the day to gather all assignments. Teachers may require 24 hours from request to gather assignments for absences of more than one day.**

## **ATTENDANCE AND TARDY MATRIX**

### **THOMPSON FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATRIX**

<b>Number of Absences</b>	<b>Action</b>
Every absence	Documented by school and call home from office if parent has not notified the school
10 total yearly absences	Letter to parent/guardian from principal with copy going in student's file and given to counselor. Parent/guardian will be contacted for a meeting to discuss the cause of excessive absences and to develop an attendance plan.
20 total yearly absences	Student is considered chronically absent. Documentation in student's file. Documentation is submitted to County Superintendent

### **THOMPSON FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TARDY MATRIX**

<b>Number of Tardies</b>	<b>Action</b>
Every tardy	Documented by school and student sent to class with tardy slip
10 total yearly tardies	Letter to parent/guardian from principal with copy going into student's file and given to counselor. Parent/guardian will be contacted for a meeting to discuss the cause of excessive tardies and to develop an attendance plan.
20 total yearly tardies	Student is considered chronically tardy. Documentation in student's file. Documentation is submitted to County Superintendent.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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

### **Activities or Pre-planned Absences**

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

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

### **Excused Absences**

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

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

### **Human Sexuality Instruction Absences**

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

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

## **DISTRICT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS, RULES, AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

A teacher or principal has the authority to hold a student to strict accountability for disorderly conduct in school, on the way to or from school, or during intermission or recess. The school staff establishes a set of rules and expectations that are more general in nature as opposed to being specific. What is fair therefore, may not necessarily be equal. Each student and situation will be considered unique and natural consequences will be employed to encourage a sense of responsibility. Students and parents are notified that violations will invite consequences that are based upon several factors, including, but not limited to the severity of the act, the situation in which it occurred, the frequency of the behavior problem, and the needs of the child.

The "9 Essential Skills" of Love and Logic and District Policy 2000, District Mission/Belief Statements, will be used as guidelines for district staff in working with students. Also, Love and Logic principles empower the teacher with input from students and parents about the process for managing student misbehavior. "Recovery Area" should be a common, non-disciplinary term that is used in grades K-12, outside the office area. Maintaining excellent communication between the teacher and the parent is a central part of the success of Love and Logic. Misbehavior that is seen by the teacher and/or other staff that requires the student to be sent to the office mean that the parent should be contacted by the person who observed the misbehavior unless cleared by the building level administrator. Parents will be notified of any disciplinary referral to the principal. Students should be seeing teacher consequences and not necessarily office consequences for most misbehavior. Student being sent to the office should result in a meeting between the referring staff person, the student, and the administrator.

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

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

The Board of Trustees has established a set of district expectations dealing with student safety, such as violence, drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, vaper products, alternative

nicotine products, bullying, etc. All student will be treated as individuals. In the event that the actions of the staff appear to be unfair, the student/parent need only to visit with the staff member involved and present his/her case. In the event that the case has merit, the consequence will be adjusted accordingly. This is the school's written guarantee that the right of due process will be observed and respected at school. (See District Policy 1700 for Uniform Complaint Procedures)

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

- Using, possessing, under the influence of, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcohol, tobacco, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, illegal drugs, marijuana, or controlled substances, look-alike drugs, and drug paraphernalia products. If a student tests positive for drugs while in attendance at school or at a school activity then the student will be treated the same as if the drug was taken at school or at the school activity.
- Possessing a weapon in a school building or on the school grounds.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person's property.
- Bullying (See District Policy 3225 on Bullying)

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

### **GUN-FREE SCHOOLS / FIREARMS**

A student, who uses, possesses, controls, or transfers a firearm, or any object that can reasonably be considered, or looks like, a firearm, on school grounds or in a school building shall be expelled for a definite period of time of at least one (1) calendar year. The Board, however, may authorize the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis. The building administrator shall notify the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings or possesses a firearm at school.

An administrator may immediately suspend a student if there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school, prior to any board hearing on a recommendation for expulsion. If there is a recommendation to expel a student for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, the trustees shall notify the adult student, or parent/guardian of a minor student, in a clear and timely manner that the student may waive his or her privacy right by requesting the hearing be held in public and may invite other individuals to attend the hearing. At a due process hearing on the recommendation for expulsion due to a student bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, there shall be a presentation of a summary of the information leading to the allegations and an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations. The Board of Trustees is permitted to expel a student only when the trustees determine that the student knowingly (had knowledge of the facts) brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

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

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

If a student violating this policy is identified as disabled, either under the IDEA or Section 504, lawful procedures for changes in placement must be followed.

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

### **Possession of a Weapon in a School Building or on School Grounds**

Any person who possesses, carries, or stores a weapon in a school building or on school grounds, except as provided below, shall be referred to law enforcement for immediate prosecution, as well as face disciplinary action by the District. In addition, a parent or guardian of any minor violating this policy shall also be referred for possible prosecution, on the grounds of allowing the minor to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building.

For the purposes of this section only, the following terms are defined: "school building" shall be defined as all buildings owned or leased by a local school district that are used for instruction or for student activities; "weapon" shall be defined as any type of firearm, a knife with a blade for (4) or more inches in length, a sword, a straight razor, a throwing star, nun-chucks, firecrackers, or brass or other metal knuckles.

The Board may grant persons and entities advance permission to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building. All persons who wish to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building shall present this request to the Board in a regular meeting. It is solely within the Board's discretion whether to allow a person to possess, carry or store a weapon in a school building.

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

- Involved in any activity that constitutes disorderly conduct, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or any disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism, tardies, and leaving the school grounds without obtaining permission at the school office.
- Cell phones cannot be taken in the locker room / bathroom. Violators will have the device taken from them and kept in the office until a parent picks it up. Repeat offenders will be considered defiant and will be treated accordingly.
- Not dressing appropriately as outlined in building level handbook.

- The forging of an 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.

## **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

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

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

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

## **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.

- The student may choose to utilize legal counsel at his/her own expense, without prejudice.
- The student may present witnesses.

- The student or his/her counsel may ask questions of witnesses presented by the school district administration or its counsel.
- The administration also has the right to cross examine witnesses and to be advised by legal counsel.
- The burden of proof of the offense lies with the school district. District Policy 3300

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

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.

### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

Each teacher, and any other school personnel when students are under his/her charge, is authorized to impose any disciplinary measure, other than suspension, or expulsion, corporal punishment or in-school suspension, which is appropriate and in accordance with the policies and rules on student discipline. Teachers may remove defiant students from a classroom to be sent home for recovery for the remainder of a period for disruptive behavior that is serious enough to hinder the teaching process.

### **BULLYING / HARRASSMENT / INTIMIDATION / HAZING**

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

### **Definitions**

- “Third parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors, or others engaged in District business, such as employees of businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the District and others not directly subject to District control at inter-District athletic competitions or other school events.
- “District” includes District facilities, District premises, and non-District property if the student or employee is at any District-sponsored, District approved, or District-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events, where students are under the control of the District or where the employee is engaged in District business.

- “Hazing” includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment, including, but not limited to, forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or permits another to be subject to earing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed, or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.
- “Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written, or physical nature, on the basis of age, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, ancestry, disability, or marital status.
- “Intimidation” includes but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper with, substantially damage or interfere with another’s property, cause substantial inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact, or inflict serious physical injury, on the basis of age, race religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, ancestry, disability, or marital status.
- “Bullying” happens when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power over and over again. Power may be physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or another resource.

### **Reporting**

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any student, employee, or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the building principal or the District Superintendent. A student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor, who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate District official. Complaints against the Superintendent or District Administrator shall be filed with the Board.

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

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

### **Responsibilities**

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



## **Consequences**

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Third parties whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the District Administrator or the Board. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

## **Retaliation and Reprisal**

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

## **ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

The following general and peer abuse behaviors are to be used as a guide. All discipline issues will be handled on a case by case basis which is a belief held by Love and Logic.

### **General Behaviors**

**Engaging in any (yet not limited to) of the following general behaviors may lead to building level consequences:**

- Involved in any activity that constitutes disorderly conduct, an interference with school purposes of an educational function, or any disruptive activity.
- Leaving school grounds without obtaining permission at the school office
- Using a skateboard on school grounds during the school day or during school activities
- Using an electronic device in the classroom or other areas of the school without permission
- Cell phone violations, (see page 10)
- Not dressing appropriately as outlined in building level handbooks
- General classroom disruptions
- Insubordination
- Computer / internet violations

### **Peer Abuse**

**Engaging in any (yet not limited to) of the following per abuse behaviors may lead to building level consequences:**

- Teasing and insults about possessions, clothes, looks, etc.
- False reporting of others behaviors
- Name calling, mean looks, excluding
- Hiding or taking items from others
- Making threatening or insulting gestures / pictures
- Pushing, shoving, poking, book checking, blocking someone's path, etc.

- Gossiping, starting / spreading rumors

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

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

### **Possible Consequences / Staff Responses**

Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

- Expulsion
- Suspension
- Detention, including Saturdays
- Clean-up duty
- Student's grade (for unexcused absence, suspension)
- Loss of student privileges
- Recess and/or lunch detention
- After school detention
- Loss of bus privileges
- Notification of juvenile authorities and/or police / school resource officer
- Restitution for damages to school property
- Conference held with parent and student to develop a plan to correct the behavior
- Teacher and/or student and/or parent contact
- Referral to office
- Referral to the school guidance counselor to help the student develop a plan to correct the problem

The following behavior rubrics are to be used as a guide as each student will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Thompson Falls K-8 Bullying Level Behaviors

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

## Thompson Falls K-8 General Behaviors

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

## CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT OUR SCHOOL

### Staff:

Classroom / school rules and expected behaviors will be posted, taught, and modeled by classroom teachers with reviews held throughout the year. Classroom teachers will teach social skills by incorporating the concepts of Kelso's Choices, and Love and Logic programs. Teachers will continue to reinforce skills and address student concerns regarding behavior issues.

Specific expectations for appropriate safe play on equipment, and with their peers and rules of games will be taught at the beginning of the year by teachers and reviewed throughout the year. The playground supervisor may enforce timeout, removal from the playground, or referral to office for violence, vulgar language or disrespect of authority.

Staff will keep a record of student behavior and academics in our school database system. A copy is always available to parents / guardians upon request.

### **Staff will consider the following when working with students to decide consequences / responses:**

- Board policy
- Elementary handbook
- The posted classroom rules
- Input from the classroom teacher(s)
- Age and behavior of the student
- Circumstances and history of the student / incident

The District will support short term suspensions and in some cases an expulsion of a student when the safety of its students and staff are at risk by a student. **It is Board Policy that it will be the student's choice as to whether the work missed during an out of school suspension will be counted for credit.** This decision by the student must be made prior to serving the out-of-school suspension. When school counseling is used as part of a student consequence, this counseling will occur either before school, during lunch, or after school.

**If students leave the school grounds without permission, school personnel are no longer responsible for their safety. Parents will be called and law enforcement will be called.**

### **Recovery:**

The term "recovery" as used in Thompson Falls Public Schools means that an individual is out of control and needs to take time to be calm and ready to comply with the role of being a student. **Recovery may include time at home** and the student may return when he/she is under control. Recovery is a non-disciplinary intervention designed to get the student back into the classroom as soon as possible.

**Students:**

Every student has a right to a safe environment where learning can take place. Each student is expected to do his/her share to make school a pleasant place to learn by respecting others and respecting property.

Additional behavior expectations of each student include by are not limited to:

- Imitation of drug use will receive the same consequences as actual drug use
- Use of or possession of a laser pen is not allowed
- Pulling the fire alarm is against school rules
- School computers are not to be used for student email or for “chatting” unless special permission is given by the classroom teacher
- Students are not allowed on school property while under suspension
- Life threatening remarks will not be tolerated in either a written or verbal manner. The district curriculum will not assign nor accept specific life threatening remarks or statements in a “real context” as part of the educational process. This means that students will not be allowed to include these types of statements in their written or verbal school assignments nor may a student bring this type of material on the school grounds.
- The playground is opened at 7:55 AM as a gathering place for students when they arrive at school. Because of the number of children, their lunch boxes and book bags, and the short period of time, this is not considered a recess time with games and recess equipment. Students walking to school are urged to arrive only in time for the assembling bell or breakfast.
- Recess time is scheduled to give students an opportunity to unwind from academic rigor, to exercise to stimulate the flow of oxygen, and to develop social skills. Behavior expectations, rules, consequences, and actions apply to recess time.

**Visitors:**

Any person, including an adult, who behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner during school or at an athletic or co-curricular event may be removed from school and/or ejected from the event. This person may also be denied access to school property for up to a year, after a Board hearing. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using vulgar or obscene language or gestures;
- Possessing or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance;
- Possessing a weapon;
- Fighting or otherwise striking or threatening another person;
- Failing to obey the instructions of a security officer or school district employee; and
- Engaging in any activity that is illegal or disruptive.

The Superintendent may seek to deny future access to school property to any person. (Board Policy 4315)

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

To maintain order and security in the schools, school authorities are authorized to conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment (such as lockers and desks) as well as of students and their personal effects. School authorities may search the student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession, when there is reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that the particular student has violated or is violating the law or the District's student conduct rules. If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the District's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

## **FAN BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES AT EVENTS FOR THOMPSON FALLS SCHOOL GYM / HALLWAYS**

- Always display positive behavior and sportsmanship
- Pre-3<sup>rd</sup> graders need a parent at event or they will not be allowed on campus
- Pre-K need to be with parent at all times during the event
- Designated hallway / foyer to be used for acceptable eating / visiting only
- Keep all areas neat and use available garbage cans
- Use common sense on when to leave gym area during game / match

Individuals that do not comply with these rules will be required to leave the premises.

## **ELIGIBILITY AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Academics come before student activities.**

Students should be passing all classes to participate in extracurricular activities and demonstrate appropriate behavior. If assigned after school academic time for late assignments, academic time should be observed before attending extracurricular activities. Students who receive suspensions during duration of extracurricular activity season may be removed from the extracurricular activity.

Other students who plan on missing school time for activities such as ski trips, or who are representing this school district in extra-curricular activities such as Junior High sports, the county spelling bee, state geography contest, etc. must be passing all classes the Friday prior to the day that students will be gone from school. The nature of the activity and the supervisor / student ratio may require that students demonstrate appropriate behavior prior to the activity in order to participate in it. Any exceptions to this section can only be granted by the building level administrator. When sixth grade students are participating in Junior High sports, they will follow the Junior High guidelines.

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 Elementary School subject to the student's eligibility as set out by school administration. 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.

## **BUS DISCIPLINE**

Bus service can be provided in a safe manner only with the cooperation of all students. The school district expects appropriate behavior at all times. Instances when a child does not conduct themselves properly are to be brought to the attention of the building principal by the bus driver for disciplinary action.

Children who become a serious disciplinary problem on the bus may have their riding privileges suspended by the principal. Parents of children involved will be notified **before**



**students are eliminated from riding the bus.** If this occurs, it will then become the parents responsibility to provide for the safe transportation of their student to and from school. Absences during bus suspension will be unexcused and subject to unexcused absence policy.

Inappropriate bus behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- \* Tripping
- \* Fighting
- \* Shoving
- \* Spitting
- \* Chewing gum
- \* Disrespectful to Driver
- \* Refusal to obey Driver
- \* Failure to remain seated
- \* Hanging out of window
- \* Eating / drinking pop
- \* Shouting offensive remarks
- \* Tampering with equipment
- \* Exhibiting bullying behavior
- \* Destruction of property
- \* Throwing objects from bus

### **Bus Referral Consequences (yearly)**

1 <sup>st</sup> Referral	Conference with student and parent by school and/or bus driver
2 <sup>nd</sup> Referral	1 Day Bus Suspension
3 <sup>rd</sup> Referral	3 Day Bus Suspension
4 <sup>th</sup> Referral	1 Week Bus Suspension
5 <sup>th</sup> Referral	Bus Suspension For Remainder of School Year

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

### **BOOKS AND FINES**

Library books are purchased for student use. Students are encouraged to take books home and read them as well as use them in school. They should handle them with special care and return them promptly so others can use them.

Textbooks are checked out to the students. Charges will be assessed for unduly damaged or lost books. Report cards and school records will be held until all assessed charges are paid.

### **DRESS REGULATIONS**

Parents and students are responsible for student dress and appearance while attending school. Good grooming and personal hygiene are part of the students' education. Students are required to wear shoes at school. Students should not wear hats in the school building. Spandex-type shorts are not permitted unless other shorts are worn over them. **Students should wear shorts or skirts that come to their fingertips when standing straight, with hands at their side.** Students will not be allowed to wear any clothing displaying drugs, marijuana, alcohol or tobacco, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, expressing obscenities; displaying pornography / unlawful violence, exposing one's abdomen / buttocks, or improperly exposing one's chest or undergarments. **Tube tops, spaghetti straps and bandanas as head gear are not allowed.**

The administration and staff have the responsibility and right to judge individual cases as being in violation of these regulations. A student who violates the dress code will be asked to correct the situation with no penalty. Parents may be called to bring a change of clothing. The student may be asked to wear clothing provided by the school until parents arrive. If the student appears to be defiant in following this rule after several occurrences, then the student will be treated as one who constitutes open defiance of authority. This will result in discipline, which may include a suspension from school.

Students should have all coats, gloves, and other items of clothing clearly marked so that they can be identified. A **Lost and Found** is provided to assist students and parents in finding lost articles.

If at all possible, please send a pair of tennis shoes to school for Physical Education class. Student can perform much better with this type of shoe as well as have protection in the event of a fire drill. For health and safety reasons student must wear shoes at all times.

### **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 Elementary 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 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.

### **TOYS / ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME**

Items brought to school will be kept in student's backpack. The school will not be responsible for loss or breakage of any items brought to school. Toys of any kind, to include personal electronic devices should not be brought to school unless a teacher has

given special permission through a note or a letter sent home. Toy knives, toy guns, or other articles that tend to incite dangerous play are not allowed and will be confiscated, and the student will be subject to discipline. Trading cards of any kind are not permitted at school for any reason.

### **BICYCLES**

Students are permitted to ride bikes to school. Bikes are to be parked when students arrive at school, and at no time during 7:45 AM to 3:30 PM are bikes to be ridden on the school grounds or sidewalks. Helmets are recommended for all students who ride bikes to school as well as locks for their bicycles.

### **SKATEBOARDS**

Skateboards are not allowed to be used on school grounds from 7:45 AM to 3:30 PM or during after school activities during the school year.

## **V. STUDENTS HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL BEING**

### **COLD WEATHER**

Students are required to go outside for recess. Children need time out of the classroom. Parents are urged to dress children in warm clothing on cold and wet mornings. **If temperatures or wind chill factor is below zero (0) degrees, recess will be inside.**



### **ACCIDENTS**

The school does not carry accident insurance for students for injuries. Parents who wish to purchase coverage may do so by contacting the elementary office for information. A local company makes insurance available at a reasonable price and the school does not receive any compensation from the insurance company.

### **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.

## **STAFF**

All staff will wear district-supplied yellow safety vests to be easily identifiable by students and the public during outdoor duties / activities such as recess, bus duty, off campus field trips or class activities of any kind.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION**

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

## **DRILLS**

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

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION**

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

## **PARTIES**

Teacher, parent volunteers, and students make arrangements for parties. Parents may take students home during classroom parties if they do not want their student to participate.

Parents may bring treats for the class on student's birthdays to be shared at the end of the school day. If you wish to be a room parent and help with the three scheduled parties, please let your student's teacher know.

## **ANIMALS**

We ask parents to help in discouraging students from bringing family or neighbors' pets to school. Not only is there the possibility of students being harmed (by biting dogs, etc.), but the animals often create disruptions. Parents may bring animals to school only after making arrangements with the classroom teachers, *including consultation regarding allergies*. **Unfortunately, given the increase in allergies, classroom pets cannot be allowed.**

## **FOOD SERVICE**

Thompson Falls School District was notified at the end of May 2024, that all students in grades K through 12 would have access to free meals, both breakfast and lunch, for the entire 2024-25 School Year. As part of the "Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act", the new

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows high-need schools to serve free school meals to ALL students regardless of their household income. Milk may be purchased to drink with cold lunches [\$.65 per carton]. Parents will be notified upon 3 charges, and the administrator will be notified after 5 charges. The administrator has the power to extend the five (5) days based upon information received after talking with the parent about the charges. Students at the elementary will not be denied lunch. Questions about lunch prices and policies should be directed to the school lunch clerk. Pop is not allowed in the elementary lunchroom. Children will also be discouraged from sharing lunches.

Students with allergies involving food must have proper documentation in place with the office, nurse, and cafeteria in order for alternative foods to be served. Necessary documents can be obtained from the elementary office.

### **CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES**

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

- **FEVER** – exclude from school with re-entry 24 hours after fever has subsided
- **VOMITING** during the night – stay home the following day
- **STREP THROAT** – Symptoms are fever and sore throat. Treatment consists of antibiotics as prescribed by a physician. Child must remain out of school until 24 hours after medication is started.
- **PINKEYE** – (Conjunctivitis) is an inflammation of the thin, transparent outer tissue layer of the eyeball and the inner surface of the eyelids. The inflammation causes redness, tearing, and occasionally the formation of a pus discharge. The student may complain of “itching or burning” eyes. The most common causes are bacteria, viruses, and allergies. If your child wakes in the morning with eyes “crusted and matted”, you should have him/her checked by a physician before sending him/her to school. Treatment consists of antibiotic eye drops or ointment obtained from a physician. The child should remain out of school for 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- **MONO** – exclusion is not indicated for cases or exposed students.
- **HEAD LICE** – Obtain “Nix” or “RID” from the store and follow specific instructions for treatment. Be sure to fine comb hair after treatment. The best way to get all nits out is by hand. It is necessary that your child be “Nit-free” before returning to school. You will need a note from the school nurse, clinic nurse, county health nurse, or any qualified professional stating your child is “Nit-free”.
- **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 usually lasts 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 children 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 such as Tinactin or Lotrimin as prescribed by a physician. 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 child 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 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 child with scabies presents no immediate emergency and need not be kept home.
- **CHICKPOX** – 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 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. Aveeno or oatmeal baths may help with itching. Tylenol is recommended for fevers. 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 child does not need to stay out of school unless he/she has a fever. If the child 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. Usually, a pain and fever reducing medication like Tylenol is all that is needed. The rash may last a week or more and will appear worse when the child is exposed to heat, cold, or sunshine.
- **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)** – Symptoms include: cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, headache, new fatigue, nausea or vomiting, congestion or runny nose.

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

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**



Montana State Law mandates that each student meet established immunization requirements. You will be notified if your child is in need of one or more inoculations. Your cooperation in meeting these requirements is expected and appreciated. A list of required vaccinations can be found at each school's office or by contacting the district health professional. Except for those vaccinations required by law, the District will not discriminate against a student by denying or withholding educational opportunities based upon the student's vaccination status.

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

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a health care provider who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of any state or Canada to provide health care under Montana law, is authorized within the provider's scope of practice to administer immunizations to which the exemption applies, and has previously provided health care to the student seeking the exemption or has administered an immunization to which the student has had an adverse reaction. This certificate must indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances which contraindicate immunization. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records. For further information, see Policy 3110.

Persons who have any of the above exemptions may be excluded from school by health authorities during a disease outbreak. This exclusion will be in force until the excluded person no longer risks contracting or transmitting the disease. Forms are available at the local health department or school district.

## **ILLNESS AT SCHOOL**

Parents will be called, when children have a temperature or are vomiting at school, to come get their child. An emergency contact person and phone number must be listed on the registration form for the school to call if parents cannot be reached. Students should be well enough to be outside for recess before returning to school.

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

When a child is under the care of a physician and it is necessary to take medication during the school day, these procedures are to be followed:

1. The parent obtains the request form from the school office, local physician's office, or the elementary website, completes and signs the form which includes a waiver of school liability.
2. The parents will have the form completed by their physician.

3. The parents will send the completed form and the medicine in the original container. Parents will send only the required number of doses to the school and will keep the remainder of the medication at home.

This procedure is to be used for all medications including Tylenol, aspirin, cough drops, and inhalers. Please contact the school for appropriate forms. **Please do not send medication to school without going through the above procedures.**

All medication is kept in a locked cabinet in the school office. As medication is administered it is recorded on a medication form.

## **HEALTH SCREENING**

Our school is required to conduct health checks for head lice. Head lice are relatively easy to control when they are discovered early. Therefore, the school will conduct screening in September and January or as referrals are made by classroom teachers. If an outbreak in a particular classroom should occur, parents will be notified. All new students are screened within 10 days after enrollment.

Students in grades 5 and 6 will be screened for scoliosis. Notes will be sent to parents prior to the screening.

Vision screenings are done in the fall for grades K-6 on all new students entering, and as requested by the classroom teacher throughout the current school year. Parent notification or referrals will be sent home by the school nurse.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE SCHOOLS**

**Tobacco, Vapor Products, and Nicotine Free Environment for Students.** To carry out the goals of the District's health curriculum regarding the use of alcohol and drugs, including tobacco / vapor products / alternative nicotine products and marijuana and to promote the health and safety of all students and staff, the use and/or possession of tobacco or tobacco products, vapor products, or alternative nicotine products by students is not permitted on school property, in school vehicles, or at school sponsored activities.

The use of tobacco / vapor products in a public school building or on public school property is prohibited, including for non-student adults.

## **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 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 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 view of other students in the administration offices.

## **THOMPSON FALLS ELEMENTARY 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 Elementary School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal 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 Thompson Falls Elementary School to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school 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 or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of 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 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 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 Thompson Falls Elementary 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))
- The 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. § 1232c(g)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

**NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

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

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

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal

laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.

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

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

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

## To Our Students

You need a safe, respectful, and orderly environment to learn. In order to maintain that in our classrooms, teachers will personally deal with all violations of classroom rules by students. Your teachers expect that you will:

- 1. Treat others with respect.**
- 2. Your actions, dress, possessions, and so on, will not cause a problem for anyone else.**
- 3. If your actions, dress, possessions, and so on, cause a problem, you will be asked to solve that problem.**
- 4. If you cannot solve the problem, or choose not to, staff members will do something. What s/he decides to do will depend upon the situation and the person(s) involved. Staff members will use their best judgment based upon the information they have at the time.**
- 5. If the student and/or parents/guardians feel that the consequences are unfair, they can request a meeting with the principal.**

The meeting does not need to be formal. It is simply a time for concerned individuals to meet together and discuss the situation in question. In the event that the discussion provides 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 situation.

Each student and each situation will be handled as unique, with one exception. The Board of Trustees has established a set of district wide rules dealing with student safety, such as violence, drugs/alcohol/tobacco, bullying, etc. These rules carry prescribed penalties that apply to all students consistently.



## Letter of Understanding 2024-25 Student / Parent Handbook



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

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

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print full name)

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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

Phone       Text Message       Email at \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred Email Address

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

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**Thompson Falls School District 2  
School-Parent Compact**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

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

***School's Responsibility:***

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

***Parent's Responsibility:***

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

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

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

Name: Len Dorscher Title: Principal  
Telephone Number: (406) 827-3592 Email Address: [ldorscher@tfalls.org](mailto:ldorscher@tfalls.org)

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

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_