

Coach/Advisor Handbook and Informational Guide 2026-27



Adopted by Thompson Falls School Board:

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This document has been developed by the Thompson Falls School District in order to familiarize coaches/advisors with what is expected of them. This handbook should be seen as a reference to assist you in the completion of your duties as a coach/advisor.

1.2 Philosophy

Our Extra-Curricular Mission and Program Goals are both identified in the ***Athletic Handbook and Extra-Curricular Student Contract***. It is your responsibility to become familiar with these, because they are a big part of why we are here. In general, we believe that academics are the main goal of the school but athletics are a very important part of education. Social, emotional, and moral development are particularly important contributions of the athletic program along with positive models that promote quality leadership. Athletics are programs intended for the talented and are extensions of the physical education program in both activity and philosophy. The personal examples, those connected with the program set, will do much to ensure the continued success of Thompson Falls School District Activities/Athletics.

2. EXPECTATIONS

This section describes the many events that may pertain to your season and outline what will be expected of you. **Coach/Advisor shall adhere to all District Policies and Procedures at all times.**

2.1 Legal Duties for Athletic Coach/Advisor

Several obligations or duties have been identified as absolute requirements for coaches/advisors.

DUTY TO PLAN – This is a comprehensive requirement that transcends all other duties. Inherent in this duty is the need to continually conduct focused analyses of potential hazards and to develop responsive strategies that prevent or reduce the potential for injury and loss in the following areas: coach/advising competence; medical screening; appropriate activities that consider age, maturity and environmental conditions; facility and equipment evaluation and improvement; injury response; warnings to athletes and their families; insurance of athletes; child advocacy in cases of alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) or family neglect or abuse. Plans and policies should be rigorously implemented unless dangerous conditions prevent implementation. Plans should become policy documents and updated regularly by administrators, coaches/advisors and experts in specific areas (e.g. equipment, emergency response, etc.). Negligence can be alleged when an injury loss results from no planning, inadequate planning or when plans are developed but ignored.

DUTY TO SUPERVISE – **A coach/advisor must be physically present, provide supervision and control of impulsive behavior, competent instruction, structured practices that are appropriate for the age and maturity of players, prevent foreseeable injuries and respond to injury or trauma in an approved manner. This includes locker rooms, fields, gyms, buses, weight rooms, hotels, restaurants, etc. for both home and away activities.**

This duty requires supervisors to ensure that facilities are locked and that students are denied access when a competent staff member cannot be physically present to supervise. Supervision responsibilities also pertain to athletics administrators who are expected to be able to supervise coach/advising staff members competently. In addition, athletics administrators are expected to supervise contests to ensure that spectators do not create an unsafe or disruptive environment. A further extension of this duty is the need to supervise the condition, safe usage, maintenance and upkeep of equipment and facilities.

The coaches/advisor's responsibility is to their participants and ensuring they are properly supervised. Therefore, coaches/advisors are not permitted to have any non-participants that require supervision at their practices. In accordance with school policy, unattended individuals are not permitted to wander school facilities or grounds. Any visitor must remain as a non-distraction to the practice.

DUTY TO ASSESS ATHLETES READINESS FOR PRACTICE AND COMPETITION - Athletics administrators and coach/advisor are required to assess the health and physical or maturational readiness skills and physical condition of athletes. A progression of skill development and conditioning improvement should be apparent from practice plans. Athletes must also be medically screened in accordance with state association regulations before participating in practice or competition. Moreover, some children may require specialized medical assessment to ascertain the existence of congenital disorders or the existence of a physical condition that predisposes the athlete to injury. In addition, injured athletes who require the services of a physician may not return to practice or competition without written permission of the physician. A new area of concern that may grow from the duty is the difficulty of assessing the readiness of handicapped children who are referred for practice and competition under the American With Disabilities Act or the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. In these cases, it is imperative that medical and multidisciplinary team approval and recommendation be obtained before a handicapped student becomes a candidate for practice and competition.

DUTY TO MAINTAIN SAFE PLAYING CONDITIONS – Coaches/advisors are considered trained professionals who possess a higher level of knowledge and skill that permits them to identify foreseeable causes of injury specific to a sport and inherent in defective equipment or hazardous environments. Courts have held athletics

supervisors responsible to improve unsafe environments, repair, or remove defective equipment or disallow access to unsafe equipment or environments. The use of sport-specific equipment safety checklists can be helpful in enhancing the safety of participants. In addition, weather conditions must be considered. Athletes should not be subjected to intense or prolonged conditioning during periods of extreme heat and humidity or when frostbite may be a factor. In addition, a plan for monitoring and responding to dangerous weather conditions is necessary. Building codes and laws must be observed and implemented with respect to capacity, ventilation, air filtration and lighting.

DUTY TO PROVIDE PROPER EQUIPMENT – coach/advisor and athletic administrators must ensure athletes are properly equipped with equipment that is appropriate for the age and maturity of the athletes and that is clean, durable and safe. Fitting should be carried out in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. This is especially important for protective equipment which must carry a National Operating Commission on Safety in Athletics Equipment (NOCSAE) certification and must be checked for proper fit and wearing. Athletes must wear protective equipment any time they are exposed to the full rigors of contact in practice or competition. Selection of equipment must also consider the age and maturity of the athletes.

DUTY TO INSTRUCT PROPERLY – Athletics practice must be characterized by instruction that accounts for a logical sequence of fundamentals that consider the developmental level of the athlete and that lead to an enhanced progression of player knowledge, skill and capability. In this regard, instruction must move from simple to complex and known to unknown. Instructor-coach/advisor must be properly prepared to provide appropriate and sequential instruction and to identify and avoid dangerous practices or conditions. Instruction must demonstrate appropriate and safe techniques and must include warning about unsafe techniques and prohibited practices.

DUTY TO MATCH ATHLETES –Athletes should be matched with consideration for maturity, skill, age, size and speed. To the degree possible, mismatches should be avoided in all categories.

DUTY TO CONDITION PROPERLY – Practices must account for a progression of cardiovascular and musculo-skeletal conditioning regimens that prepare athletes sequentially for more challenging practices and competitive activities. Consideration must be given to student readiness and maturational factors. In addition, consideration should include weather conditions and their impact on student health.

DUTY TO WARN – Coaches/advisors are required to warn parents and athletes of unsafe practices that are specific to a sport and the potential for injury or death. This warning should be issued in writing and both athletes and parents should be required to provide written certification of their comprehension. Videos of safety instructions and warnings to players and parents are recommended.

DUTY TO ENSURE ATHLETES ARE COVERED BY INJURY INSURANCE – Athletic administrators and coaches/advisors must screen athletes to ensure that family and/or school insurance provides a basic level of medical coverage. Athletes should not be allowed to participate without injury insurance. Deductible and copayment requirements should be clearly explained to parents and athletes. Comprehension should be required of parents and athletes.

DUTY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY CARE – Coaches/advisors are expected to be able to administer accepted, prioritized, standard first aid procedures in response to a range of traumatic injuries – especially those that are potentially life-threatening.

DUTY TO DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN – Athletic administrators and coaches/advisors must develop site-specific plans for managing uninjured team members while emergency care is being administered to an injured athlete. In addition, plans must be in place to: ensure access to a telephone, a stocked first aid kit,

spine board and other emergency response equipment. The plan should also account for a timely call to EMS and an expedited access by EMS to the injured athlete by stationing coach/advisor or team members at driveways, parking lots, entry doors and remote hallways.

DUTY TO PROVIDE PROPER TRANSPORTATION – In general, all students will travel to scrimmages and competitions on school provided transportation. Athletes are prohibited from driving to an out of town competition without permission from the athletic director or principal and a written note from their parents. Parents/legal guardians may provide written permission to the coach/advisor for their child to ride home from an activity. A parent CANNOT sign out another student for which they are not the guardian. This must be arranged with the administration and coach/advisor in advance of the departure to this event.

2.2 Mandated Reporter

A District employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a student may be an abused or neglected child, regardless of whether the person suspected of causing the abuse or neglect is a parents or other person responsible for the child's welfare, shall report such a case to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and notify the building administrator that a report has been made. An employee does not discharge the obligation to personally report by notifying the Superintendent or building administrator. Any District employee who fails to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, or who prevents another person from doing so, may be civilly liable for damages caused by such failure or prevention and is guilty of a misdemeanor. The employee will also be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. In the event that a DPHHS reveals information to an employee after he or she makes a report or requests that information be shared with another employee, employees receiving such information shall keep the information confidential. Please refer to **Policy 5232**.

How do I make a report?

Immediately contact a school official.

Call 1-866-820-5437 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911 or call your local police first. Then, call MT DPHHS to make a report. Calling law enforcement is not the same as reporting to MT DPHHS. You must notify MT DPHHS directly.

When making reports, DPHHS prefers first-party witnesses, not second-hand witnesses.

2.3 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students

Harassment is any conduct, verbal, written or physical, on or off campus, which has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's educational or work performance at school, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive education, work or living environment. Harassment on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or age includes harassment of an individual in terms of a stereotyped group characteristic, or because of that person's identification with a particular group.

The Thompson Falls School District is committed to a positive and productive working and learning environment free of discrimination. Discrimination adversely affects morale and interferes with employee and student ability to work and learn. The District prohibits sexual harassment or intimidation of its employees or students, whether committed by a co-worker, supervisor, subordinate, contractor, volunteer or student, and finds such behavior just cause for disciplinary action. Whereas sexual harassment substantially compromises the attainment of educational excellence, the District will not tolerate such behavior between members of the same or opposite sex.

Furthermore, the District prohibits retaliation against any employee or student because he or she has made a report of alleged sexual harassment or against any employee or student who has testified, assisted, or participated in the investigation of a report. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or adverse pressure. Retaliation is itself a violation of federal and state regulations prohibiting discrimination and will lead to disciplinary action against the offender.

This policy applies to individuals attending any events on District property, whether or not District-sponsored, and to any school-sponsored events, regardless of location.

"Hazing" includes but is not limited to any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment, including but not limited to forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed, or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.

"Bullying" means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication ("cyberbullying") or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or repeated, and that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or anywhere conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a student or staff member or an interference with school purposes or an educational function, and that has the effect of:

- a. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- b. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- c. Creating a hostile educational environment, or;
- d. Substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

2.4 Handbooks

Start the season off with clear communication. One of the most important things is that you be very clear and understand the rules by which this athletic program is governed. All coaching/advising staff should be very familiar with the ***Athletic & Activities Handbook and Extra-Curricular Student Contract*** and enforce the rules. The handbook is simply a brief outline of many of the school policies adopted by the School Board. Along with this, the school has a Student Handbook. These may be of interest to you depending on your level of instruction. You should also be aware of the Employee Handbook which lays out many other aspects of working at Thompson Falls School District. These handbooks will be provided to you digitally but are also available in print upon request.

2.5 Vertical Team Approach

Coaches/advisors should work together in a vertical team approach. The varsity coach/advisor acts as the head of the vertical team. Every member of the coaching/advising staff should have a voice in this process. The junior varsity/C team coach/advisor is to work in coordination with the varsity coach/advisor to ensure a well-developed program right down the line through the junior high coach/advisor. By working together, we build cohesion throughout the levels and improve the program overall.

2.6 Coach/Advisor Certification

According to the MHSA all varsity and sub-varsity coaches/advisors will complete the necessary certification for their sport. This includes the rules clinics (general and sports specific), concussion management, fundamentals of coach/advising, CPR/AED and coaching mental wellness. The district will pay for the courses. It is up to the coach/advisor to attend and pass all requirements. In addition, failure to do so by the start of the season will result in termination of your contract. All coaches/advisors, paid or volunteer, must have certifications in all courses. All coursework is found on www.NFHSLearn.com. In addition, all coaches/advisors, paid or volunteer, must have a background check and fingerprinting on file with the District Office.

2.7 Evaluation Process

The evaluation process includes a number of steps and meetings to help ensure we are heading in the right direction. At the end of the season:

- The coach/advisor will reflect upon a set of program goals defined by the Activities Director and coach/advisor.
- The Activities Director will evaluate the coach/advisor based upon a set of standards defined ahead of time.
- The Activities Director will review the evaluation with the coach/advisor and a final document will be created to submit to the employee file. Coaches/advisors may attach any additional information to this document to be included in the file.
- Once this is done and you have accounted for all items (keys, equipment, uniforms & varsity scorebook) the Activities Director will submit the form to the Clerk for your check to be cut.

2.8 Confidentiality

Student-athletes have the right to confidentiality. Any discussion of grades, discipline, or personal problems must be done in private. Any items discussed should remain in strictest confidence. If you believe a student to be at risk, you must give their name to a member of administration. The only time grades can be discussed is in general terms such as, "Grades are closing and you need to make sure you have all your work done." Discipline or consequences related to the activity is the responsibility of the coaching staff and/or administration. Student-athletes should not be involved in the disciplinary process of their teammate(s).

3. COMMUNICATION

Communication is one of the most important parts of any job. A coach/advisor may not agree with decisions of the administration or board, but it is important to communicate the disagreement in a professional manner so other opinions can be considered. Follow the chain of command when communicating your concerns.

3.1 Administration

All athletic coaches/advisors report directly to the Activities Director. Each paid position will be evaluated on the basis of personal performance as well as team performance (not talking about season record). This process is to ensure that we keep heading in the right direction as an athletic program. Your input is very important. It is expected that during the season if a problem arises both sides will be open and frank.

Many procedures are often established at an administrative or board level, this includes athletic policy. At any time there are changes, it is expected that the coaches/advisors will take an active part in providing input. Once something is passed and put into practice, it is expected that all coach/advising staff will abide by the rules without exception, whether he/she personally agrees or not.

3.2 Students

Coaches/advisors are expected to provide the best possible leadership in their programs. Coaching/advising after all is more than just the passing of skills but really the mentoring of a child and further developing him/her as a person. Example: enthusiasm and sincerity are the means of developing such leadership. All students should understand what is expected of them from day one.

You should provide them with a set of written team policies/rules for which they are held accountable for. Once they have signed off on the handbook, it states that if a coach/advisor has his/her own additional expectations they will be enforced as long as they do not conflict with current policy. Consider each individual disciplinary situation carefully and make sure that if there is any question you ask for assistance. It is essential that any such measure be carried out in a completely fair and consistent manner. The Activities Director or an administrator is always available for such cases.

3.3 Parents

We must keep in mind that most parents are sincerely concerned with the activities their sons or daughters are involved in. With this in mind, it is suggested that each coach/advisor prepare a short letter or meet with parents for the purpose of explaining the program. This can be done at your digression but it is highly recommended that you have contact at least at the beginning of the season. Other methods of communication are encouraged and the Activities Director will assist you in any such endeavor. **Keep the Activities Director informed of all public relations material and meetings.** Nothing should go out with the school's name on it before it passes through the administration's hands in advance.

3.4 School

Thompson Falls School District's primary goal is to educate the students and that should always come first. Coaches/advisors who are also teachers are reminded that their primary responsibility is to their academic area. Coaching/advising is an additional responsibility with additional compensation. All on-staff coaches/advisors are to check with their administrator if they need to miss a faculty meeting and should stay in communication with staff.

3.5 Community

Activities in this school district are primarily for the educational advancement of our students. However, the public is the support for our program; therefore, we recognize a responsibility to them. They should share in our pride and feel as much a part of our program as possible. Pressure from the public in any form is to be resisted and reported to the Activities Director at once. We will strive to make our community comfortable and welcome at all of our events.

3.6 Team/Group Communication

All communication between coaches/advisors and students should be done as a group. For example, using the Remind App, TeamReach App, or school email are acceptable platforms for group communications. **DO NOT use direct text messaging for school related activities.**

4. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 Crowd Influence

Coaches/advisors are reminded of their influence on crowds through their action from the bench and expected to act accordingly.

4.2 Participant Behavior

Coaches/advisors are responsible for the proper behavior of their players before, during, and after the contest. Corrective action should immediately follow all cases of player and team misconduct during a contest or practice. One of the most important lessons of athletics is the control of emotions in a mature manner. We must not overlook the potential for helping our athletes learn this lesson.

- In the event an athlete is in violation of appropriate conduct, i.e. technical in basketball, the Activities Director should be notified. The coach/advisor will meet to discuss the possible consequences. The athlete may be required to meet with the administration. Athletes expelled from a contest will be suspended for future games until the administration has reviewed the case.
- Obscene gestures will not be tolerated. An athlete will face team and school suspension for such actions.
- Furthermore, a coach/advisor or player making physical contact with an official will be handled by the administration.

4.3 Supervision

Locker room supervision is important for the players' safety and supervision of equipment to minimize damages. **Coaches/advisors are expected to make proper arrangements for supervision (one member from the**

coach/advising staff must be the last person to leave any area). This includes both practices and games/activities. See 2.1 for more detail.

4.4 Purchasing

All equipment/uniforms/merchandise for teams or activities must be approved before purchasing through the Activities Director and administrator to prevent Title IX violations. Any coach/advisor making purchases not in the budget will be financially responsible for the item(s) out of their own pocket. The school district will NOT be responsible for any debts accrued. No purchases may be made without **an online purchase order** signed by administration in advance, so please plan ahead. **No outside accounts are permitted by law, all funds and expenditures must go through student activities or the district office.**

4.5 Rosters

Prior to the first practice, the Activities Director will provide a list of students eligible to participate in activities. All coaches/advisors will provide a list of all athletes on their squads to the Activities Directors after the first week of practice. This will be done alphabetically by grade, seniors first. Also included will be height and uniform number(s). The coach/advisor will also provide updated game rosters 24 hours prior to all games.

4.6 Practice Time Limits

All practice sessions should be coordinated with the Activities Director to prevent scheduling conflicts.

4.7 Practice & Travel Schedules

Practice & travel Schedules will be determined no later than the Friday before the coming week and posted some time during that weekend for staff, students, and parents. These schedules are not to be changed unless there are extreme circumstances. Coaches/advisors will work with the Activities Director to develop schedules. If the coach/advisor needs to cancel a practice they need to notify the Activities Director and the school office.

4.8 Out of Season Sports Activity

MHSA has a very strict policy on out-of-season interaction between coaches/advisors and players. Please discuss this policy with the Activities Director upon being hired.

4.9 Organization

Coaches/advisors are expected to be diligent in their attention to the details of coaching/advising; reports, inventory, requests, collecting of equipment, attendance at coach/advisor meetings, cleanliness of locker rooms/coaches office including away activities etc.

4.10 Sunday Practice

There will be NO SUNDAY PRACTICES.

4.11 Sub Varsity Level Teams

Coaches/advisors of Sub Varsity and Jr. High teams should keep in mind the purpose of the Sub Varsity/Jr. High program is developmental. This should be foremost in the coach/advisor's philosophy. At this stage it is more about getting students interested, working on fundamental skills, teaching students to be part of a team, and keeping them involved in extracurricular activities.

4.12 Cut Exception

Coaches/advisors cannot remove a player from a team. Should a player require removal, the Activities Director, Principal, and Superintendent must be involved in that process. Participation in extracurricular activities is a right under Montana Law.

4.13 Two Sport Participation

Students may participate in more than one sport per season. Coaches/advisors are not to discourage students from participating in two sports. The Activities Director has made sure that students will be able to participate in two sports and coaches/advisors will refrain from discouraging students from doing so.

4.14 Bussing

All transportation for athletic events will be arranged by the Activities Director and/or administration. Non-sport advisors are required to submit transportation requests to their administrator. All coaches/advisors will ride the bus to and from games, unless otherwise cleared through the Activities Director. Coaches/advisors are expected to control athlete behavior on the bus. Only members of the coaching/advisory staff and their participants are allowed to ride the bus to and from athletic events unless approved by the administrator. A student's parent/guardian may check out a student at the conclusion of an activity. This must be completed in writing with the coach/advisor. Generally, the coach/advisor will have a checkout sheet available to parents after the game. A parent CANNOT sign out another student for which they are not the guardian. This must be arranged with the administration and coach/advisor in advance of the departure to this event.

4.15 Cancellations Due to Weather

Weather is a big variable in school activities. Canceling events or practices will be done as early as possible. All activities should have a well-developed communication chain in place for such occurrences that include both students and parents. Every attempt will be made to play the scheduled games. A decision will be made by noon by the Activities Director and the administration.

4.16 Fundraising

All fundraising programs must be approved by the Activities Director and administration who report to the Superintendent. Advanced knowledge of any type of fundraising is required. The School Board has done this to avoid any conflicts with existing approved fundraisers. This is a requirement without exception. MHSA, Federal Title IX, and district guidelines must be followed. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the administration. No outside accounts are permitted by law, all funds including donations and expenditures must go through student activities or the district office.

4.17 Due Process

Any violation of rules, regulations, and/or policies may require a meeting between the student, coach/advisor, and the Activities Director and/or administration. The student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be contacted to attend this meeting, should they choose to do so. The student will NOT be permitted to participate in the program until the meeting is held to determine the student's status. Any coach/advisor's rule infraction should be handled in the same manner, if the discipline you administer will cause the athlete to miss substantial playing time. This will eliminate many problems in the long run.

4.18 District Credit Cards

The district credit card may be checked out for travel expenses associated with a school activity. A signed requisition with estimated expenses is required to check out a credit card. Please plan ahead and submit your requisition at least three days prior to travel. The credit card must be returned the next business day after travel with **itemized receipts** for every charge. If itemized receipts are not attached it is the responsibility of the coach/advisor to obtain them.

4.19 Competition Travel

All lodging reservations will be made by the district administrative secretary in cooperation with the district activities director. All persons traveling with the team are expected to exemplify the core values of the district at all times, not just during the competition. Student athletes should maintain proper sleep habits during travel.

Coaches/advisors will make room assignments for overnight trips and set curfew and/or lights-out times based on scheduled game times. Coaches/advisors may collect electronic devices (including cell phones) at any time during travel if they become a distraction. Parents may contact the coaches/advisors for any urgent situation.

A room occupants list must be attached to the reservation if the trip is overnight. The amount allotted for meals will be based on the time of day the group is departing and returning according to current Montana State travel per diem rates. **All paperwork is to be submitted the first working day following travel.**

4.20 Coach/Advisor Travel

All school related travel should be done in a district owned vehicle. If a district owned vehicle is not available and the superintendent approves the use of a personal vehicle for travel related to school activities, submit receipts for mileage to the administrator. When a school vehicle is available for travel, you will not be reimbursed for choosing to take a personal vehicle. Students should not travel in personal vehicles without permission of the student's parents in writing and proof of insurance submitted by the owner of the vehicle to the district office prior to departure. Travel to clinics/conferences must be approved in advance and should be coordinated with other attendees.

Employees required to drive their personal vehicle for authorized school business shall receive a mileage reimbursement, for the distance actually traveled, at a rate equal to the mileage allotment allowed by the United States Internal Revenue Service for the current year, for the first 1,000 miles and three cents per mile less for all miles thereafter traveled within a calendar month. Board Policy 7336

It is the expectation of the district for coaches of the same gender to room together. Head coaches will have their own room. All lodging reservations will be made by the district administrative secretary in cooperation with the district activities director. The state rate should be requested from all hotels.

4.21 Prayer

The U.S. Supreme Court banned school-sponsored prayer in public schools in a 1962 decision, saying that it violated the First Amendment. But students are allowed to meet and pray on school grounds as long as they do so privately and don't try to force others to do the same.

5. SAFETY & WELFARE

5.1 Proof of Insurance

Each student/athlete is required to provide proof of insurance or be covered by school insurance before he/she will be allowed to participate in practices or games.

5.2 Athletic Paperwork

Each student/athlete is required to have all his/her paperwork submitted and approved before being allowed to participate in practices or games.

5.3 Physicals & Doctor's Notes

Athletes must have a physical on file with the school prior to practices. If an athlete is ill and misses school for 5 days or more, is injured or unable to practice or participate in games, or requires surgery, a note from a doctor may be required by the coach/advisor before s/he can resume practice. Concussion protocols must be followed in all activities.

5.4 Emergency Contact Information

It is the responsibility of the coach/advisor to have a medical kit at all times with emergency contact information for each individual student.

5.5 Injury Procedure

Injuries:

- All coaches/advisors are expected to have a thorough knowledge of first aid and be certified in CPR.
- All major injuries are to be reported to the Activities Director within 24 hours and an accident form filled out. Major is defined as not being able to continue to play, practice, or participate in the next activity. Parents must be notified and should be documented every time a participant is injured in an activity.
- In case of an injury requiring immediate examination by a physician, every effort will be made to contact the family.
- Parents will be notified if the athlete is taken to the hospital.
- A member of the coach/advising staff should accompany the athlete, if at all possible.
- Any athlete receiving doctor's care for an injury must have a note from the doctor upon returning to practices.

5.6 Emergency Action Plan

- Coaches/advisors are responsible for not only ensuring they are familiar with the school emergency action plan.
- but that their student athletes are as well. This should be gone over at a minimum of once a season or until everyone on the team is comfortable with the plan.

Please see attached copy of the document.

5.7 Health Concerns of Students

Please contact the school nurse to be informed of any specific health needs of individual students (seizures, diabetes, concussions, etc.)

5.8 Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

Some students have an IEP. That student's case manager (Special Education teacher) will send you a list of accommodations specific to that student. It is required that this **strictly confidential plan** is followed for that student.

6. COACH / ADVISOR CHECKLIST

6.1 Employment Paperwork

Please see the Business Manager in the District Office to complete your district employment paperwork. All paperwork is mandatory and must be completed before your first day of practice.

- Background/Fingerprint check.
- Federal I9 form. (You need two forms of ID or a current passport).
- W4 form.

All coaches/advisors must use a district issued email address for communication of all coaching/advising related information. Personal email accounts cannot be used for school business as required by the Freedom of Information Act and Montana State law.

6.2 First Day or Meeting

- Read and understand this and all other handbooks before you meet with the team.
- Explain your tryout policy.
- Explain your attendance policy at practice.
- Direct the students where to look for schedules, both practice and games.

The Activities Director or administrator will explain the athletic contract to the students.

6.3 General

- Prepare a team roster and turn in to the Activities Director and building secretary one week after the date of the first practice.
- A roster of players on each level should be submitted to the Activities Director and building secretary one week before the first game.
- Submit travel rosters to the Activities Director and building secretary at least one week prior to departure.
- Check all equipment for safety. Notify the Activities Director if there are problems.
- Get a medical kit before the first practice.
- Record all equipment and uniforms issued to athletes. This will help when collecting them. Return ASAP to the Activities Director!
- Check game and practice schedules for accuracy.
- Any new athletes must meet with the Activities Director for the necessary forms, review handbooks and, to check eligibility before they begin.

6.4 Academic Eligibility

Thompson Falls High School students must meet MHSAA eligibility requirements to participate. Grade checks begin the 3rd week of each semester. All work must be completed and grades posted by 8:00 am on the Monday following the end of the semester. No "F's" during the season. Students can practice, but not participate in games or travel until the grade is above failing and they have completed Study Table requirements.

Coaches/advisors will be informed by the Activities Director or administrator of student eligibility the first day of each week beginning the 3rd week of the semester and adhere to the status of each student. The Activities Director or administrator is responsible for informing the students. A student is ineligible if they are failing any classes.

High School Eligibility Policy

- Eligibility checks begin the 3rd week of the school year.
- Eligibility checks take place on the first day of the week at 8:00 am (1 check per week).
 - Eligibility impacts participation Tuesday through the following Monday.
 - Students with an F can practice, but CANNOT: participate in games, sit on the bench, be in the dugout, be on the sidelines, or travel with the team when they are ineligible.
 - Homeschooled students participating in activities will be required to submit grades to the high school office by 8:00 am the first day of the week, for each week of the sports season.
 - A HS or 8th grade student who is ineligible will:
 1. Attend mandatory study time (after school 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm Mondays-Thursdays) until the failing grade is passing.
 2. If the student fails to complete the required study time, they will remain ineligible the following week. Ineligible students are not eligible to travel or miss any school.

Students with D's are strongly encouraged to attend Study Table (after school 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm) until the grade has improved.

Junior High Eligibility Policy

- Eligibility checks begin the 3rd week of practice for each sport.
- Eligibility checks take place on the first day of the week at 8:00 am (1 check per week).
 - Eligibility impacts participation Tuesday through the following Monday.
 - Students with an F can practice, but CANNOT: participate in games, sit on the bench, be in the dugout, be on the sidelines, or travel with the team when they are ineligible.
 - Homeschooled students participating in activities will be required to submit grades to the high school office by 8:00 am the first day of the week, for each week of the sports season.
 - A JH student who is ineligible will:
 1. Attend mandatory study time (after school 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm Mondays-Thursdays) until the failing grade is passing.
 2. If the student fails to complete the required study time, they will remain ineligible the following week. Ineligible students are not eligible to travel or miss any school.

Students with D's are strongly encouraged to attend Study Table (after school 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm) until the grade has improved.

6.5 School Attendance

Attendance for Games or Contests

If a student misses any part of school and is marked absent on the day of a game or activity or the Friday before a Saturday event, they are not eligible to participate in any activity. If the absence is for a medical, legal, or other governmental appointment, a note from the provider must be received by the office before the activity in order for the student to be eligible to participate. The Activities Director or administrator will determine if the absence is excused and notify coaches as to eligibility of the student.

Attendance for Practice

If a student is absent and the absence is for a medical, legal, or other governmental appointment, a note from the provider must be received by the office before practice in order for the student to be eligible to participate in practice that day. If a student is absent for 1 period or less during the school day and does not have the required note, they will attend the mandatory Study Table from 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm Mondays-Thursdays before they are allowed to attend practice to make up for the loss of educational time. If a student is absent for more than 1 period during the school day and the absence is not for a medical, legal, or other governmental appointment, the student is not eligible to attend practice. The Activities Director or administrator will determine if the absence is excused and notify coaches as to eligibility of the student.

Students are expected to attend school after morning practice and be on time for their first class. Failure to attend school could result in loss of playing time.

Any exception to the above is based on a case by case basis at the discretion of the principal.

Coaches/advisors are required to provide the office with a roster at the beginning of the season. Absent athletes will be recorded by the office daily and emailed to the coach/advisor's school email every day. **It is the coach/advisor's responsibility to get the list prior to practice and enforce the attendance policy.**

6.6 Day Before a Game

- Let the Activities Director know if you need items to restock the medical kit.
- Inform athletes of any special instructions or situations.
- Check with the Activities Director for the proper departure time and early dismissal, if needed.

6.7 Game/Activity Day

- Make sure you have all equipment ready for use and prepared.
- Make sure the facilities/field and locker room is picked up and cleaned when you leave.
- Make sure you or another coach/advisor are the last one out of the locker room, out of the facility, off the bus, or off the campus. Do not leave until all of your students have been picked up after away games. Make sure that all doors are locked and securely closed for the locker room, gym, commons entrance, and lower hallway before you leave campus.
- As a varsity coach/advisor make sure YOU call the newspapers or fax/email scores
- If in the case of a serious injury, contact the Activities Director, administrator, and parents.

6.8 Practice Day

- Make sure the first aid kit is with you.

- Lock all doors and turn off all lights before you leave.
- Make sure no equipment of any kind is left around on the field, court, or locker room
- Check for injuries.
- Report any damage to a custodian or contact the Activities Director.
- Report any discipline issues to the Activities Director.
- Clear all unauthorized people from your practice area.

6.9 Post Season

- Collect, clean, and inventory all equipment and uniforms.
- Prepare for awards night, plan on showing up early to help where needed and sign awards.
- Communicate with the Activities Director on athletes who have been selected for all-conference and/or all-state recognition and who have placed at a state competition so boards can be updated in the high school.
- Share the names of athletes who set school records with the Activities Director so boards can be updated in the high school.
- Write down all ideas for improving the following year: equipment needs, uniforms, facilities, etc.
- Turn in keys.
- Make an appointment with the Activities Director for evaluation.
- Fill out all forms and turn them in to the Activities Director.
- Make plans to attend a coach/advising clinic.
- Take an interest in the athlete's out of season class work.
- If you are resigning please inform the Activities Director as soon as possible.

Coach/advising checks will be held until all inventories and reports are completed, all uniforms and equipment are accounted for and stored properly in equipment rooms, locker rooms and offices are cleaned out, and coach/advising evaluations are completed. **It is NOT the responsibility of the Activities Director to collect uniforms.**

7. EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

LOCATION: *Thompson Falls School District*

In the event of an Emergency:

**NOTE: An injured individual should not be moved until evaluated by medical personnel.*

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Emergency..... (911)
 Sanders County Sheriff's Dept.....(406) 827-3584
 Doree Thilmony (Activities Director)..... (406) 827-3561 or (406) 830-6075 (cell)
 Jodi Morgan (High School Principal).....(406) 827-3561 or (406) 369-1701 (cell)
 Len Dorscher (K-8 Principal).....(406) 827-3592 or (208) 841-0816 (cell)
 Bud Scully (Superintendent)(406) 827-3323 or (760) 898-4174 (cell)

1. EMS should be activated for all emergencies including, but not limited to:

- If an individual stops breathing or has no pulse
- Loss of consciousness
- Possible back or neck injury
- Possible heat illness or heat stroke
- Compound or displaced fracture

2. Coach/advisor should stay with the injured student until EMS arrives and relieves them of their responsibility to care for the student.

When calling 911 be prepared to give the following information:

- Your name

- What the emergency is
- What entrance to come to and directions to the location of injured person
- The number of the phone they are calling from

***Stay on line until the dispatcher hangs up.**

3. The caller should update the coach/advisor about the EMS call, and then meet EMS at the appropriate entrance/driveway or notify the staff member working the entrance area to be prepared to quickly and efficiently allow the ambulance access to the facility.

4. Depending on the situation, either the coach/advisor or an assistant coach/advisor *may* accompany the individual to the hospital. The person going with the student should bring the **Emergency Information Card** for that athlete from the **Medical Kit**.

1. The coach/advisor will notify the athlete's parents, and the activities director or principal of the incident. Appropriate paperwork should then be completed as soon as possible after the incident and submitted to the office the next business day.

8. CLOSING STATEMENT

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. It is important that everyone stays aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect many aspects of Thompson Falls School District. Understand that out of all the responsibilities the primary responsibility as Activities Director is first the safety of the students/staff and secondly supporting the coaches/advisors so they can provide a quality program for the students of Thompson Falls School District. **Communication is the foundation of a successful season and working relationship.** Thank you for giving your time and talents to the students of Thompson Falls School District.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of Thompson Falls School District Coach/Advisor Handbook, and I do commit to read and follow these policies.

I am aware that if, at any time, I have questions regarding Thompson Falls School District policies I should direct them to the activities director or administration.

I also am aware that the Thompson Falls School District, at any time, may on reasonable notice, change, add to, or delete from the provisions of the district policies.

Employee's Printed Name

Position

Employee's Signature

Date

Thompson Falls School District #2

STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Those who work in public schools are legally bound to confidentiality. The principles which will be adhered to will include but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Students will not be discussed with persons outside of the school unless the student or his/her parent has granted permission. Additionally, students will not be discussed with those inside the school that are not directly involved in a student's education.
- Students will not be discussed in public places where there is a possibility of others overhearing the conversation.
- All written information regarding students will be securely maintained and may not be disclosed without written student/parent consent. Information about students will not be given out over the phone without specific written permission.
- State, Federal and school policies regarding student educational records will be adhered to.
- Any information about students acquired by service providers will be kept in the strictest confidence.
- Information can be shared when reporting any suspected abuse of a student as required by law.

Please read the following document. Your signature on the handbook acceptance document is your acceptance of this procedure. This procedure has been developed in an effort to protect the right to confidentiality of the students we serve. It also serves to ensure that you are aware of the legal and moral obligation you have to maintain confidentiality.

I accept the privilege and responsibility to have access and to receive information about students enrolled in the Thompson Falls School District. I understand the confidentiality of the material which I read, hear, or discuss. Under no circumstances shall I duplicate, disseminate, or verbalize to unauthorized persons this information.

I fully understand that access to information, whether obtained from records, through my attendance at or involvement in meetings, through discussion with teachers, students, family members, and other service providers is only for the purpose of helping me make informed choices when provided educational services. The information I obtain is considered personal and private and should in no way be used in a prejudicial manner.

THEREFORE, I AGREE that:

My right to enter or make use of confidential information is restricted to my need to know the data or information to perform my job responsibilities. I will keep my computer access password(s) confidential. If another method of accessing a computer system is used, I will restrict its use to myself. I will not discuss any confidential information in any public areas, hallways, gathering spaces, etc.

I will hold all confidential information of which I have knowledge in the truest confidence, as required by law. I agree to utilize confidential information obtained by me only for the benefit of the employee or student or in the performance of my job responsibilities.

I HAVE READ THIS CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS.

Employee Signature _____

Employee Name (print) _____

Date _____