



HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027 School Year

HHS IS A PLACE WHERE ...

Students feel a sense of belonging

We learn from our mistakes

**Students can grow and develop into young
adults**

**Students can seek help when they need it,
are proactive and can advocate for
themselves**

Student voices are heard

Students enjoy being in school

Students and staff respect each other

HHS GRADUATES ARE ...

**Responsible
Community
Members**

**Curious
Independent
Learners**

**Innovative and
Resilient
Problem-
Solvers**

**Compassionate
Communicators**

**Global and
Local Citizens**



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Welcome to Highland High School! We look forward to a great year of learning, friendship, and fun.

This quick guide is meant to help you find answers to the most common questions that students have, however it is not a replacement for the full Student Handbook. You can find a copy by scanning the QR code on this page.

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Can't find an answer to your question?
Check out the full Code of Conduct!



THE BASICS

SCHOOL CALENDAR

BELL SCHEDULES

ATTENDANCE

TRANSPORTATION

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Important Dates

9/8	First Day of School
11/25	Half Day
1/26 - 1/29	Regents Exams
2/12	Half Day
3/5	Half Day
5/18	Budget Vote
6/15-6/24	Regents Exams
6/14	Last Day of Classes

No School

9/21	Yom Kippur
10/12	Fall Break
11/3	Conference Day
11/11	Veteran's Day
11/26-11/27	Thanksgiving
12/24-1/1	Winter Holiday
1/18	MLK Holiday
2/15	President's Day
3/22-3/26	Spring Break
4/30	Conference Day
5/31	Memorial Day
6/18	Juneteenth

[Full Calendar](#)



BELL SCHEDULES

Regular Schedule

45 minute classes

- 1st Period** 7:40 - 8:25
- 2nd Period** 8:28 - 9:15
- 3rd Period** 9:18 - 10:03
- 4th Period** 10:06 - 10:51
- 5th Period** 10:54 - 11:39
- 6th Period** 11:42 - 12:27
- 7th Period** 12:30 - 1:15
- 8th Period** 1:18 - 2:05
- Activity Period** 2:10-2:45

2 Hour Delay

30 minute classes

- 1st Period** 9:40 - 10:10
- 2nd Period** 10:13 - 10:46
- 3rd Period** 10:49 - 11:19
- 4th Period** 11:22 - 11:52
- 5th Period** 11:55 - 12:25
- 6th Period** 12:28 - 12:58
- 7th Period** 1:01 - 1:31
- 8th Period** 1:34 - 2:05

3 Hour Delay

23 minute classes

- 1st Period** 10:40 - 11:03
- 2nd Period** 11:06 - 11:29
- 3rd Period** 11:32 - 11:55
- 4th Period** 11:58 - 12:21
- 5th Period** 12:24 - 12:47
- 6th Period** 12:50 - 1:13
- 7th Period** 1:16 - 1:39
- 8th Period** 1:42 - 2:05

Delays and cancellations will be announced on the school website, Facebook, and with a phone call.

ATTENDANCE

Lateness and Absences

Regular attendance is the key to academic success! Students who miss class tend to struggle and fall behind.

- Absences from school or from class will result in an automatic phone call to families.
- If you are absent 10 times in a marking period, your family will receive a letter.
- Too many unexcused absences can prevent you from earning credit for your classes.
- Absences are unexcused without documentation.

Excused Absences

Acceptable reasons include: illness, death in the family, religious observances, court appearances, school activities, suspension, quarantine, dental/medical appointments, military obligations, approved work programs, college visits, and parental educational experiences.

Early Dismissal

If you need to leave school early for an appointment, please have your parent or guardian call or email the school first.

You cannot leave before signing out at the office!

Because consistent attendance is so crucial for success, Highland High School has developed a progressive model of intervention for truancy. Students who are repeatedly absent may be referred for intervention from the social worker, support staff and administration may conduct home visits, and students with serious truancy may be referred to PINS.

TRANSPORTATION

Student Drop-Off

If someone drops you off at school, please make sure that they take you to the correct entrance.

- Before 1st period, you can enter at the back of the school by the cafeteria.
- After school starts, please enter at the main entrance so that you can be checked-in.

After School / Late Buses

If you need to stay after school, you have a few options: drive yourself home, get picked up, or take the Late Bus.

- If you take the Late Bus, you will need a pass from your teacher, coach, or club advisor.
- Students should conduct themselves in a kind, respectful manner on the Late Bus.
- There are no Late Buses on Friday.

Student Parking

Application



If you would like to drive to school, you must first register your vehicle and receive a parking pass.

Seniors get priority, as spots are limited.

As a student driver, it's your responsibility to get to school on time. Consistent tardiness may result in losing your student driver privilege.

Please make sure to lock your car, as the school is not responsible for the vehicle or its contents.

Driving to school is a privilege! Please be safe, on time, and responsible.

ACADEMICS

EXPECTATIONS

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

ULSTER BOCES AND CTE

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

What We Expect

Highland High School teachers and staff design instruction and learning activities to foster student learning and promote growth in terms of content knowledge, critical thinking, and academic skills. As such, students are expected to engage with learning tasks with effort and integrity.

Students are responsible for understanding course expectations, including grading policies, late work policies, and classroom expectations. Teachers are responsible for providing this information to students and families at the start of each course.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are taken very seriously. Work that is found to be copied, AI-generated, or completed by anyone other than the student will not be accepted. Multiple instances of academic dishonesty may result in a disciplinary action.

Need Help?

Your teachers want to help you succeed! If you're struggling or need extra time on an assignment, please talk to your teacher **before** progress reports are due.

You can always stay after school during activity period for support.
Just talk to your teacher!

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must attain a minimum of 22 credits to graduate. Here is a typical path for Highland students:

Subject	Regents	Advanced Regents
English	4 credits 1 Regents	
Social Studies	4 credits 2 Regents	
Mathematics	3 credits 1 Regents	3 credits 3 Regents
Science	3 credits 1 Regents	3 credits 2 Regents
World Languages	1 credit	3 credits
Health	0.5 credit	
Physical Education	2 credits	
Art, Music, Theater	1 credit	
Electives	1.5 – 3.5 credits	

Note that some requirements might be altered or waived for students with IEPs or 504s. Check with your counselor if you have questions.

[Guidance](#)



ULSTER BOCES AND CTE

The Ulster BOCES Career & Technical Center, located in Port Ewen or I-park 87, offers dozens of high-tech training programs that lead to in-demand jobs in competitive fields. Graduates leave the program ready for college and the workforce. Students can also gain real-life experience and build employment references through participation in apprenticeship programs with area employers. Programs are available to juniors and seniors and are typically taken over two years.

Available Programs

- Animal Science
- Auto Collision
- Automotive Technology
- Aviation /Drone
- Business & Entrepreneurship
- CISCO & Cybersecurity
- Criminal Justice
- Culinary Arts
- Digital Design and Programming
- Early Childhood Education
- Electrical Construction
- Fashion Design & Merchandising
- Graphic & Visual Arts
- Health Occupations Program
- Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning
- Licensed Cosmetology
- Motorcycle/Turf Management
- Music Production
- Nurse Assisting (Seniors only)
- Robotics & Advanced Manufacturing
- Welding & Metal Fabrication

Ulster BOCES



TECHNOLOGY

ELECTRONICS POLICY

SCHOOLLOGY

ONLINE CONDUCT

USE OF A.I.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

Basic Expectations

At Highland, we view technology as a useful and important tool for learning. That being said, it's important to ensure that technology does not distract from your education, please review the Board of Education policy. Here are a few basic expectations:

- You will come to school with your school-issued laptop charged. You should also bring your charger!
- You will keep your phone off and placed in your locker or in your backpack.
- **Faculty and staff are authorized to confiscate any electronic devices that are visible or in use during prohibited times. Refusal to comply will be considered insubordination and addressed in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.**
- Regularly check your school email and Schoology account for important messages and updates.
- If you are experiencing issues with tech, talk to a teacher, and they will help you to solve the problem or connect you with our Technology Office.

Schoology

Many teachers use Schoology to post assignments and grades. Your teacher will tell you at the beginning of the year where to find more information about the class. Additionally, you can find updates about the school, athletics, and clubs in the Highland HS Schoology group. Be sure to check Schoology at least once per day!

Schoology



Did you know that you don't have to use Classlink to access Schoology? Just go directly to <https://hcsd.schoology.com>.

ONLINE CONDUCT

The Internet Never Forgets

It's important to remain vigilant and responsible online. A good rule of thumb is to consider everything that you post permanent, even if shared on an ephemeral platform such as Snapchat. There are often websites and services that make copies of this data for searchability later, or your peers might take screenshots of your posts.

Online Conflicts

In the event that an incident online (even outside of school hours) could create a risk of disruption at school, you may be subject to discipline according to the Code of Conduct or DASA. Remember – if you wouldn't say it directly to someone at school, you probably shouldn't say it online either.

Staying Safe

You'd be surprised how many scams are on the internet. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Anyone asking you for money or pressuring you to send them personal information is probably up to no good.

If you're not sure about something, ask an adult at home or at school before you share any personal or financial information.

Avoiding Scams



USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a common part of everyday life, both in and out of school. Because students will encounter AI in many settings, HCSD believes it is important for families, students, and educators to understand what AI is and how it can be used safely, responsibly, and ethically.

How is AI Supported in Instruction?

HCSD supports the safe and responsible use of artificial intelligence by:

- Modeling safe and responsible AI use in classrooms.
- Providing teachers with guidance, resources, and training to help students understand the appropriate use of generative AI tools.
- Curating high-quality instructional resources that support learning.
- Allowing students access to approved, secure AI tools when appropriate for learning.
- Reviewing digital tools that use AI to ensure they protect student data and meet instructional quality standards.

Through these efforts, HCSD helps students learn how to use AI as a supportive learning tool while emphasizing digital citizenship, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making.

USE OF AI

Acceptable uses of generative AI

Student use of generative AI tools should support and enhance, not replace, their learning. Below are some acceptable uses of generative AI tools:

- Brainstorm ideas
- Generate outlines
- Summarize information
- Suggest revisions and feedback
- Create school appropriate images

Inappropriate uses of generative AI

Using generative AI tools to fully complete assignments or cheat on assessments would be considered inappropriate use. Below are some examples of inappropriate uses of generative AI tools:

- Fully complete assignments
- Replace your writing style and analysis
- Complete research for you
- Get answers to test or quiz questions

USE OF AI

7 Tips for Students

1. **Put Learning First**

- Let AI support your brainstorming, but keep the thinking and writing yours.

2. **Know AI Permissions**

- Follow your teacher's rules for AI use and only use approved AI tools.

3. **Protect Privacy**

- Keep personal information private. Don't share names, IDs, or photos of you or anyone else.

4. **Honor Integrity**

- Use AI honestly and ensure your work reflects your own learning.

5. **Be Transparent**

- Share your AI use with your teacher and always cite it.

6. **Fact Check**

- Always use lateral reading to verify answers and outputs.

7. **Deepen Learning**

- Use class resources as a starting point, and use AI to deepen your understanding.

COMMUNITY

DASA - PBIS

HERE TO HELP

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

DRESS CODE

DASA - PBIS

Our most important goal is for you to feel safe and welcome at school. The Dignity for All Students Act allows you to report instances of **discrimination** or **bullying** by students and adults.

File a DASA Report

You can talk to any adult that you feel comfortable with. They will help you make the report. However, the high school coordinators are:

- **Mrs. Mullen** (Assistant Principal)
- **Mr. Markman** (School Social Worker)
- **Ms. Grosmark** (School Psychologist).

You can also go directly to them.

[More DASA Info](#)



PBIS

“Be Safe; be respectful; be responsible; and be a learner.”

PBIS is all about promoting positive behavior instead of only punishing wrongdoing. Here are some ways to interact positively with your peers:

- Respect your classmates’ pronouns. If you aren’t sure, just ask!
- Use people-first language. For example, instead of saying “disabled people,” say “people with disabilities.”
- Slurs are not tolerated. While we acknowledge that some slurs have been reclaimed by various communities, we want to ensure that school remains a safe and positive environment for everyone.

[More PBIS Info](#)

HERE TO HELP

Highland High School has numerous resources available to support students, including school counselors (Ms. Candia, Ms. Garcia, and Ms. Laubach), Ms. Grosmark (school psychologist), and Mr. Markman (school social worker). They collaborate to support students as they work towards their goals.

School Counselors

See your counselor if you need help with:

- Scheduling classes
- Plans after graduation
- Emotional or social challenges at school
- Academic challenges

School Psychologist

Make an appointment with the school psychologist if:

- You are struggling with your mental health
- You are having emotional or social challenges at school
- You are having a hard time learning or focusing

Social Worker

Talk to our social worker if:

- You are struggling with your mental health
- Your friends are struggling with substance use
- You are having issues with family
- Your family needs extra support

If you are having a hard time for any reason, the most important thing is that you talk to an adult. We're all here to help!

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students Have a Right To

Be informed of all school rules

Be provided with an education that is intellectually challenging and relevant to demands of the 21st century

Learn in an environment free from interruption, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, and fear

Have complaints about school-related matter or school-employees responded to

Be guided by a Code of Conduct which is fairly and consistently implemented • Participate in discussions and on committees which determine the content of the Code of Conduct

Express themselves

Participate in district activities on an equal basis regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex

Be eligible to participate in school activities including sports and other extra and co-curricular activities

Privacy (in relation to search and seizure) – Students in attendance in our public schools are protected against illegal or unreasonable personal searches or seizures of their property by both the federal and state constitutions

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students Have a Responsibility To

Follow all school rules

Take advantage of the intellectually challenging education that is offered by putting forth genuine effort, completing all assignments and attending school, prepared to learn on a regular and punctual basis

Behave in a manner that contributes to a positive environment • Accept responsibility for your actions • Report negative behavior that you witness which may affect the school climate in a negative manner to school personnel • Seek assistance if they feel the need to do so

Present complaints that are valid and based on accurate knowledge of a situation • Recognize that adults in the school setting assume a role of authority in matters of student behavioral management

Become familiar with the Code, building level handbooks, and to seek interpretation of parts not understood

Express themselves in a prudent manner and understand that freedom of speech can be limited

Contribute toward establishing and maintaining an atmosphere that generates mutual respect and dignity for all and respect the rights of others

Demonstrate appropriate conduct as established by the student Code of Conduct and any rules established and disseminated by a written announcement specifically for participation in extra and/or co-curricular activities

Refrain from possession of any items prohibited in the Code of Conduct or items that do not belong to you

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

It's important to remember that your behavior affects the learning of everyone at Highland High School.

In The Hallways

- Remember to get a hall pass from your teacher.
- Keep your voice low - your peers are learning in class.
- Check out posters and flyers for events and club info!
- The hallways aren't a place to hang out. Do your business, then head back to class.

Banned Substances

You may not possess or distribute the following on school grounds or at school activities (on or off school property):

- Vapes, regardless of their contents.
- Alcohol or cigarettes
- Prescription or over the counter medication
- Any other substance that might be legal for an adult to use recreationally or medically, but is illegal to use if you are a minor

Ineligibility List

Sports and clubs make high school special, but remember that we're here to learn! If you are failing 2 or more classes, you can't participate in sports or other extracurriculars. Talk to your teachers about how to make up missing work, then get the ineligibility form from guidance once you've caught up after 5 school days. Failing PE, is automatic ineligibility.

Please note that all disciplinary action is subject to the discretion of the administration.

DRESS CODE

Did you know that our school district adopted a new dress code starting in 2023? It was created with feedback from students and faculty to be more inclusive and fair. Here's the quick summary.

Keep these covered

The following body parts need to be covered at all times.

- Breasts
- Buttocks
- Genitals

You must wear

- A shirt (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms)
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts).
- Shoes

You may not wear

- Violent imagery
- Images or languages depicting or highlighting illegal substances/drugs or alcohol
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography
- Clothing that reveals visible undergarments or is see-through (note that visible waistbands and straps are OK).

This list doesn't cover everything. Please see pages 19 & 20 of the Code of Conduct for the full dress code.

STUDENT LIFE

STUDENT VOICE

ATHLETICS

CLUBS

FOOD AND WORK

STUDENT VOICE

Everything that happens at HHS is for the students. If there is something you want to fix or change, get involved in the solution! There are many ways for students to speak up, including:

Student Government

Each class elects representatives, including a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who work with their class advisors to plan and fundraise for students events (prom, class trips, etc) in addition to serving as peer leaders. If you are interested in getting involved, see Ms. Skrabak.

Board of Education Representative

Each year, a student from the senior class is elected by their classmates to serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Education, the governing body. The student representative actively participates in Board meetings, providing insight and recommendations from a student perspective.

DIRECommittee

The HCSD Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equity Committee, is made up of students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators and community members. It works to make the district a more welcoming place for all students and to address and improve unfairness that students experience through their educational experiences.

ATHLETICS

The athletics program is an extension and integral part of the total educational curriculum of the Highland Central School District. Participating in athletics is a great way to build community, stay active, and challenge yourself physically as well as mentally.

Fall Sports

Game Day Cheer	Varsity
Cross Country	Modified, Varsity
Football	Modified A, Varsity
Golf (Boys)	Varsity
Soccer (Boys & Girls)	Modified, JV, Varsity
Tennis (Girls)	Varsity

Winter Sports

Competition Cheer	Varsity
Basketball (Boys & Girls)	Modified, JV, Varsity
Bowling	Varsity
Indoor Winter Track	Varsity
Wrestling (Boys)	Modified, Varsity
Wrestling (Girls)	Varsity

Spring Sports

Baseball	Modified, JV, Varsity
Flag Football (Girls)	Varsity
Golf (Girls)	Varsity
Lacrosse (Boys & Girls)	Modified A, Varsity
Softball	Modified, JV, Varsity
Tennis (Boys)	Varsity
Track	Modified, Varsity

Athletic Website



As leaders of the Husky pack, student athletes are held to a high standard in terms of academic standing, behavior, and citizenship.

CLUBS

Whatever your interests, Highland High School probably has an after-school club for you! They usually meet during the Activity Period (2:05 - 2:45) in the classroom of the club advisor. At the beginning of the school year club members and advisors try to get the word out in several ways: flyers around school, morning announcements, and posts on Schoology.

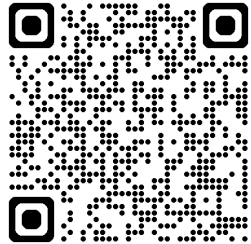
Also, if you're interested in starting a club, try to gather a group of potential members and approach a few of your teachers for a trial run. If things go well, it might become an official club next year!

FOOD

Did you know that students get breakfast and lunch for free? However, if you qualify for free or reduced lunch, please be sure to have your family complete the form. This helps the school keep lunch free for everyone. Breakfast is in the cafeteria before 1st period. During lunch, students can also purchase additional food at the Snack Shack.

Students may not order food delivered to the school.

[Lunch Menu](#)



WORKING PAPERS

Students between the ages of 14 and 17 can get working papers that allow you to get a job. If you are thinking about applying for a job, see Mrs. Tompkins or Mrs. Yohannes in the Main Office.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

This is just the skinny on how things work at HHS-- it's important that all students and their families read and understand the full of **HCS D Code of Conduct**. Use the QR code below to access the full code of conduct and digitally sign. We're so glad to have you as part of our pack!

Full Code of Conduct

Click on the link for the HCS D Code of Conduct or scan the QR code.

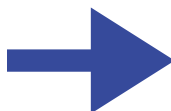


Code of Conduct

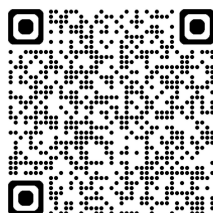


Student & Family Sign-off

Please have your parent/guardian complete the form linked here to indicate that they have received and read the Code of Conduct no later than Friday, September 18th.



Signature



HHS Staff

Principal

Mr. Brandon K. Opitz

bopitz@highland-k12.org

Assistant Principal

Mrs. Colleen M. Mullen

cmullen@highland-k12.org

Main Office Secretaries

Ms. Kori Tompkins

ktompkins@highland-k12.org

Ms. Tsiona Yohannes

tyohannes@highland-k12.org

School Counselors

Ms. Kristin Candia

kcandia@highland-k12.org

Ms. Danielle Garcia

dgarcia@highland-k12.org

Ms. Heather Laubach

hlaubach@highland-k12.org

School Psychologist

Ms. Megan Grosmark

mgrosmark@highland-k12.org

School Social Worker

Mr. Peter Markman

pmarkman@highland-k12.org

Transportation

Ms. Cathy Mekulik

cmekulik@highland-k12.org

Director of Athletics

Mr. Frank Alfonso

falfonso@highland-k12.org