

HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL



Student & Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! Highlands Middle School is committed to cultivating a positive learning environment that is focused on student success. As we begin a new school year, our goal is to develop and foster a growth mindset through dedication and hard work. We strive to provide an environment in which students hold themselves to be Respectful, Accountable, Motivated, and Safe.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and parents with information regarding the academic and behavioral expectations for Highlands Middle School. Upon review of this handbook, please sign below and return it to the Middle School.

The teachers and staff at Highlands Middle School are here to support students with their academic, personal, and future goals. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns, and suggestions. We look forward to working with you and your children.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rebecca Bragan
Principal

I, _____ (Parent/Guardian Name—Please print), have read and understood

this student handbook for my student, _____ (Student Name—Please print).

I have clarified any questions with the teacher or building principal.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

DUE BY: SEPTEMBER 19, 2025

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HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Highlands School District is to create a quality, caring educational environment and to develop academic, vocational and social programs that will enable students to achieve their highest potential in personal growth; and that the family, the community, business and industry will share in the responsibility to prepare students to function as effective citizens in an ever-changing global community.

THE HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY

The Highlands School District is comprised of the municipalities of Fawn Township, Harrison Township, Brackenridge Borough, and Tarentum Borough. This area is approximately twenty-two square miles with a population of about 25,000. It is located in the northeast corner of Allegheny County along the Allegheny River, about 18 miles from Pittsburgh. The Route 28 Expressway provides easy access to the Greater Pittsburgh area. The immediate area contains major industries, including three primary research and developmental facilities. The four communities offer a mixture of urban and rural residential areas, and a variety of recreational, educational, shopping, and health care facilities. Residents are within commuting distance of central Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania colleges and universities, and a wide selection of business and technical schools.

ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

The Highlands School District is comprised of four school buildings and the Administrative Center. The Highlands High School houses students in grades 9 through 12, the Middle School houses students in grades 5 through 8, Highlands Elementary School houses students in grades 1 through 4, and Highlands Early Childhood Center houses students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten—total district enrollment approximately 2,500 students.

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

1500 Pacific Avenue
Natrona Heights, PA 15065
Phone: 724.226.2400
Fax: 724.226.8437

Dr. Monique Mawhinney	Superintendent
Dr. Cathleen Cubelic	Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Paul Paradise	Executive Director of Business Affairs
Dr. Catherine Russo	Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
Dr. Amber Dean	Director of Student Services
Dr. Rebecca Keenan	School Psychologist
Dr. Angela Kennedy	School Psychologist
Mrs. Carmen Corna	School District Attendance Officer
Ms. Stacey Waffensmith	Director of Food Services
Ms. Katie Jo Stobert	Director of Athletics and Transportation
Mrs. Jennifer Goldberg	Coordinator of Communications
Mr. Lee McIntire	School Police Officer
Dr. Stanley Whiteman	Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Mrs. Diane Faix	PIMS Coordinator
Mr. Jim Rounce	Director of Technology

HSD DISTRICT GOALS

Re-FRAMING THE FUTURE

Academic achievement is a priority for all students. The Highlands School District and Board of Directors established the following goals for the 2019-2024 school years that connect to student achievement.

1. Student Achievement and Growth
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Operational Efficiency
4. Safety and Security
5. Collaborative Community and Culture



SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT 2025-2026

Highlands Middle School and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement, and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards.

This school-parent compact is in effect during the school year 2025-2026.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Highlands Middle School will:

Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables students to meet the state's student academic achievement standards as follows:

- Provide engaging and motivating learning experiences through educational best practices and research-based strategies.
- Set high academic and classroom expectations.
- Promote collaboration between staff, administration, parents, and community stakeholders.
- Provide clear explanations of academic and classroom expectations to both students and parents.
- Use differentiation of instruction and research-based interventions through the use of progress monitoring and data collection.
- Encourage lifelong learning through parent involvement activities.
- Emphasize the respect and uniqueness of students and families.
- Enable students to become responsible citizens by providing opportunities for success.

Hold parent-teacher conferences during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.

- Parent conferences will be held yearly in November.

Provide parents with frequent reports on their children’s progress.

Specifically, the school will provide reports as follows:

- Title I teachers will prepare and send reports 3/x a year (beginning, middle, end).
- PSSA score reports will be mailed home to parents.
- STAR 360 and Progress Reports will be given to parents before Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- Classroom teachers will inform parents about quarterly interim progress reports and quarterly report cards.
- Parents of students moving into Tier III of the MTSS model will be invited to an MTSS Action Plan Meeting.
- Provide *PowerSchool* information to check student grades, attendance, and/or teacher comments.

Provide parents with reasonable access to staff. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents as follows:

- Back-to-School Night in September
- Parent/Teacher Conferences in November
- MTSS Meetings throughout the year as needed
- Learning Support and Speech IEP meetings throughout the year, as needed
- Individual parent conferences as needed
- Title I Night
- Title I/ PAC parent meetings/workshops
- Email

Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class, and to observe classroom activities (*clearances needed)

- Parents may observe classrooms by request
- Parents may volunteer to chaperone field trips*

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We, as parents, will support our child’s learning in the following ways:

- Encourage proper study habits, including quiet study time at home.
- Promote my child’s self-esteem by talking about school work and activities.
- Reinforce respect for self and others.
- Stay informed about my child’s progress by checking grades and attendance online, attending conferences, reviewing their folder/backpack daily, and communicating with the school as needed.

- Attend school events and/or volunteer to help in the classroom or at school activities.
- Monitor my child's screen time (TV, tablets, etc.) and help select worthwhile programs.
- Encourage proper hygiene.
- Follow the district dress code.
- Encourage daily attendance and provide written excuses when a child is absent.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We, as students, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the state's high standards. Specifically, we will:

- Complete work on time.
- Give to my parent/guardian all notices and information from my school every day.
- Work hard and challenge myself.
- Ask for help from my teachers, staff members, or parent/guardian when needed.
- Respect myself and others and take responsibility for my behavior by following all school/district rules daily.
- Discuss with my parent/guardian what we did in school during the day.
- Be prepared for school every day---book bag, Chromebook, pencil, etc.

Highlands Middle School will:

- Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's parental involvement policy in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Involve parents in the joint development of any school-wide program plan in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Hold PAC (Parent Advisory Council) meeting(s) to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I programs, and to explain the Title I requirements, and the right of parents to be involved in Title I programs.
- Provide information to parents in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon the request of parents with disabilities, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.
- Provide parents of participating children with information promptly about Title I programs that includes a description and explanation of the school's curriculum,

the forms of academic assessment used to measure children's progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

- At the request of parents, provide opportunities for suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children.
- Provide an individual student report about the performance of their child on the state assessment in Math and English Language Arts.

SECTION 1—SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF DIRECTORY

Grade 5 Brown	Grade 5 Gold
Math – Kevin Mason	Math – Shawn Bennis
ELA – Jill Aaron	ELA – Hannah Miller
Science – Scott Cale	Science – Jennifer Hartle
Social Studies – Mark Duncan	Social Studies – Jaime Mochanski
Grade 6 Brown	Grade 6 Gold
ELA – Kailey Swope	ELA- Lauren DeMaria
Science – Ron Dejidas	Science – Jenn Koprivnikar
Math – Josh Casey	Math – Mike Shannon
Social Studies – Shawn Hisiro	Social Studies – Eli Butler
Grade 7 Brown	Grade 7 Gold
Science – Natalie Cale	Science – Chris Resek
ELA – Paul Manno	ELA – Megan McKenna
Math – Tom Wesolowski	Math – Joe Bolla
Social Studies – Ben Wolford	Social Studies – Kala Lenart
Grade 8 Brown	Grade 8 Gold
Science – Jim Doran	Science – Wendy Hutchison

Math – Emily Reinsel	Math – John Radvan
Social Studies – Mike Foster	Social Studies – Andrew Murphy
ELA – Alyssa Binck	ELA – Kate Rizzo
Encore Team (Special Areas)	Encore Team (Special Areas)
Art – John Merolillo	Art – Regina Duckstein
Music – Renee Ludwig	Music – Lee Lynn
Health/PE – Kathy Black	Health/PE – Charles Morris
Health/PE – Melissa Billingsley	Tech. Ed. – Jacob Emminger
STEM/Computers – TBD	Library – Jen Kosior
Foreign Language - TBD	FACS - Justin Cook
Special Education Teachers	
Autistic Support – Amanda Coulter	MTSS Facilitators – Kylie Shields, Lindsey Woods, Kelly Schoepf, Mandy Simon
Life Skills Support – Bridgette Jodon	Gifted Support – Becky Mentecky
Learning Support – Leslie Phillips	Nurse – Aliza Zelina
Learning Support – Erin Conley	Speech – Angela Mosseso, Lindsay O’Donnell
Emotional Support – Brady Sherrieb	School Counselor 5th and 6th Grade – Julie Allman
Learning Support – Trish Beam	School Counselor 7th and 8th Grade – Julie Shankle
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	ADMINISTRATION

Building Secretary – Mrs. Karla Phillips	Principal – Dr. Rebecca Bragan
Guidance Secretary – Ms. Karen Barnwell	Assistant Principal – Mr. Matt Dunker
	Dean of Students – Mrs. Holly Paris

Regular Bell Schedule

2024-2025 Master Bell Schedule

Period	Fifth	Period	Sixth	Period	Seventh	Period	Eighth
HR 8:10-8:20	Home Room	HR 8:10-8:20	Homeroom	HR 8:10-8:20	Home Room	HR 8:10-8:20	Home Room
1 8:20- 9:00	Block one	1 8:20- 9:00	Block one	1 8:20- 9:00	Block one	1 8:20- 9:00	Specials
2 9:02- 9:42	Block One	2 9:02- 9:42	Block one	2 9:02- 9:42	Specials	2 9:02- 9:42	Block one
3 9:44-10:24	Specials	3 9:44-10:24	Block 2	3 9:44-10:24	Block one	3 9:44-10:24	Block One
Lunch 10:26- 10:56	Lunch	4 10:26-11:06	Block 2	4 10:26-11:06	Block 2	4 10:26-11:06	Specials
4 10:58- 11:38	Block 2	Lunch 11:08- 11:38	Lunch	5 11:08-11:48	Block 2	5 11:08-11:48	Block 2
5 11:40-12:20	Block 2	5 11:40-12:20	Specials	Lunch 11:50-12:20	Lunch	6 11:50-12:30	Block 2
6 12:22-1:02	Specials	6 12:22-1:02	Block 3	6 12:22-1:02	Block 3	Lunch 12:32-1:02	Lunch
7 1:04-1:44	Block 3	7 1:04-1:44	Specials	7 1:04-1:44	Block 3	7 1:04-1:44	Block 3
8 1:46-2:26	Block 3	8 1:46-2:26	Block 3	8 1:46-2:26	Specials	8 1:46-2:26	Block 3
Resource 2:28-2:58	Resource	Resource 2:28-2:58	Resource	Resource 2:28-2:58	Resource	Resource 2:28-2:58	Resource

Two-Hour Delay

Period	Fifth	Period	Sixth	Period	Seventh	Period	Eighth
HR	Homeroom	HR	Homeroom	HR	Homeroom	HR	Homeroom
10:10-10:20		10:10-10:20		10:10-10:20		10:10-10:20	
1	Block 1	1	Block 1	1	Block 1	1	Special 1
10:20-10:50		10:20-10:50		10:20-10:50		10:20-10:50	
Lunch	Lunch		Block 1		Block 1		Block 1
10:52-11:22		10:52-11:22		10:52-11:22		10:52-11:22	
3	Special 1	3	Lunch	3	Block 2	3	Block 1
11:24-11:54		11:24-11:54		11:24-11:54		11:24-11:54	
2	Block 1	2	Block 2	2	Lunch	2	Special 2
11:56-12:26		11:56-12:26		11:56-12:26		11:56-12:26	
4	Block 2	4	Block 2	4	Special 1	4	Lunch
12:28-12:58		12:28-12:58		12:28-12:58		12:28-12:58	
5	Block 2	5	Special 1	5	Block 2	5	Block 2
12:55-1:24		12:55-1:24		12:55-1:24		12:55-1:24	
6	Special 2	6	Block 3	6	Block 3	6	Block 2
1:26-1:56		1:26-1:56		1:26-1:56		1:26-1:56	
7	Block 3	7	Special 2	7	Block 3	7	Block 3
1:58-2:28		1:58-2:28		1:58-2:28		1:58-2:28	
8	Block 3	8	Block 3	8	Special 2	8	Block 3
2:30-2:58		2:30-2:58		2:30-2:58		2:30-2:58	

Period	Fifth	Period	Sixth	Period	Seventh	Period	Eighth
HR	Home Room	HR	Homeroom	HR	Home Room	HR	Home Room
8:10-8:20		8:10-8:20		8:10-8:20		8:10-8:20	
1	Block 1	1	Block 1	1	Block 1	1	Specials
8:20-8:42		8:20-8:42		8:20-8:42		8:20-8:42	
2	Block 1	2	Block 1	2	Specials	2	Block 1
8:44-9:06		8:44-9:06		8:44-9:06		8:44-9:06	
3	Specials	3	Block 2	3	Block 1	3	Block 1
9:08-9:30		9:08-9:30		9:08-9:30		9:08-9:30	
4	Block 2	4	Block 2	4	Block 2	4	Specials
9:32-9:54		9:32-9:54		9:32-9:54		9:32-9:54	
5	Block 2	5	Specials	5	Block 2	5	Block 2
9:56-10:18		9:56-10:18		9:56-10:18		9:56-10:18	
6	Specials	6	Block 3	6	Block 3	6	Block 2
10:20-10:42		10:20-10:42		10:20-10:42		10:20-10:42	
7	Block 3	7	Specials	7	Block 3	7	Block 3
10:44-11:06		10:44-11:06		10:44-11:06		10:44-11:06	
8	Block 3	8	Block 3	8	Specials	8	Block 3
11:08-11:30		11:08-11:30		11:08-11:30		11:08-11:30	
HALF DAY SCHEDULE							

School Breakfast and Lunch Program

Highlands will continue to provide FREE breakfast and FREE lunch for all enrolled students. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act was passed in 2010, qualifying schools for the CEP (Community Eligibility Provision). This allows all students to receive free breakfast and free lunch every school day. The goal of this program is to improve overall student health by offering nutritious and healthy food options daily. Highlands will follow HHKFA regulations by offering students whole grain-rich breads, low-fat, low-sodium, and lower-sugar foods. Students will also be offered a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.

My School Bucks

Students who pack their lunch and wish to purchase milk will have to pay \$0.65. The Board policy is that there is no charge; students will need to take a reimbursable meal or have money on their account. You can access student balances at:

<https://www.schoolcafe.com/HIGHLANDSSD>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Highlands will enforce the state's compulsory attendance laws to eliminate absenteeism. Parents can access their child's attendance by logging into the PowerSchool system at www.goldenrams.com.

ABSENCES

- It is not necessary to call the school when your child is absent. Feel free to communicate with your child's teachers about absences, but please understand that a phone call will not excuse the absences - we need written or email documentation for our records.
- A call will be made to all homes/families of students who were marked absent from their homeroom.
- Family educational trips (up to 5 days) *must be pre-approved* by the building principal. Requests must be submitted at least one week in advance of the trip and should be submitted to the office.
- If a student accumulates three illegal absences, parents will receive a Notice of Truancy in the mail, which will notify them of the illegal days and encourage them to contact the school to participate in an attendance improvement meeting, either over the phone or in person.
- After the 6th illegal absence, a letter will be sent in the mail with a date and time for a Student Attendance Improvement Plan conference. If parents cannot attend due to

work, please get in touch with the attendance office within 48 hours of the meeting to reschedule. Failure to participate in the meeting and continued absences may result in a citation with the local magistrate.

- When a student reaches their 8th excused absence, a Warning Letter will be mailed notifying parents that all absences beyond 10 require a doctor's excuse or the absence is illegal.
- **Truancy is three unexcused absences; habitually truant is six unexcused absences.**
- **If a student has 10 days of consecutive non-attendance, they will officially be withdrawn from Highlands School District.** The student would need to be re-enrolled to attend Highlands School District in the future.
- Please call the attendance office at **724-226-2400, press 3 for the Middle School, and then extension 3007**, if you have any questions about the attendance policy.

ADMINISTRATORS DISCRETION

- The principal of the school shall exercise discretion whether to excuse the student from compulsory attendance. Consideration shall be given to the length of the tour or trip, the number of requests made during the school year, and whether the educational tour or trip is likely to advance the academic growth of the student. It is the practice of Highlands School District to discourage excused absences for educational tours or trips during the school year.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Upon request by a parent, guardian, or student, teachers shall submit a list of student assignments for the period of absence during an approved educational tour or trip. These requests must be formally submitted to the high school main office at least three 3 days before the approved absence. Assignments/responsibilities may be made either before the absence or upon return to school. All assignments to be completed shall be submitted to the teacher(s) upon return to school or within a reasonable period designated by the teacher(s).

EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE

- After an absence, a student **MUST** give their homeroom teacher a written excuse or email the school.
- Acceptable excused absences include illness, accidents, death in the family, religious reasons, or impassable roads. All other absences may be judged illegal. The excuse

must consist of the student's full name, date(s) of absence(s), reason(s) for absence(s), the date the excuse was written, and the signature of the parent or guardian. The excuse must be submitted upon return to school, or the absence will be classified as illegal. Attendance contacts by building:

- Highlands Middle School, Karen Barnwell, Guidance Secretary
- HMSAttendance@goldenrams.com 724-226-2400
- Parents and students should make every effort to schedule appointments for special services after school. Administrators and teachers discourage the practice of dismissal during school hours, but if it is necessary to be excused during the day, the student must follow this procedure.
 - Submit to the office a written request from the parent stating the reason and time the student is to be excused. The excuse must be presented to the principal or assistant principal one day in advance. Requests made by phone will not be honored.
 - After verifying the request, the school will give the child a special excuse on a blue slip.
 - The parent/guardian must report to the main office with state identification to be provided to the office staff to verify identification. The parent/guardian must sign out the student in the binder provided before the student is released to their parent/guardian.

ABSENCE FOR VACATIONS

For the optimal success of our students, we request that you not schedule vacations when school is in session.

Absences due to family vacations will be considered legal if the following conditions are met:

- Submit the required district form (see the appendix), detailing the nature and dates of the vacation, to the building principal at least one week in advance of the departure date.
- The length of the vacation should not exceed five (5) school days. Any days exceeding five (5) will result in illegal absences.
- Parents will be responsible for ensuring that the child completes any missed schoolwork before returning to school.
- Students referred to the district justice for attendance issues may not be approved for vacations. This will be at the principal's discretion.
- **NO VACATIONS DURING THE PSSA TESTING WINDOW WILL BE APPROVED BY ADMINISTRATION.**

ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

A student's claim of illness does not necessarily justify being excused from class or school.

Students who claim to be ill must:

- Ask the teacher's permission to see the nurse, who will determine the degree of illness. If the nurse is not present, the student should report to the office. If a student is sent home from school by the nurse, that day is considered a nurse-excused day and is not counted as a parent excuse.
- If necessary, the nurse or a member of the office staff (NOT THE STUDENT) will contact the home to arrange for transportation.
- If the parent, a near relative, or other designated person cannot be contacted, the student will not be permitted to leave school.
- Parents may request the child's homework assignments during an extended absence and should make arrangements for the work to be picked up, either by another student or a designated adult, after a 24-hour notice.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

- Students are allowed in the building at 7:40 a.m.
- Breakfast is provided each morning for all students in the cafeteria.
- Students may receive breakfast up until 10:20 a.m.
- Students will report to their assigned morning locations after picking up breakfast.
- Students must be in their arrival location by 8:10 a.m. Students must be in their homeroom by 8:20 am or they will be marked as having an illegal absence for the day.
 - Arrivals after 8:20 a.m. require the student to report to the office for a tardy slip.

TARDINESS AND CHANGES IN DISMISSAL

- Students are marked tardy if they arrive at school between 8:20 and 10:00 a.m. Students are marked ABSENT for the morning session (one-half day) if they arrive after 10:00 a.m. Students will be marked ABSENT for the whole day if they arrive after 11:30 a.m.
- A request for early dismissal before 10:00 a.m. will be marked as one whole day of absence. A request must be written and submitted to the office, which will contact the parent/guardian to verify the request.
- A request for early dismissal before 11:30 a.m. will be marked as one-half day of absence.

- A written excuse is required for every tardiness. There is a one-day grace period to submit an excuse. After the second day, tardiness is illegal.
- After five tardies during a school year, a warning letter is sent to the parent/guardian. After a student has accumulated 10 tardies, they are given a half-day illegal absence. For each five tardies following the ten tardies, an additional one-half day of illegal absence will be charged against their record. After 3 days of illegal absences, a first notice letter will be served to the parent/guardian.
- As stated above, any notices served thereafter during a student’s entire period of enrollment in the Highlands School District shall be a truancy citation. Any truanancies will require the parent/guardian to attend a hearing before the district justice.

Parental cooperation regarding absences will ensure the safety and welfare of students and will promote good attendance habits.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The athletic program at Highlands Middle School exists to provide wholesome activities to students and offer competition with other schools. We encourage both active participation and spectator support. Our seventh and eighth-grade student programs meet the requirements of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA).

FALL	WINTER	SPRING
Cross Country	Boys Basketball	Softball
Soccer	Wrestling	Track
Girls Basketball		Baseball
Football		Volleyball

GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Highlands School District provides the opportunity for students to work to their fullest potential, maximize effectiveness in the classroom, stay in school, and participate in a tutorial

program designed to improve their grades. The Highlands School District has, therefore, developed the following guidelines that govern student participation in athletics.

- The Athletic Director will contact the Middle School Administration and coaches each Tuesday to inform them of students who are failing one or more core subjects or two electives and are at risk of becoming ineligible.
- A student failing one or more core subjects or two electives at the end of the day on any given Friday during the season will be deemed ineligible for the upcoming week (Sunday to Sunday).

BOOKBAGS/BACKPACK/Crossbody/Fanny Packs/Belt Bag

- Students will be provided a locker and are allowed to bring book bags to school.
- All book bags will be checked at metal detectors upon arrival.
- All bags must be stored in each student's locker. **Students will not be permitted to carry any bags around during the day.**
- **All cell phones and non-school technology devices must be kept in their bags/lockers during the school day.**
- **Students are not permitted to use personal computers.**
- Students will not be permitted to wear drawstring bags, crossbody bags, fanny packs, belt bags, purses, etc.

HEALTH SERVICES

The nurse's suite is on the first floor and supervised by a certified school nurse. If students are ill, they must secure a pass from their teacher and report directly to the nurse's suite.

Between classes, students must obtain a pass from their next class teacher. Under no circumstances are students permitted to leave school because they feel ill. Students are not allowed to remain in the restrooms if they are sick. Instead, they must report to the nurse's suite.

Students returning to class will be given a pass from the nurse. Students who become ill while school is in session must be seen by the nurse to be dismissed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Only the nurse or an administrator has the authority to excuse a student from school because of illness.

EXAMINATIONS

Pennsylvania requires each student to receive a comprehensive health examination conducted upon original entry, sixth grade, and eleventh grade. Families may have these examinations completed by their family physician. Forms are available on the Highlands School District website.

Pennsylvania requires each student to receive a dental screening upon original entry into school and in grades three and seven. Families may have these examinations completed by their family dentist. Forms are available on the Highlands School District website.

SCREENINGS

As school law requires, hearing screenings will be conducted in grades one through three, and vision screening tests will be conducted in grades one through four.

In addition, a yearly screening program consisting of weight and height measurements is completed on every student. Abnormal screening results will be communicated to parents/guardians. Please contact the school nurse if you choose to opt your child out of health screenings.

In accordance with the school policy, the parents/guardians of students who are to receive physical and dental examinations or screenings shall be notified. The notice shall include the date and location of the examination or screening, as well as the fact that parents/guardians are welcome to attend. In addition, the notice shall encourage the parent/guardian to have the examination or screening conducted by the student's private physician or dentist at the parent's/guardian's expense to promote continuity of care. Such a statement may also include notification that the student may be exempted from such examination or screening if it is contrary to the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All students shall be immunized against specific diseases in accordance with state law and regulations, unless specifically exempt for religious or medical reasons. Immunization requirement information is available on the Highlands School District website.

MEDICATION

All medication shall be brought to the nurse's office by the parent/guardian or by another adult designated by the parent/guardian. All medication shall be stored in the original pharmacy-labeled container and kept in a locked cabinet designated for the storage of medication. Medications that require refrigeration shall be stored and locked in a refrigerator designated only for medications. The district shall not store more than a thirty-day supply of an individual student's medication.

1. No medication, prescription, or non-prescription (Over The Counter) will be administered in school except by the Direct Medication Order Form of a licensed health provider that is accompanied with a parent's/guardian completed and signed Highlands Medication Administration Permission Form. This paperwork must be in place before any medications are dispensed to students. Highlands School District does not supply any medications.
2. Prescription medication must be presented in the original pharmacy bottle and be accompanied by a Highlands Medication Administration Permission Form.

Prescription medication shall be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with:

- a. Name, address, telephone, and federal DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) number of the pharmacy.
- b. Student's name.
- c. Directions for use (dosage, frequency, and time of administration, route, special instructions).
- d. Name and registration number of the licensed prescriber.
- e. Prescription serial number.
- f. Date originally filled.
- g. Name of medication and amount dispensed.
- h. Controlled substance statement, if applicable.

3. Non-prescription medications (over-the-counter) must also be presented in the original labeled container with the child's name on it and written permission from the parent/guardian, as well as a doctor's note.

4. Unlabeled medications will not be given at school.

5. Medications are to be kept in the Nurse's office. Students are not permitted to carry their medications with them throughout the day.

6. Students caught carrying Prescription or Non-prescription medications into the building, without written permission from a parent/guardian will be dealt with according to the Code of Conduct. Students caught carrying Prescription or Non-prescription medications in the building will receive consequences indicated in the Code of Conduct.

7. It is the parent's responsibility to supply and deliver all medications with proper instructions from a physician and the Highlands Medication Administration Permission Form to the main office to be administered during school hours.

STUDENT SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF ASTHMA INHALERS AND EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS

Before a student may possess or use an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector in the school setting, the Board shall require the following:[\[1\]\[8\]](#)

1. A written request from the parent/guardian that the school complies with the order of the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Please contact the school nurse for the request to self-administer medication.
2. A written statement from the parent/guardian acknowledging that the school is not responsible for ensuring the medication is taken and relieving the district and its employees of responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the prescribed medication.
3. A written statement from the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant that states:
 - Name of drug

- Prescribed dosage
 - Time medication is to be taken.
 - Length of time medication is prescribed.
 - Diagnosis or reason medication is needed, unless confidential.
 - Potential serious reaction or side-effects of medication.
 - Emergency response.
 - If the child is qualified and able to self-administer the medication.
4. A written acknowledgement from the school nurse that the student has demonstrated that s/he is capable of self-administration of the asthma inhaler and/or epinephrine auto-injector in the school setting. Determination of competency for self-administration shall be based on the student's age, cognitive function, maturity and demonstration of responsible behavior.[\[1\]](#)
 5. A written acknowledgement from the student that s/he has received instruction from the student's licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant on proper safety precautions for the handling and disposal of the asthma inhaler and/or epinephrine auto-injector, including acknowledgement that the student will not allow other students to have access to the prescribed medication and that s/he understands appropriate safeguards.

The district reserves the right to require a statement from the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant for the continued use of a medication beyond the specified time period.[\[1\]](#)

A written request for student use of an asthma inhaler and/or epinephrine auto-injector shall be submitted annually, along with required written statements from the parent/guardian and an updated prescription. If there is a change in the student's prescribed care plan, level of self-management, or school circumstances during the school year, the parent/guardian and the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner, or physician assistant shall update the written statements.

The student shall notify the school nurse immediately following each use of an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector.

Students shall be prohibited from sharing, giving, selling, and using an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector in any manner other than which it is prescribed during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and school-sponsored activities. Violations of this policy, provisions of a Service Agreement or IEP, or demonstration of unwillingness or inability to safeguard the asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector may result in loss of privilege to self-carry the asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector and disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy and applicable procedural safeguards.

If the district denies a student's request to self-carry an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector or the student has lost the privilege of self-carrying an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector, the student's prescribed medication shall be appropriately stored at a location near the student. The school nurse, other designated school employees, and the student's classroom teachers shall be informed of where the medication is stored and the means to access the medication.

STUDENT POSSESSION AND USE OF DIABETES MEDICATION AND MONITORING EQUIPMENT **(Policy 209.2)**

Prior to student possession or use of diabetes medication and monitoring equipment, the Board shall require the following:

1. A written request from the parent/guardian that the school comply with the instructions of the student's health care practitioner. The request from the parent/guardian shall include a statement relieving the district and its employees of responsibility for the prescribed medication or monitoring equipment and acknowledging that the school is not responsible for ensuring that the medication is taken or the monitoring equipment is used.

2. A written statement from the student's health care practitioner that provides:

a. Name of the drug.

b. Prescribed dosage.

- c. Times when medication is to be taken.
- d. Times when monitoring equipment is to be used.
- e. Length of time medication and monitoring equipment are prescribed.
- f. Diagnosis or reason that medication and monitoring equipment are needed.
- g. Potential serious reactions to medication that may occur.
- h. Emergency response.
- i. Whether the child is competent and able to self-administer the medication or monitoring equipment and to practice proper safety precautions.

3. A written acknowledgement from the school nurse that the student has demonstrated that s/he is capable of self-administration of the medication and use of the monitoring equipment.

4. A written acknowledgement from the student that s/he has received instruction from the student's health care practitioner on proper safety precautions for the handling and disposal of the medications and monitoring equipment, including acknowledgement that the student will not allow other students to have access to the medication and monitoring equipment and that s/he understands appropriate safeguards.

The written request for student possession and use of diabetes medication and monitoring equipment shall be reviewed annually, along with the required written statements from the parent/guardian and the student's health care practitioner. If there is a change in the student's prescribed care plan, level of self-management, or school circumstances during the school year, the parent/guardian and the student's health care practitioner shall update the written statements.

Students shall be prohibited from sharing, giving, selling, and using diabetes medication and monitoring equipment in any manner other than as prescribed during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and school-sponsored activities. Violations of this policy, provisions of a Service Agreement or IEP, or demonstration of unwillingness or inability to safeguard the medication and monitoring equipment may result in loss of privilege to self-carry the diabetes medication and monitoring equipment, and may result in disciplinary action by Board policy and applicable procedural safeguards.

If the district prohibits a student from possessing and self-administering diabetes medication and operating monitoring equipment, or if a student is not capable of self-administering diabetes medication or operating monitoring equipment, the district shall ensure that the diabetes medication and monitoring equipment are appropriately stored in a readily accessible location in the student's building. The school nurse and other designated school employees shall be informed of where the medication and monitoring equipment is stored and the means to access them.

ADMINISTRATION OF NALOXONE

To ensure the health and safety of its students and staff, the Highlands School District will maintain and administer an opioid antagonist in its schools, specifically Naloxone, for use during emergencies to any student or staff member experiencing a known or suspected opioid overdose, regardless of a previous history of opioid abuse. In compliance with school board policy, the District's medical director has issued a non-patient-specific order to the school nurse to administer Naloxone on-site.

Administration shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving the use of controlled substances immediately, as soon as practicable. Any student who experiences a drug overdose shall be referred to the district's Student Assistance Program.

Additionally, the Administration shall immediately report incidents involving the use of controlled substances on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity, to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations.

MANDATED REPORTING

Act 299 (Pennsylvania General Assembly - December 30, 1970) amends Act 91 (1967) known as The Child Abuse Law (dealing with gross physical neglect or injury to children under eighteen years of age) as follows:

"Any school nurse whose examination of a child less than eighteen years of age or any school teacher whose observation of a child less than eighteen years of age discloses evidence of gross physical neglect or injury shall immediately report such an incident.

Any person who makes or participates in the making of a report shall be immune from any liability."

All concerns of abuse will be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-932-0313). This is the law. All teachers, school nurses, and social workers are bound by law to report concerns of neglect or abuse that are brought to their attention.

PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICINE TO STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS (Policy 210)

The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours, as directed by a parent/guardian and family physician, is permitted only when failure to take medicine would jeopardize the student's health and prevent them from attending school without it.

No medication, prescription, or non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication will be administered in school without a Direct Medication Order Form from a licensed health provider, accompanied by a parent's/guardian's completed and signed Highlands Medication Administration Permission Form. This paperwork must be in place before any medications are dispensed to students. Highlands School District does not supply any medications, and it is the parent's responsibility to provide and deliver all medications to be administered during school hours.

Only the School Nurse or other licensed health personnel is solely responsible for administering medications to students. Students are NOT permitted to carry or possess any medications while at school. All medication is to be taken in the presence of the school nurse. In the case of inhalers and EpiPens, the parent/guardian and student will follow the procedures for possession and use of emergency medications. The parent/guardian of the child must assume responsibility for informing the school nurse of any changes in the child's health or changes in medication. A new "Medication Order" from the licensed provider and the Medication Permission Form, completed by the parent, will be required with each change in medication and at the start of each school year. The complete Medication Policy may be viewed at any school building or online at www.goldenrams.com.

DRESS GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

To keep the focus on learning and not on dress, the following guidelines are in place.

Acceptable	<u>NOT</u> Permitted
T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, hoods down	Crop Tops, halter tops, pajamas (this includes tops and/or bottoms) wearing hoods up, and hats
Jeans, sweatpants, dresses, skirts, biker (of fingertip length). Any holes above fingertip length with an appropriate under-layer.	Clothes that are excessively short/tight, such as biker shorts and tank tops. Clothes with excessive holes. Holes in pants, jeans, and shorts that expose skin above fingertip length.
Shorts (of fingertip length)	Clothing or jewelry that refers to tobacco, alcohol, weapons, violence, profanity, gangs, sex or drugs.
Tennis Shoes, Sandals, Boots	House Slippers
	Tinted eyewear, visible underwear, ski masks or face coverings (not pertaining to medical concerns)

The building principal will make the final decisions about the appropriateness of dress. The student will have the option to change their attire in the RAMS Den or have their parent/guardian contacted to request a supply of clothing.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When it is necessary to announce a delay in starting time or the cancellation of classes for the day because of an emergency, parents and students should follow the standard procedures.

1. When the decision is made to delay or close, a district-wide call will be made on the One-Call System to inform everyone registered to receive a call. In addition, the Superintendent will contact the local Pittsburgh radio and television stations, which begin broadcasting school information at 6:00 AM. This information will also be posted on the Golden Rams website at www.goldenrams.com. **Please do not call the schools for information.** Listen to KDKA or WPXI or check <http://kdka.com/schoolclosings/> or <http://www.wpxi.com/closings/> for all cancellations or delays.
2. When a two (2) hour delay is announced, students should report to their schools two hours later than usual. On a two-hour delay, morning K-FOUR classes and breakfasts in all buildings are canceled.
3. The decision to delay, close, or dismiss school early is based on the safety and welfare of the students and requires everyone's cooperation. Parents who would not be at home during such an emergency should arrange for students to report to an alternate safe place.

FIELD TRIPS

As part of the educational program, children may attend field trips supervised by classroom teachers. Students are permitted to participate in field trips only with a completed parent permission form. Field trips are a privilege. Students may lose this privilege if their behavior impedes the safety of the students and/or staff.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

According to the PA School Law, fire or school safety drills shall be conducted periodically, but not less than once a month. All teachers will communicate fire drill procedures to their classes. When the fire alarm is given, without exception, the building must be evacuated. Students will exit *quickly* and *quietly* with their teacher in an orderly fashion and meet outside at their assigned area. Emergency drills will be held both on and off-site.

INSURANCE (STUDENT)

In the event of medical emergencies, expenses incurred are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. **The responsibility for arranging for any insurance needs lies with the respective student or parents/guardians, not with the school.** A student insurance policy covering school accidents with school day coverage or 24-hour coverage is available for purchase each fall. Application forms are given to all students through their homeroom teachers at the beginning of the school year. The application and check are then returned to the student's homeroom teacher in the sealed envelope provided.

Late registrants can acquire an application form during student registration or by calling the company directly. **This insurance does not cover interscholastic sports in any form, including practice sessions or travel to and from such activities or practices. Before students are allowed to compete on a school team, they must show proof of insurance coverage.**

All accidents or injuries on school grounds should be reported to the main office and the nurse. Failure to report any accident or injury may cause insurance coverage to be voided. School insurance claim forms may be picked up in the main office.

NOTE: *It is recommended that all students purchase insurance coverage.*

LOCKERS

- Lockers will be assigned to every student for the storage of cell phones, books, supplies, and clothing. Each locker is provided with a built-in combination lock. Please keep locker combinations confidential.
- Student lockers are the property of the school district. They may be searched by school officials if there is reasonable suspicion, as stipulated in the student rights, discipline, and drug and alcohol policies.
- The school is not responsible for any property stored in the student lockers.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles, when found, are taken to the office where the owner can claim them. Each year, the school accumulates numerous unclaimed items. Please help by labeling all items. All unclaimed items at the end of the school year will be given to a local charity organization.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are responsible for all assignments missed during an excused absence. The student must contact the teachers and arrange to complete all work within the agreed-upon timeline. Parents may request make-up work by contacting the school counseling office for absences that extend more than 3 days. Please allow 24 hours to obtain the make-up work from the teachers.

METAL DETECTORS

All bags (including, but not limited to, book bags, sports bags, and purses) will be checked at the security tables before entering the school. Students will not be permitted to bring in any open food or drink containers. To expedite security procedures, students must remove all items from their pockets, including belts. These items will be placed on the security tables for

inspection. All students and visitors must pass through the metal detectors before entering the building.

REFUSAL TO BE SEARCHED

If a student refuses to be searched for any reason, the student may be subject to consequences in accordance with the Highlands Middle School Discipline Code. Upon refusal to be searched, the student will be assumed guilty, and the subsequent discipline will correspond to the appropriate Behavioral Consequence Level for the suspected offense as detailed in this Student Handbook.

PETS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Pets are not permitted on the school grounds or in the middle school building without the consent of the school district. This includes before and after school hours, as students enter the building, and during dismissal.

PICK UP/DROP OFF

Students should be dropped off in the morning in the small parking loop. If the child arrives tardy, they may be dropped off in the parking lot on the Argonne Drive side of the building. This policy is for your child's safety and to avoid conflict with the buses. When picking up your child at dismissal, please pick them up on Broadview Boulevard.

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS

A parent or student who has a complaint or concern should first speak directly with the teacher involved. If necessary, the matter may then be brought to the principal. Do not rely on hearsay or "second-hand" information. Parents should make an appointment to ensure adequate time to discuss the problem with the teacher/principal.

The Highlands School District is committed to communication with parents and the community. Open lines of communication are essential to the educational process. District staff members will make a concerted effort to respond to inquiries in a timely fashion. Please note that staff members are not permitted to contact parents during instructional time and, therefore, will not respond to you immediately during the school day. In the event of an emergency during the school day, please get in touch with the Main Office. Parents are advised to contact their child's teacher(s) or the educator in charge of the class or program via voicemail or email when a question or concern arises. Should your child's teacher(s) not be able to assist in fielding the inquiry or addressing the problem, please follow the Chain of Command below.

The Chain of Command serves as a resource to parents and the community regarding communications with various departments for other concerns or questions.

CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR MATTERS INVOLVING:

Attendance

1. Main Office
2. School Counselor/Nurse
3. Principals

General Information on School Programming

1. School Website
2. Main Office
3. Principals
4. Assistant Superintendent
5. Superintendent
6. Board of Education

Student Activities

1. School Website
2. Supervising Staff Member
3. Main Office
4. Athletic/Activities Coordinator
5. Building Principals

Credential Support (Access, Usernames, Passwords for school website, school network, Google Account, Edgenuity)

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Main Office
3. School counselor
4. Edgenuity Lead Teacher
5. Building Principals
6. Director of Technology
7. Assistant Superintendent
8. Superintendent

Instruction/Curriculum/Student Progress

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Building Principals
3. Assistant Superintendent
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Education

Student Discipline based on Board Policy

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Dean of Students
3. Building Principals
4. Assistant Superintendent
5. Superintendent
6. Board of Education

Athletics

1. Coach
2. Athletic Director
3. Building Principals
4. Assistant Superintendent
5. Superintendent
6. Board of Education

Facilities/Grounds/Buildings

1. Director of Facilities 724-226-2400
2. Superintendent
3. Board of Education

Transportation (busing information, personnel)

- 1 Main Office
2. Building Principals
3. Director of Transportation - 724-226-2400
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Education

Transportation (Student Concerns)

1. Main Office
2. Counselor

3. Dean of Students
3. Building Principals
4. Director of Transportation
5. Assistant Superintendent
6. Superintendent
7. Board of Education

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

1. Safe2Say
2. School Counselor
3. Dean of Students
4. Building Principals
5. Assistant Superintendent
6. Superintendent
7. Board of Education

TECHNOLOGY

It is a privilege to use technology at Highlands. Highlands School District provides computer systems, software, and Internet access for educational use only. Students must abide by the District Acceptable Use Policy and all other District policies and procedures relative to the use of technology in the district. Students are not permitted to tamper with equipment or the network in any way.

Students who do not follow our technology policies will face the consequences, including potential loss of technology privileges or charges for repairs.

If a student needs to borrow a Chromebook temporarily, they must return it to the technology department. Students who forget their Chromebooks at home will not be supplied with an additional device.

Students/Families who refuse to pay their fees for repaired Chromebooks will have an obligation put on the student's account.

Failure to pay for the obligation could result in the withholding of the student's diploma upon graduation.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For supervision, safety, and security, video cameras and recorders may be used on campus and school buses.

VISITORS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

For the safety of our students and staff, any parent or visitor to the building MUST provide a valid Driver's License or ID to gain permission to enter the building and obtain an identification badge. Parents who need to speak with a teacher MUST prearrange a meeting as per Board Policy 907

SECTION 2—STUDENT SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

The goal of Highlands Middle School's instructional program is to equip each child to be an informed, caring, and effective citizen. Middle school students are acquiring foundational reading skills, developing writing abilities, and learning to be both individual learners and part of a *community of learners*. We expect our students to express ideas through speaking and writing, work with mathematical operations, investigate, inquire, and collaboratively solve problems. All students are also offered experiences in Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library. Units of instruction in conflict resolution, bully prevention, nutrition education, career education, drug, alcohol, and tobacco awareness are part of the total curriculum.

We use the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework, which is a comprehensive system of supports including standards-aligned, culturally responsive, and high-quality core instruction, universal screening, flexible grouping, data-based decisions, tiered services and supports, and parental engagement. Students will be engaged in individual, small group, corrective, remedial, and/or enrichment opportunities. Students learn best when they accept challenging yet achievable goals and are given individualized, constructive feedback. We also believe that a favorable emotional climate promotes learning. At Highlands Middle School, the potential of each child is celebrated.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Highlands School District Student Services Department is committed to providing a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students. The Student Services Department can be reached at 724-226-2400 ext. 5650

SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

In partnership with the school community, school counselors deliver a school counseling program to support all Highlands School District students. The School Counselors will assist students in applying academic achievement strategies, practicing interpersonal skills, and planning for college and career readiness.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Highlands School District offers a full continuum of services. Students' Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are developed by their IEP teams, including parents/ guardians and, when appropriate, the student. If you have a question or concern about your child's IEP, please get in touch with their IEP Case Manager. If you believe your child may be eligible, please get in touch with your child's school counselor.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

The Highlands School District recognizes that gifted students have special educational needs that should be met within the context of educating the whole child through a variety of services and options. Students needing Gifted Education receive services based on their Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP). These plans are developed by their GIEP teams, including parents/guardians and, when appropriate, the student. If you have a question or concern about your child's GIEP, please get in touch with their GATE teacher. If you believe your child may be eligible, please get in touch with your child's school counselor.

504 SERVICES

Highlands School District provides eligible students services aligned to their disability-related needs, allowing the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate. If you have questions or concerns or believe your child may be eligible, please get in touch with your child's school counselor.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

ESL instruction is available to students with limited proficiency in speaking, listening to, reading, or writing English due to their status as immigrants, refugees, foreign exchange students, or American-born children from non-English speaking homes. Parents of children who may require ESL instruction should alert the registration department when enrolling their child.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

SAP services are available to all Highlands School District students. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to assist school personnel in identifying any issues (including academic problems, emotional/social issues, and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use/abuse) that pose a barrier to a student's learning and success in school. SAP Teams are a specially trained group of teachers, school counselors, administrators, and a liaison from a local mental health agency. If you believe your child could benefit from these services, please get in touch with your child's counselor.

NURSING SERVICE

Please see the Health Services section of the handbook.

COMPLIANCE NOTIFICATIONS

Annual Compliance Notifications include the following, as well as additional notifications available on the district's website.

CHILD FIND NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES & PROGRAM

Each school district and other public agencies in the commonwealth must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate, and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice aims to help find these children, assist parents, and outline the parents' rights regarding the confidentiality of information gathered during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English but can be translated into other languages or transcribed into braille. If a person does not understand any of these notices, they should contact Dr. Amber Dean at 724-226-2400 ext. 5651 and request an explanation.

IDEA AND CHAPTER 14

Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

- Autism/pervasive developmental disorder
- Blindness or visual impairment

- Deafness or hearing impairment
- Developmental delay
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Neurological impairment
- Other health impairments
- Physical disability
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment

If you believe your school-aged child may require special education services and related programs, or a young child (age 3 to school-age) may need early intervention, screening, and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and their eligibility, these services are available to you at no cost upon written request. You may request screening and evaluation, whether your child is enrolled in the district’s public school program or not. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be written to the building principal. Additional information is available on the district’s website. Questions and concerns should be addressed to Dr. Amber Dean, 724-226-2440 ext. 5651

504 SERVICES/Service Agreement

Highlands School District provides eligible students services aligned to their disability-related needs, allowing the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate. If you have questions or concerns or believe your child may be eligible, please get in touch with your child's teacher/school counselor.

Section 504/ Chapter 15

In compliance with state and federal law, the School District will provide to each eligible student with a disability, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations that are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities. Additional information is available on the district website. Questions and concerns should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Michele Welter, 724-226-2440 ext.5658.

GIFTED EDUCATION AND CHAPTER 16

Specially designed instruction is provided for students who are identified as intellectually gifted in accordance with Chapter 16 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code. These individuals have demonstrated cognitive and academic performance, which has been determined to be significantly beyond age/grade level norms. After thoroughly evaluating each gifted learner's educational needs, a team of qualified professionals and the parents develop a Gifted Individualized Educational Plan (GIEP). Questions and concerns should be addressed to Dr. Amber Dean at 724-226-2440 ext. 5651.

NOTIFICATIONS OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and specific physical exams. Additional information is available on the district website.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

All school records are handled in strict compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations. Additional information is available on the district website.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

If a student is unable to attend school due to a temporary mental or physical illness or other urgent reason (lasting 10 days or more), the parent/guardian should contact their counselor or administrator to request the homebound form. This form requires input from the treating physician indicating the medical or psychological issue and when the student will return. The district approves Homebound Instruction based on a review of these records. Homebound instruction may not exceed three months unless the district has approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The school counselor will provide you with the required Physician's Statement and the Physician's Input form. For additional information, please get in touch with Dr. Amber Dean at 724-226-2400 ext. 5651

TITLE IX INFORMATION

The Highlands School District does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, genetic information, or other legally protected categories in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. The announcement of this policy is in accordance with State Law, including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, and with federal law, including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act

of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The district has established Title IX personnel to promptly respond to concerns, sexual harassment, and assault reports. All investigations into sexual harassment and assault reports will be impartial, free of bias and conflicts, and will not prejudge the facts for either side. The district strives to maintain an environment where all students, staff, and the greater community feel safe.

Complaints or questions regarding nondiscrimination in school, classroom, and employment should be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Cathleen Cubelic- Title IX Compliance Officer, Highlands Administrative Center, PO Box 288, Natrona Heights, PA 15065.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Highlands School District continues to attempt to identify all children within the District who may be experiencing homelessness. If you believe you know of families or individual students that may qualify for this service, please get in touch with Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, McKinney-Vento Liaison, at 724-226-2400.

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION POLICY

The Highlands School District recognizes the need to protect its students' health, safety, and welfare, promote healthy development, safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among school-aged youth, and address barriers to learning. This policy supports other federal, state, and local efforts to provide youth with prevention education, early identification and intervention, and access to all local resources to promote health and prevent personal harm or injury. For additional information, please get in touch with Dr. Amber Dean, District Suicide Prevention Coordinator, 724-226-2400, ext. 5651

HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL NOTICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

[Annual Notification](#)

HIGHLANDS VIRTUAL ACADEMY (HVA)

Students may choose to enroll in the Highlands Virtual Academy to learn content with Highlands' teachers online. To register for HVA, interested students must attend an orientation along with their parent/guardian.

For specific regulations, including grade expectations, please refer to the HVA handbook.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grades 5 and 6 Standards-Based Grading:

Standards-based assessment is grounded in the principle that grades must be meaningful, learning expectations should be clearly defined, and students deserve multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding. Academic achievement is reported separately from non-academic factors such as class participation or extra credit. This approach allows students to progress at their own pace and recognizes that not all students will succeed on their first attempt. Homework and similar tasks are treated as practice opportunities, and students receive descriptive feedback rather than traditional grades to support their growth.

At Highlands Middle School, students do not receive traditional grades, points, or percentages. Instead, their progress is measured based on their current level of understanding and application of specific learning standards. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has identified key standards critical to success at each grade level and in every course. These standards guide both instruction and assessment, which are evaluated using rubrics and performance level descriptors.

This approach is designed to meet students where they are and provide a clear, individualized path for improvement. Students are assessed independently, given multiple ways to demonstrate their learning, and offered repeated opportunities to show mastery.

The following grading scale will be used for grades 7 and 8:

Letter Grade	Score
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69

F	59 and below
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ACADEMIC AWARDS – Grades 7 and 8

Each year, the top academic achievers in Grades 7 and 8 are honored at a formal reception. Students are selected based on their academic performance during the first three nine-week grading periods of the current school year. Previous years' grade point averages are not factored into this recognition.

BROWN AND GOLD AWARDS

Each quarter, students who meet the criteria for the Brown and Gold Awards will be recognized in front of their respective grade levels.

- **Grades 7 and 8:**
 - Students with an overall average of **92–95.9%** will receive the **Brown Award**.
 - Students with an overall average of **96% or higher** will receive the **Gold Award**.
- **Grades 5 and 6:**

Recognition will be based on standards-based grading criteria developed by the 2025 committee.

HOMEWORK

The value and purpose of homework are to practice and reinforce skills learned in the classroom. Students will be required to complete homework assignments when assigned. Teachers will acknowledge all homework submitted and will determine if the quality of the completed assignment is acceptable.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Instructional materials and supplies are provided by the school at no cost to the student. There will be a charge for items that are damaged or lost. The amount will not exceed the price of the replacement. This includes technology violations and school-owned devices.

PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARDS

Every student enrolled in the Highlands School District will be issued a report card that will be available online through PowerSchool every nine weeks. Student progress may be tracked daily through this site. The aim of the report cards and student progress data is to:

- Inform the parents of the student's progress.
- Help the student to self-appraise.
- Help the teacher study each student's achievement of the Pennsylvania standards.
- Enable the home and school to work together in helping the student.

RETENTION IN GRADE

Grade retention is generally considered a last-resort option. The decision to retain a child must be grounded in the belief that an additional year in a given grade will be in the *child's best interest*. The procedure for recommending retention shall be by a conference of the student's parents and the teachers, principals, and school counselor.

BENCHMARK AND STANDARDIZED TESTING

Testing is an integral part of assessing student achievement and improving teaching methods. Students must be well-rested and prepared for these testing situations. Throughout the year, parents are given specific information on the type of test that will be provided, the date of the testing, and results using letters and calendar publications.

In Pennsylvania, schools are required to give the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to students in grades 3-8. These tests measure Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards. All students will be assessed annually on the PSSA exam in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in Grade 8 will also be evaluated in science.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/PROPER DRESS

The middle school program has been structured to provide your child with a wide range of experiences. These activities range from basic skill development to creative movement. All areas within the program provide for a comprehensive foundation of values and learning experiences. Please remember that all clothing should be comfortably loose, always to allow freedom of movement. Appropriate footwear (no sandals, Crocs, etc.) is required for students to participate. Each student should be dressed appropriately for total activity participation. Dressy and restrictive types of clothing are strongly discouraged, as is excessive jewelry.

SECTION 3—STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Highlands School District promotes a district-wide philosophy supported by procedures and policies that contribute to the promotion of a *RAMS for Life* attitude. We expect our students to be Respectful, Accountable, Motivated, and Safe in all school settings and the community. The administration, teachers, and support staff teach students what these behaviors look like, recognize those students who display these behaviors, and encourage and support students who struggle. A large portion of this philosophy depends on consistency, communication, and cooperation among all stakeholders.

One of the primary goals of Highlands Middle School is to promote constructive and respectful behaviors. The procedures and consequences described in the tables below are designed to modify unacceptable behavior, not to punish. Students will be expected to make appropriate decisions concerning their behaviors. Building principals have the right to address behaviors on a case-by-case basis. The following guidelines serve as a framework for behavior throughout the school.

BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING

Bullying is a form of aggression where (1) the behavior is intended to harm or cause distress, (2) the behavior occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) there is an imbalance of power or strength among the parties.

We, Highlands Middle School, take this very seriously. Bullying violates a student's rights and can adversely affect a student's education. **NO FORM OF BULLYING WILL BE PERMITTED AT HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL.** Depending upon the severity of the bullying offense, the following consequences may be enacted for a student found to be bullying:

Cyberbullying or bullying through the use of technologies such as cell phones, networking websites, or email is a federal crime. Anyone caught cyberbullying may be reported to the local police department in addition to being disciplined through the school.

BUS SAFETY

In the interest of a safe, orderly, and pleasant ride on the school bus, students are expected to be courteous and cooperative. Students are to ride their assigned bus. Students may not ride another bus without a written request from a parent and signed permission from the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean of Students.

Students' actions that endanger themselves and others will be addressed with consequences. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus. Situations that need attention should be reported to the driver immediately. A student who violates any safety regulation may be deprived of the privilege of school transportation, and/or disciplined.

BUS MISBEHAVIOR

Bus transportation is a privilege. Video recordings of bus runs will be reviewed periodically by building principals to assure the safe and orderly transport of students. Misbehavior on a school bus or van may result in the removal of the student from the vehicle and could result in a disorderly conduct citation for serious offenses. Building principals have the right to address behaviors on a case-by-case basis. The following course of action serves as a framework for consequences. With a bus suspension, parents/guardians must provide transportation to and from school. Absence from school on a day of bus suspensions will result in an illegal absence. Parents/guardians will be notified of bus misbehavior.

Number of Infractions	Consequence
First	Written Warning
Second	3 Day Bus Suspension
Third	5-10 Day Bus Suspension
Fourth	45 Day Bus Suspension
Fifth	Removal from bus for the duration of school year

CELL PHONES

The Highlands School Board authorizes student possession of cell phones and other personal electronic devices, such as calculators, laptop computers, handheld computers, cameras, mobile phones, tablets, or any other devices designed to communicate, create, or store information. While the district does not prohibit bringing these devices to school, the district does not recommend it. Students assume all risks of damage, theft, loss, or misuse of such devices. Students may only be permitted to utilize such devices in the classroom with the consent of the teacher. **The cell phone should be off and away during school hours.**

Violations of this policy by a student shall result in the following disciplinary action and confiscation of the item:

Violation	Disciplinary Action
First	Phone may be picked up at the end of the school day by the student.
Second	Phone may be picked up at the end of the day and the student will receive a disciplinary consequence (i.e. lunch detention, RRR, detention, ASA etc.)
Third or More	Phone must be picked up by a parent/guardian and the student will receive a disciplinary consequence (i.e. detention, RRR, ASA, etc.)

- Students must turn off or silence their electronic devices upon entering the building. They must be kept in a book bag/locker. Cell phones are not allowed in the classroom.
- Students are prohibited from posting pictures and/or negative comments about other students/staff during school time (this includes the bus ride to and from school) that disrupt the normal function of the school day. Failure to comply with this directive will result in disciplinary action.
- Irresponsible use of cell phone technology and/or electronics will result in disciplinary action and confiscation of the device.

Items may be given to the front office for safekeeping during the school day. Students are responsible for their belongings at all times. The school district is not responsible for any loss or theft of items.

NOTE: If a student refuses to turn over a prohibited item, they will be immediately referred to a principal for disciplinary action.

CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS

1. Students will remain in the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period.
2. Students are to remain seated until dismissed by staff at the end of the lunch period.
3. Students should clean up after themselves and ensure that all garbage is placed in the appropriate receptacles before leaving the cafeteria.
4. Students will always maintain an appropriate voice level in the cafeteria.

Failure to follow expectations will result in, but not limited to, lunch detention, resource detention, after-school detention, after-school alternative, or other loss of privileges.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

1. Cheating involves giving or receiving unauthorized help by talking, by using written notes, or by any other visual, oral, tactile, or electronic means.
2. Plagiarism is the intentional stealing of words or ideas from someone else and submitting them as one's work. Plagiarism is a crime: both inside and outside school. The internet "cut and paste" is one example of plagiarism.
3. A zero will be given on the activity, project, or test on which the cheating occurred, with no opportunity for make-up work.
4. Teachers will notify the parents and refer students to the building administration.
5. A summary of the situation will be handed into the office so it can be placed in the student's discipline file.
6. Students who violate the plagiarism policy will be referred to the Dean of Students for misconduct violations, and consequences will be issued.

CLASS CUTS

For a student to achieve their highest potential, they must attend class regularly. Therefore, choosing not to attend class is irresponsible behavior. Students will not have the opportunity to complete any missed assignments during the period they did not participate in.

- 1st offense: Students will have a conference with the teacher
- 2nd offense: Students will receive a lunch/choice detention
- 3rd offense: Students will receive after-school detention

- Students who do not show up for after-school detention will receive ASA
- 4th offense and greater: Students will receive an ASA, which will require them to stay for three hours after school to make up for the time they have missed in class. A parent meeting may be requested to discuss the behavior and an educational plan for future success.

If a student fails to attend ASA within a given period, they may be subject to RRR or out-of-school suspension.

DEFIANCE AND LACK OF RESPECT

Students who fail to respond to adult requests, say “no”, ignore, or act out are demonstrating defiance and/or lack of respect.

A teacher, staff member, or administrator may assign detention to those students who have made poor conduct choices. Detention is after school from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays. The student will be given a date to fulfill their detention. If this is not completed on the assigned date, the student will be given in-school consequences and loss of potential extra-curricular privileges. A student who owes a detention is not eligible to participate in school activities. Parents will be notified of all offenses.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The Highlands School District recognizes its responsibility to educate, prevent, and intervene in the use and abuse of all drugs, alcohol, and mood-altering substances by students.

Through the use of curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong and consistent administration and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, the Highlands School District will work to combat the problems associated with substance abuse that permeate our society.

*See Appendices

FIGHTING/PHYSICAL ALTERCATION/ASSAULT

A physical altercation is an unsafe physical act such as pushing, kicking, or shoving. A **fight occurs when two or more students engage in physical altercations**, such as hitting, punching, or kicking. If a child chooses to retaliate, they have chosen to participate in the fight.

An **assault** is defined as a violent physical or verbal attack intended to injure another person. The difference between an assault and a fight is that in an assault, **the victim does not**

participate or retaliate. When an assault occurs, the police may be called, a citation may be issued, and the student may be arrested. In addition, the student will receive an out-of-school suspension and will have the possibility of expulsion, depending on the severity of the assault.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is “to annoy or torment repeatedly and persistently.” This includes any derogatory sexual, racial, and ethnic remarks, and personal intimidation. After a thorough investigation by the school’s administration, students found guilty of harassing other students or staff members will face severe disciplinary actions. **These actions may include, but are not limited to, a restriction from school activities, assigned detention, a suspension from school, a citation for harassment filed with the district justice, and a school board expulsion hearing.**

LEAVING THE BUILDING

Leaving the school building without permission is very serious. Police and parents will be notified immediately.

OPEN CONTAINER

1. Students are not permitted to have any open containers in school. Students bringing in unsealed beverages must empty or dispose of them upon arrival.
2. Students are permitted to bring refillable water bottles. Upon entry, these bottles must be empty. This includes parents/guardians dropping off items for students. No ice is permitted in water bottles.
3. All food and drinks, except water, are only permitted in the cafeteria. Students who bring large bags or boxes of food will have them confiscated. These situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

FOOD DELIVERY

Highlands School District does not accept delivery of food from outside entities (i.e., pizza, DoorDash, GrubHub, etc.) Any deliveries will be declined, and they will not be reimbursed.

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

The use of profanity and/or abusive or inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Profanity involves vulgar speech and/or actions. Abusive language involves ethnic, religious, racial, and/or sexual slurs. Inappropriate language includes substitute curse words and put-downs.

SUSPENSION

Out-of-school suspension is a **severe** disciplinary consequence in which a student is released to a parent/guardian for a designated period. During this time, the student must remain at home during school hours. A student on suspension is not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities. In addition, when a student is suspended and a parent/guardian has been contacted, they must pick up the student at the school ASAP.

When students are suspended from school, they may not attend any school function or activity. Students who attend a function or event during their suspension will have their suspension extended and may receive a citation for trespassing. This also applies to suspensions that stretch over a weekend, including school events that occur on Fridays, Saturdays, and/or Sundays.

SUSPENSION WHEN SCHOOL IS CANCELED

If a suspension falls on a day that school is canceled for some reason, such as a snow day, that day **WILL NOT** count as a suspension day. The suspension will continue to the next day that school is in session. For example, if the suspension falls on a Tuesday and school is canceled that day due to snow, the suspension will be moved to Wednesday. Thus, the suspended student should not return to school on Wednesday, but should return on Thursday.

TARDY TO CLASS

Students are considered tardy if they arrive at class after the teacher has begun with no pass. After three tardies, students will earn a lunch detention/choice detention and a phone call home. Teachers will work with parents and students with chronic tardiness concerns.

THEFT

Student has, has passed on, or is responsible for removing someone else's property, or has signed a person's name without that person's permission.

THREATS

Threats are defined as an act or reference to do bodily harm. Threatening another student or staff member verbally or physically is intolerable and is considered severe.

VANDALISM

Vandalism is the damage and/or defacing of school property. The standard repair and maintenance of school equipment and buildings is a costly item in the school budget. When

school property is damaged or destroyed through vandalism, it is inconvenient for students and staff of the affected building and places an unfair burden on the taxpayer. Parents are financially responsible for the cost of repair or replacement if the damage has been done deliberately.

WEAPONS

The definition of “weapon” includes, but is not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, martial arts device, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, handgun, shotgun, rifle, chemical agent (such as mace or pepper spray), explosive device, or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting injury.

The definition of “firearm” includes firearms of any type that will or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, any destructive device, pellet gun, BB gun, or look-alike firearm, whether capable of operation, loaded or unloaded.

Students suspected of possessing a weapon are subject to a search of pockets, lockers, coats, book bags, purses, and cars parked on school property. Regulations also permit the use of reasonable force by school officials to obtain a weapon or an otherwise dangerous object. If a student resists a search, the local police will be called for assistance.

*See Appendices

CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSE STRUCTURE

The examples provided in this Code of Conduct are not to be construed as limiting the behaviors that may require disciplinary action by school personnel. The following misconduct/response structure includes four levels. **Levels I, II, III, and IV represent a continuum of misbehaviors based on the seriousness of the act and the frequency of the occurrence, determined by school administration.** Students should avoid the behaviors listed as examples under each level and, instead, exhibit good conduct. Any student found in violation of Board Policy and District rules and regulations will receive appropriate disciplinary action.

<p align="center">Level I Definition</p>	<p align="center">Examples of Level I Misbehaviors include, but not limited to:</p>	<p align="center">Examples of Disciplinary Actions, but not limited to:</p>
<p>Misbehavior on the part of the student which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school.</p> <p>These misbehaviors are usually handled by individual staff members, but sometimes require the intervention of other school support personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom/school disturbance or disruptive/inappropriate classroom/school behavior ● Non-defiant failure to complete or carry out directions ● Bringing Bluetooth speakers, cell phones, cameras, and other electronic devices without authorization ● Eating outside cafeteria or in unauthorized area(s) ● Failing to have or return required forms, books, library books, materials, and equipment ● Littering ● Loitering ● Running or shouting in the halls ● Unauthorized presence in the halls or other school areas ● Inappropriate display of affection ● Unauthorized sale of non-harmful items ● Classroom tardiness and first offense class cut ● Lying ● Name calling ● Violation of Dress Code ● Inappropriate language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private conversation with student ● Verbal warning or written reprimand ● Special Assignment ● Written Assignment ● Detention ● Denial of privileges ● Confiscation ● Rams Reflection Room ● Isolation in class

Level II Behaviors

Level II Definition of Behaviors	Examples of Level II Misbehaviors include, but not limited to:	Examples of Disciplinary Actions, but not limited to:
<p>Frequent or serious misbehavior that disrupts the learning environment of the school.</p> <p>These infractions, which usually result from the continuation of Level I misbehaviors, require the intervention of administrative personnel level because the execution of Level I disciplinary options has failed to correct the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extreme Level I misconduct ● Continuation of Level I misconduct ● Abusive, obscene, or disrespectful language, writing, or gestures ● Using forged notes or excuses ● Unsafe/disorderly bus conduct ● Unsafe/disorderly cafeteria conduct ● Violation of school attendance policies (e.g. tardiness; truancy; leaving school property without permission; 2nd offense cutting class; unexcused absence) ● Failure to serve detentions within reasonable time ● Unauthorized possession or use of school property, facilities, lockers ● Hazing ● Bullying/Cyberbullying ● Plagiarism/Cheating ● Misbehavior during field trips or school programs ● Open defiance of authority; willful refusal to do as ordered; or any form of insubordination ● Repeated violation of dress guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent Contact ● Parent/Student/Teacher conference ● Behavior Contract ● Modified day ● Detentions ● Denial of privileges/extracurricular activities ● ASA ● Rams Reflection Room ● Out of school suspension ● Confiscation ● Temporary removal or permanent removal from bus or area ● Restitution of damaged property ● Citation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate use of electronic devices ● Using, installing, or downloading unauthorized software (i.e. games, music, etc.) ● Horseplay (unsafe acts such as pushing, shoving, running, jumping etc.) ● Verbal harassment of others ● Possession of any article disruptive to the school day ● Leaving room without permission ● Throwing objects without the intent to harm 	
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Level III Behaviors

Level III Definition of Behaviors	Examples of Level III Misbehaviors include, but not limited to:	Examples of Disciplinary Actions, but not limited to:
Frequent or serious misbehaviors that tend to disrupt the learning climate of the school and/or acts directed against persons or properties that endanger the health or safety of others in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuation of or extreme Level II misconduct ● Vandalism ● 3rd offense truancy ● Petty theft ● Instigation ● Fighting ● Assault ● Minority, ethnic, or racial slurs or intimidation ● Trespassing on or in school property when closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent Contact ● School conference ● Detention ● Confiscation ● Temporary removal from area (i.e. class, cafeteria, etc.) ● Rams Reflection Room ● Out of school suspension ● ASA ● Denial of privileges/extracurricular activities ● Temporary removal or full removal from bus ● Restitution of property or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refusal to leave school property when ordered to do so ● Intimidating others ● Hazing ● Bullying/Cyberbullying ● Sexting or any inappropriate material on any electronic or cellular device. ● Destruction of the property of others ● Lewdness or indecent exposure ● Possession or use of tobacco, matches, e-cigarettes, lighters, vapes, vaping material, etc. ● Harassment ● Sexual harassment ● Spitting on individuals or property ● Inappropriate use of electronic devices ● Throwing objects that can cause harm or damage. ● Gross disrespect towards staff member 	<p>damages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Referral to police or district magistrate ● Citation
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Level IV Behaviors

Level IV Definition of Behaviors	Examples of Level IV Misbehaviors include, but not limited to:	Examples of Disciplinary Actions, but not limited to:
Frequent or serious misbehaviors that tend to disrupt the learning climate of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuation of, or extreme Level III misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expulsion ● Citation ● Confiscation

<p>the school. Acts directed against persons or property which could, or do, pose a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others in the school.</p> <p>Such acts will require administrative action which could result in the immediate removal of the student from school and the possible intervention of law enforcement authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extortion or attempted extortion ● Bomb threat or threatening phone calls ● Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons ● Fighting ● Assault ● Lighted or ignited objects ● Theft or possession/sale of stolen property ● Arson or attempted arson ● Hacking, cracking, or tampering with the network/computers ● Inappropriate use of electronic devices ● Transfer/sale/possession /purchase/procurement /distribution/use or under the influence of unauthorized substances (e.g., drugs, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia) ● Possession, sale, or use of firecrackers, cherry bombs, or other fireworks ● Disorderly conduct ● Unauthorized use of fire alarm or equipment ● Other violations of federal, state, or local laws ● Terroristic threats ● Terroristic acts ● Repeated incidents of bullying/cyberbullying ● Retaliation against a student for reporting bullying or extortion, or for assisting in an investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rams Reflection Room ● Out of school suspension ● Permanent removal from bus ● Restitution for damages to or loss of property ● ASA ● Referral to police or district justice ● Referral to outside agency
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AFTER SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE (ASA)

The After School Alternative (ASA) program is designed to help students maintain grades and attendance when an Out-of-School suspension is assigned or to prevent an Out-of-School Suspension. The student will be required to report to the Middle School Office for the ASA session that will run from **3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** The student will receive all of their schoolwork for that day at ASA. Failure to report to ASA will result in the student being marked as an unexcused absence, and further consequences may be issued.

ASA EXPECTATIONS:

- Students must be in the office by 3:00 p.m. Any student arriving after 3:15 p.m. will be turned away, and the student will be marked as an illegal or unexcused absence.
- Students should bring all the materials they would for class.
- Students will work for the duration of ASA.
- One 10-minute break will be given at 4:15 p.m.
- All classroom rules apply. In the event a student is asked to leave, the student will be marked as an illegal or unexcused absence.

RAMS REFLECTION ROOM (RRR)

The RAMS Reflection Room is designed to help students learn socio-emotional skills that will help them make better choices for behavior in the future. In addition to two group lessons with the behavioral specialist, students will work one-on-one with the behavioral specialist twice during the school day, in addition to completing their regular assignments.

RRR EXPECTATIONS:

- Report to the main office at 8:15 a.m. after checking in with their HR teacher.
- Bring books, materials, pencils, and any other needed supplies. Assignments will be collected through the main office for all students assigned to the RRR that day.
- If students are uncooperative in the RRR, additional consequences may be assigned.
- All students with special education services will receive those services in the RRR.
- Students must complete additional RRR assignments and activities as directed. Some documents require a parent's signature for validation of the time spent.

DETENTION

- Detention is held Monday through Thursday from 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- Students will report to the cafeteria at 3:10 to serve their detention.
- Students must complete their schoolwork and work during the entire detention.

- Students who do not follow the rules of detention may earn further disciplinary action.
- Students who skip a detention could receive disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the building administration.

SECTION 4—PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Children do better in school when their family takes an active role in their education. There are many ways for us to look at parent involvement, and at least six different categories of involvement have been encouraged by successful schools. At Highlands, parents are encouraged to become as active as possible, including all these levels of involvement:

Parenting Level - Ensuring regular attendance, getting the child to the school bus or the school building on time, calling to report your child is sick, making sure the child completes homework and assignments, congratulating a child’s success, supporting the school’s discipline, attending the Back-to-School Night, and Teacher Conference days.

Communicating Level - Two-way communication includes home-to-school, sending in an excuse or doctor’s excuse when a child has missed a day of school, signing the homework planner each night, calling the child’s teacher when there is a concern, returning calls from the school, keeping the Emergency Card up to date with working/current phone numbers and contact information.

Volunteering Level - Joining and/or attending the PTO, participating in the school Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), helping with one of the many school-wide student activities, becoming a weekly classroom or office helper, and reading in classrooms to groups of children.

*See note below regarding VOLUNTEERING in our schools.

Home Learning Level - Working on the class work or homework papers with your child to assess for yourself what your child knows and can do, and providing contact with teachers or tutors to assist your child with academic weaknesses.

Decision Making Level - Engage in the public meetings and open forums of the district-wide Title I PAC, join the PTO Board, and collaborate with other families to develop an Action Plan for your school.

Community Collaboration - Participate in Family Literacy activities at the school, the Community Library, and other locations. This helps extend the contacts our Board of School

Directors has developed to involve community partners and local businesses in our education programs.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents can schedule conferences with teachers and principals any day of the school year by calling the school to make an appointment. In addition, the district has scheduled several parent-oriented events throughout the year when parents can exchange ideas and get information concerning the schools and their children.

A day in November is scheduled for Parent-Teacher Conference Day, held at all schools in the district. The purpose of this day-long event is to allow parents to become acquainted with all their children's teachers and to receive information on student potential, performance, and achievement early in the school year.

In addition, Back to School Nights are scheduled in September at each school.

Since time limits at these events prohibit lengthy discussions on serious problems, parents are invited to make appointments in advance to discuss issues at a time convenient for both parties.

VOLUNTEERS

Highlands School District welcomes parents and community members into the district as volunteers. The district believes it is essential to include the community in its mission to build foundations for the futures of our students. Many programs, extracurricular activities, events, and experiences would not be possible without the graciousness of volunteers. The district anticipates a cordial relationship with you, as a volunteer, and thanks you for your time and dedication to our youth.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Minimum of 18 years of age, unless the volunteer is a high school student in a peer-mentoring position.
- Adhere to all regulations, policies, and procedures of the Highlands School District.
- Maintain confidentiality when volunteering within the schools.
- Provide State Criminal Record Check and State Child Abuse clearances, as well as FBI clearance or Arrest/Conviction Form, depending on the period of residency in Pennsylvania. Information about how to obtain the necessary clearances is posted on the school website at www.goldenrams.com/volunteer

APPENDICES: SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

This Student-Parent Handbook operates under the Highlands School District Board of Directors' policies. It is designed to support and reinforce the expectations set forth by the Board.

Please click the following link to view these and all other district policies, which include but are not limited to the following:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/high/Board.nsf/vpublic?open#>

Policy Number	Policy Title / Summary
103	Nondiscrimination / Title IX
200	Enrollment
204	Attendance
209	Health Examinations / Screenings
209.1	Food Allergy Management
210.1	Possession / Use of Asthma Inhalers & Epi-Pens
218.1	Weapons
220	Student Expression / Media

226	Student Use of Medications
229	Student Fundraising
233	Suspension & Expulsion
236.1	Threat Assessment
237	Education of Students with Disabilities
246	School Wellness
247	Hazardous Materials
252	Dating Violence
806	Child / Student Abuse
810	Transportation Safety
817	Privacy
824	Acceptable Use of Technology