HIGHLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

A PLACE WHERE STUDENTS LEARN AND GROW

1060 Atlantic Avenue
Brackenridge, PA 15014

Phone: 724-226-2400
Fax: 724-224-2413

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK
2023-2024

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

At Highlands Early Childhood Center, we are 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 **R**espectful, **A**ccountable, **M**otivated and **S**afe.

Our Highlands Early Childhood Center Handbook is now available on the Highlands School District website (goldenrams.com) on the Highlands Early Childhood Center page. The purpose of the handbook is to provide students and parents with information regarding the academic, attendance, and behavior expectations at Highlands Early Childhood Center. Upon review of this information with your child, please **sign below and return by September 8, 2023** to your child's teacher. Please use the handbook as a reference during the school year.

The teachers and staff at Highlands Early Childhood Center 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 child(ren).

Sincerely,

Kristie L. Gizienski

Kristie L. Gizienski, Principal
kgizienski@goldenrams.com

(please cut and detach here)

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HIGHLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
Handbook and School-Parent Compact

I, _____ have read and understood this student handbook for my
(Please print)
student, _____. I have clarified any questions with the teacher or
(Please print)
building principal.

_____ _____
Parent Signature Date

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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 major 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 major 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 is approximately 2,500 students.

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

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. Angela Keenan	School Psychologist
Dr. Rebecca Kennedy	School Psychologist
Dr. Stanley Whiteman	Director of Innovation
Ms. Stacey Waffensmith	Director of Food Services
Ms. Katie Jo Stobert	Director of Athletics & Transportation
Mrs. Jennifer Goldberg	Coordinator of Communications
TBD	School Police Officer
Mr. Anthony Ricci	School Police Officer
Mr. Chris Reiser	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
Mrs. Diane Faix	PIMS Coordinator
Mr. Jonathon Westergom	Assistant Director of Technology
Mrs. Carmen Corna	School District Attendance Officer

Highlands Administrative Center
1500 Pacific Ave., PO Box 288
Natrona Heights, PA 15065
724-226-2400 Fax 724-226-8437

DISTRICT GOALS

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

HIGHLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT 2023-2024

Highlands Early Childhood Center 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 the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

This school-parent compact is in effect during school year 2023-2024.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

HIGHLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER WILL:

1. **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 rigorous learning experiences through educational best practices and research-based strategies.
- Set high academic and behavior 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 utilization of progress monitoring and data collection.
- Encourage lifelong learning through parent involvement activities.
- Emphasize respect and uniqueness of students and families.
- Enable students to become responsible citizens by providing opportunities for success.

2. **Hold parent-teacher conferences (at least annually in elementary schools) during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.**

- Parent conferences will be held yearly in November.

3. **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 times a year (beginning, middle, end).
- District Benchmark Assessment and Progress Reports will be given to parents before Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- Classroom teachers will send quarterly progress reports and report cards.
- Parents of students moving into Tier III of the MTSS model will be invited to a MTSS Action Plan Meeting.
- Provide *PowerSchool* information to check student grades, attendance, and/or teacher comments.

4. **Provide parents 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

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

- Parents are invited to read in classrooms.*
- Parents are invited to Title I Night to participate in activities with their children.
- Parents may volunteer to be Room Parents.*
- 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 schoolwork and activities.
- Reinforce respect for self and others.
- Be aware of my child's progress by checking grades and attendance on-line, attending conferences, checking my child's folder/backpack daily, reviewing schoolwork and communicating with school when needed.
- Attend school events and/or volunteer to help in the classroom or at school activities.
- Encourage good reading habits by reading to or with my child.
- Limit my child's screen time (TV, tablets, etc.) and help select worthwhile programs.
- Encourage proper hygiene.
- Follow district dress code.
- Encourage daily attendance and provide written excuse when student 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.
- Read at least 20 minutes a day outside of school.
- Give parent/guardian all notices and information from the school day.
- Work hard and be challenged.
- Respect self and others and take responsibility for behavior.
- Discuss with parent/guardian what occurred during the school day.
- Limit screen time (computer, TV, gaming device) and make time for reading.
- Be prepared for school every day---book bag, HW folder, pencil, etc.

HIGHLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER 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 to parents of participating children information in a timely manner 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 to each parent an individual student report about the performance of their child on the state assessment in Math and English Language Arts.

HECC STAFF DIRECTORY

Main Phone Number 724-226-2400

Office Staff	Extension	MTSS Interventionist	Extension
Mrs. Gizienski-Principal kgizienski@goldenrams.com	1605	Mrs. Lynch allynch@goldenrams.com	
Mrs. Mace—Secretary jmace@goldenrams.com	1600	**Special Education**	**Extension**
Nurse	**Extension**	Mrs. Grove-Behavior Specialist agrove@goldenrams.com	1101
Mrs. Eiler—Nurse seiler@goldenrams.com	1700	Mrs. Mosesso-Speech amossesso@goldenrams.com	1212
School Counselor	**Extension**	Mrs. Garner-Hirtz kghirtz@goldenrams.com	1101
Ms. Skradski kskradski@goldenrams.com	1201	**Related Arts**	**Extension**
Pre-K Counts Program	**Extension**	Mrs. Karavlan-Music akaravlan@goldenrams.com	1103
Mrs. Ayres mayres@goldenrams.com	1102	Mrs. Malcolm-Library lmalcolm@goldenrams.com	1210
Mrs. Gourley cgourley@goldenrams.com	1106	Mrs. Black-Physical Education kblack@goldenrams.com	1126
Mrs. Miller cmiller@goldenrams.com	1104	Mrs. Grubbs -Art rgrubbs@goldenrams.com	1106
Kindergarten	**Extension**	Ms. Hartner lhartner@goldenrams.com	1106
Mrs. Cochran mcochran@goldenrams.com	1202	**Kitchen**	**Extension**
Mrs. Mazur cmazur@goldenrams.com	1204	Ms. Artman cartman@goldenram.com	1125
Mrs. Pacek mpacek@goldenrams.com	1205	Ms. Mann mmann@goldenrams.com	1125
Ms. Perlik sperlik@goldenrams.com	1207	**Custodians**	**Extension**
Mrs. Smith cysmith@goldenrams.com	1203	**Daylight-**Chris Clink cclink@goldenrams.com	1127
Mrs. Yeckel ayeckel@goldenrams.com	1213	**Evening-**Mr. Grzywinski tgrzywinski@goldenrams.com	1127
Mrs. Yount	1206	**Evening-**Mr. Zylinski jzylinski@goldenrams.com	1127

SECTION 1--SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

	DAILY SCHEDULE	TWO HOUR DELAY	EARLY DISMISSAL
Doors Open	8:20 a.m.	10:20 a.m.	8:20 a.m.
Breakfast	8:20-8:55 a.m.	None	8:20-8:55 a.m.
School Begins	8:55 a.m.	10:55 a.m.	8:55 a.m.
Dismissal	3:40 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	12:10 p.m.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

Highlands will continue to offer a FREE breakfast and FREE lunch program for all enrolled students.

In 2014, Highlands School District received a grant through the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. This act, passed in 2010, qualified the district for CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) allowing all students to receive free breakfast and lunch each school day. The purpose of this program is to ensure overall student health by providing students with daily nutritious food options.

Highlands will be following the HHKFA regulations by offering students with whole grain rich breads, low fat, low sodium, and lower sugar foods. Students will be offered a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.

Students who pack their lunch and wish to purchase a milk will have to pay $0.65. Such purchases will accumulate on your student's account. You can access student balances at: www.myschoolbucks.com

MySchoolBucks will be used to track student balances and load funds into your student's account. If you student would like to purchase snacks, money must be loaded into their account. The school district has a no charge policy.

A "closed lunch" program is in effect. Students may bring their own lunch or receive a free lunch from the school cafeteria. All students must eat in the cafeteria. Pizza and/or fast food deliveries are not permitted.

ASK YOUR CHILD: What did you eat today? Did you try anything new? What vegetable or fruit choices did you have? What drink did you have? Children's nutrition and diet drives more than just their health and physical attributes. It also keeps their brains in high gear, allowing them to remain more focused and learn. Please encourage your child to ditch the brown bag and jump in line for a nutritious and delicious meal in our café!

Please Contact: Stacey Waffensmith, Food Services Director, at 724-226-1000, ext. 4180 with any questions.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL / ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Students **must be in homeroom by 8:55 a.m.** or they will be marked *illegally absent* for the day. Students who arrive tardy to school *must be signed in* by a parent/guardian. An automated call will be sent to all homes/families of students who were marked absent from homeroom. **You do not need to call in the office to let us know that your student will be absent.**

PRE-K COUNTS ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Students enrolled in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms are considered full-time and must attend five days per week for a minimum of 180 school days per year for the length of the instructional day (either 2.5 hours/half

day or a full school day). **Morning Pre-K students will report at their regular time on half days scheduled by Highlands School District.**

Families may be contacted when children are absent for 3 consecutive days to learn the nature of the absences. At this time, HECC and the family may discuss and determine approaches to support the child's attendance at school. Children who have 10 or more unexcused absences over the course of the school year and have not responded to program supports may be dismissed from the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classroom. More details concerning the attendance expectations for Pre-K Counts are found in the Pre-K Counts Handbook. The Attendance Procedures listed under "Kindergarten Attendance Procedures" apply to school-age students, not Pre-K Counts students.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Good attendance is a habit every student should develop. A student with excessive absenteeism cannot be taught effectively and cannot sustain class expectations. To develop and maintain good attendance habits for all students, Highlands has adopted a strict and effective attendance policy.

New School Laws of Pennsylvania classify all absences as unexcused or illegal except those for the following reasons: illness of the pupil, death in the family, religious, and "exceptionally urgent reasons" such as quarantine, recovery from an accident, required court attendance, approved family educational trips, educational tours, etc.

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

A doctor's excuse is required for absences due to illness in excess of ten days, and for each day of absence thereafter. A warning letter will be sent after the eighth day of absence regardless of the reason.

ABSENCE REPORTING / INFORMATION

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. Written or email documentation is required for our records.

A call will be made to all homes/families of students who are 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 an excuse is not provided to the school within 3 days of the student's absence, the absence(s) will be recorded as an illegal absence. Excuses will not be accepted if they are turned in late.

If a student has 3 illegal absences, parents will receive a Notice of Truancy in the mail notifying them of the illegal days and encouraging them to participate in an attendance improvement meeting.

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, they should contact the school office within 48 hours of the meeting to reschedule. Failure to attend the meeting and/or continued absences may result in a citation with the local magistrate.

When a student reaches an 8th Excused absence, a Warning Letter will be mailed notifying parents that all absences beyond 10 require a doctor's excuse or the absence will be illegal.

Truancy is defined as 3 unexcused absences; habitually truant is defined as 6 unexcused absences.

If a student has 10 days of consecutive non-attendance, they will officially be withdrawn from Highlands School District. Re-enrollment would be required to attend Highlands School District in the future.

Please contact the District Attendance Officer, Carmen Corna, if you have any questions about the policy @ 724-226-2400 ext. 3007.

EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE

After an absence, a student MUST provide a written or email excuse to the student's school secretary. The excuse must include the student's full name, date(s) of absence(s), reason(s) for absence(s), the date(s) 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 are:

- Highlands High School, Patty Sirota
    - HHSAttendance@goldenrams.com
- Highlands Middle School, Karen Barnwell
    - HMSAttendance@goldenrams.com
- Highlands Elementary School, Dawn Howells
    - HESAttendance@goldenrams.com
- Highlands Early Childhood Center, Jamie Mace
    - HECCAttendance@goldenrams.com

Excused absences include illness, accidents, death in the family, religious reasons, or impassable roads. All other absences may be judged illegal.

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 office one day in advance. Requests made by phone will not be honored.
- The parent or guardian must report to the office to have the student released.

ABSENCE FOR VACATIONS

For optimal student success, we request you do not schedule vacations when school is in session. Absences due to family vacations will only be considered legal if the following conditions are met:

- Submit a request on required district form (see 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 does not exceed five (5) school days. Any days exceeding 5 will result in illegal absences.
- Parents will be responsible for making sure that missed schoolwork is completed by the child before returning to school.
- Students referred to the magistrate for attendance issues may not be granted approval. This permission will be at the principal's discretion.

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 counted as an attended day of school.
- If necessary, the nurse or member of the office staff (NOT THE STUDENT) will contact the home to arrange for transportation.
- If the parent, near relative or designated person cannot be contacted, the student will remain in school.

Parents may request the child's homework assignments during an extended absence and should plan to pick up assignments after a 24-hour notice.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive between 8:55 AM and 10:35 AM will be marked Tardy. Any student arriving after 10:35 AM will be marked Absent for a half day. Students who arrive after 2:05 PM will be marked Absent for the whole day. Students who leave school before 10:35 AM will be marked Absent for a whole day. Students who leave school between 10:35 AM and 2:05 PM will be marked Absent for half a day.

After five tardies during a school year at HMS, HES and HECC, a warning letter will be sent to the parent/guardian. After a student has accumulated 10 tardies, he/she is given a half day illegal absence. For every five tardies following the ten tardies, an additional one-half day of illegal absence will be charged against a student's record. After 3 days of illegal absence, a notice will be served to the parent/guardian.

As previously stated, all notices served thereafter during a student's entire period of enrollment in the Highlands School District, shall result in a truancy citation. All truancies will require the parent/guardian to attend a hearing before the magistrate.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

The decision to delay starting times, to cancel school, or to dismiss students early because of weather factors or other emergencies is based solely on the safety and welfare of students. These situations necessarily require the understanding and cooperation of parents. Parents who are not ordinarily at home at times of morning delays, school cancellations, or early dismissals should make arrangements at the start of the school year for their children to be supervised at home, or for them to report to a pre-arranged, safe place when such an emergency occurs.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

- Announcements of school emergencies will be broadcast on local radio and TV stations, the School Messenger phone system, the district's website, www.goldenrams.com, the website's E-Alert (e-mail message) system, Facebook, Twitter, and the Highlands mobile app.
- On a two-hour delay, starting times at schools and bus pick-up times will be adjusted according to the length of the delay for K-12 students.
- The school breakfast program will be cancelled on a two-hour delay.
- Early dismissals due to emergency will be ordered only when absolutely necessary.
- Additional information or changes during a particular emergency will be broadcast if necessary.

HEALTH SERVICES

The nurse's suite is on the first floor and supervised by a registered nurse. If students are ill, hurt or in need of a change of clothes their classroom teacher will send them to the nurse's suite. In the event your child needs to be dismissed from school because of illness the school nurse or front office staff will contact the parent / guardian.

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.

SCREENINGS

As school law requires, hearing tests and vision screening tests will be conducted at the kindergarten level. In addition, a yearly screening program consisting of weight and height measurements are 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 and notice that the parents/guardians may 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 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 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 and 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 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.
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:
   a. Name of the drug.
   b. Prescribed dosage
   c. Times medication is to be taken.
   d. Length of time medication is prescribed.
   e. Diagnosis or reason medication is needed, unless confidential.
   f. Potential serious reaction or side-effects of medication.
   g. Emergency response
   h. If 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 in close proximity to the student. The school nurse, other designated school employees and the student's classroom teachers shall be informed where the medication is stored and the means to access the medication.

STUDENT POSSESSION AND USE OF DIABETES MEDICATION AND MONITORING EQUIPMENT

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 is prescribed.
    f. Diagnosis or reason medication and monitoring equipment is 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 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 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 in accordance with 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 where the medication and monitoring equipment are stored and the means to access them.

ADMINISTRATION OF NALOXONE

In an effort 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 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, 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 on the Child Abuse Hot Line (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

The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours in accordance with the direction of a parent/guardian and family physician will be permitted only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the student if the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not available during school hours.

No medication, prescription and non-prescription (over the counter), will be administered in school except the Direct Medication Order Form of a licensed health provider and 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 and it is the parent's responsibility to supply 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 change 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.

SAFETY

Please make certain that your child knows how to cross streets and intersections to and from school. It is most important that your child is taught to come directly home after school. He/she should know that crossing guards are there for protection and should obey them. He/she should know about proper behavior on the school bus.

STUDENT DRESS GUIDELINES

In an effort to keep an educational focus, the following guidelines are in place.

Acceptable	NOT Permitted
T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters	Crop Tops, Halter Tops, Pajamas, Hats, Hoods
Dresses, skirts (fingertip length)	Clothes with excessive holes
Jeans, sweatpants	Clothes that are excessively short/tight (fingertip length is appropriate)

Shorts (fingertip length)	Clothing or jewelry that refers to tobacco, alcohol, weapons, violence, profanity, gangs, sex, or drugs.
Socks, Tennis Shoes, Sandals, Boots	Visible underwear
	Flip Flops, Slides, Slippers, High Heels
	Headwear

No head coverings are permitted inside the school building. Students are required to remove any headwear upon entering the building and throughout the school day. This includes but is not limited to caps, hats, hoods, bandanas, wave caps, athletic sweatbands, wave caps, sunglasses, headsets, or any other head covering (male and female students). Any headgear worn due to religious beliefs and/or medical reasons is acceptable.

The final decisions about appropriateness of dress will be made by the building principal.
Parent may be required to supply a change in attire.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for returning all property belonging to the district that has been distributed to them (i.e. Chromebooks, calculators, textbooks, etc.). This equipment must be in good, working order. If the item is damaged, altered, or lost in any way, the student is financially responsible for the item's replacement. Students are required to fulfill all financial obligations annually. Obligations must be current in order to participate in after-school activities and student sponsored events. Legal action may be pursued by the district for unfulfilled obligations.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

According to the PA School Law, fire drills shall be conducted periodically, but not less than once monthly. 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.

BUS EVACUATION DRILLS

The purpose of school bus evacuation drills is to have the bus driver and each student know exactly what to do in case of an emergency. Emergencies may occur because of fires or accidents, and in every instance the school bus driver will give the evacuation instructions. If the bus driver is unable to carry out his duties, a predesignated student should assume the leadership to carry out the drill. The two evacuation drills are scheduled during the school year by the Director of Transportation.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS

Since the Highlands School District does not carry insurance coverage for student accidents, parents are responsible for the costs of medical care. The Highlands School Board does provide a Student Accident Insurance Program, however, which can be purchased by parents for students. This program provides plans for both "school day" and twenty-four hour coverage.

Parents are advised to review the insurance program package information which is announced and posted on the district website www.goldenrams.com

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS/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.

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.

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.**

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 may receive a **minimum** two-day suspension and/or loss of computer privileges.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles, when found, are taken to the office where they can be claimed by the owner. Each year the school accumulates numerous articles that are not claimed. Please help by labeling all items. All unclaimed items at the end of the school year will be given to a local charity organization.

PETS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

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

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SECTION 2
STUDENT SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

The goal of Highlands Early Childhood Center's instructional program is to equip each child to be an informed, caring, and effective citizen. Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten are learning skills to read, foundational writing skills, the acquisition of facts and skills and being an individual learner as well as 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. We believe that students learn best when they accept challenging yet achievable goals and are given individualized, constructive feedback. We also believe that a positive emotional climate promotes learning. At Highlands Early Childhood Center, 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. Student's Individual Education Programs (IEP) 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 contact their IEP Case Manager. If you believe your child may be eligible, please contact 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 contact their GATE teacher. If you believe your child may be eligible, please contact 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 contact 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 contact your child's counselor.

NURSING SERVICE

Please see the Health Services section of the handbook.

COMPLIANCE NOTIFICATIONS

Annual Compliance Notifications include the following and additional notifications that can be found 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 is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents, and describe the parents' rights concerning the confidentiality of information obtained during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English but can be translated into other languages or transcribed to 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 development 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 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 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. 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

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. Amber Dean, 724-226-2440 ext.5651

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

Notification 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 certain 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 for a temporary (10 days or more) mental or physical illness or other urgent reason, the parent/ guardian should contact their counselor or administrator and ask for the homebound request 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 Input form. For additional information, please contact 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 respond to concerns and sexual harassment and assault reports promptly. 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 that may be experiencing homelessness. If you believe you know of families or individual students that may qualify for this service, please contact 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 contact Dr. Amber Dean, District Suicide Prevention Coordinator, 724-226-2400, ext. 5651

GRADING SYSTEM

The following scale will be used:

N-Needs Improvement
P-Progressing
S-Secure

HOMEWORK

The value and purpose of homework is 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 cost of the replacement.

REPORT CARDS

Every student enrolled in the Highlands School District will be issued a report card that will be available ONLINE through Power School every nine weeks.
The purpose of the report card is to:

- inform parents of student's progress
- aid in student goal setting
- allow the teacher to assess the student outcomes based on Pennsylvania CORE standards
- enable home and school to support 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 the current grade level 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. It is very important that students are well rested and prepared for these testing situations. Throughout the year, parents are given specific information on the type of test that will be given, the date of the testing, and results by means of 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 in Mathematics. Students in Grade 4 will also be assessed in Science.

All kindergarten students will take the Acadience benchmark assessments in Math and Reading three times during the year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / PROPER DRESS

The elementary 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. All clothing should be comfortable and allow for movement. Each student should be properly dressed for total activity participation. Dressy and restrictive types of clothing are strongly discouraged, as is excessive jewelry.

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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 in 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 Early Childhood Center 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 serves as a framework for behavior throughout the school.

CODE OF CONDUCT DEFINITIONS

BULLYING

Children being bullied need and deserve adult intervention and help. Without intervention the problem will not go away. Highlands School District's definition of bullying is repeated and unwanted negative actions towards another child.

BULLY PREVENTION PROGRAM

Highlands School District believes that children who are bullied need and deserve adult intervention and help. Students in kindergarten participate in the *Second Step Program*. This program is designed to provide elementary students with the knowledge and skills they need to be responsible, effective problem-solvers and communicators while fostering a safe and caring school environment.

BUS MISCONDUCT

Bus transportation is a privilege. Video cameras are installed on all Highlands buses. Video recordings 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 for a minimum of three days and a maximum of the rest of the school year for severe or continuing offenses. Building principals have the right to address behaviors on a case by case basis. The following course of action serves as a framework. 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	10 Day Bus Suspension
Fourth	45 Day Bus Suspension
Fifth	Removal from bus for the duration of school year

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC ITEMS-See Appendices

The Highlands School Board authorizes student possession of cell phones and other personal electronic devices, such as pagers, calculators, personal digital assistants (PDAs), laptop computers, handheld computers, cameras, MP3 players, 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.

- Students ***must*** turn off their electronic devices upon entering the building. They must be kept book bag/locker.
- 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) 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***

CAFETERIA MISCONDUCT

Inappropriate behavior in the cafeteria including, but not limited to, failure to clean up after themselves, throwing/spilling food, out of seat without permission, and using unsafe voice levels.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Deliberate copying of another person's work. Student will receive a zero for the assignment.

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.

DRUGS/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO - See the District Policy

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 are involved in hitting, punching, kicking, or other aggressive actions. If a child chooses to retaliate, he/she has 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.

HARASSMENT
Harassment includes derogatory racial, ethnic, and/or sexual remarks, and personal intimidation.

INAPPROPRIATE/PROHIBITED MATERIALS
Items including but not limited to: cell phones, Pokemon or other trading cards, open containers, gaming and electronic devices, fireworks, matches, shell casings, toy weapons, etc.

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

PROFANITY / INAPPROPRIATE/ABUSIVE 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.

THEFT
Student is in possession of, having 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 in nature.

VANDALISM
Vandalism is the damage and/or defacing of school property. The normal 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—See Appendices

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES—See Appendices

CODE OF MISCONDUCT AND RESPONSE STRUCTURE
The examples provided in this Code of Conduct are not to be construed as limiting the behaviors which may require disciplinary action by school personnel. The following misconduct/response structure includes four levels. **Level 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.

Level I Behaviors

Level I Definition	Examples of Level I Misbehaviors Include, but not limited to:	Examples of Disciplinary Actions, but not limited to:
Misbehavior on the part of the student which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school. These misbehaviors are usually handled by individual staff members, but sometimes require the intervention of other school support personnel.	• 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	• Private conversation with student • Verbal warning or written reprimand • Special Assignment • Written Assignment • Detention • Denial of privileges • Confiscation • In school suspension • 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:

Frequent or serious misbehavior that disrupts the learning environment of the school. 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.	• 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 • 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	• Parent Contact • Parent/Student/Teacher conference • Behavior Contract • Modified day • Detentions • Denial of privileges/extra-curricular activities • ASA • In-school suspension • Out of school suspension • Confiscation • Temporary removal or permanent removal from bus or area

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.	• 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 • 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.	• Parent Contact • School conference • Detention • Confiscation • Temporary removal from area (i.e. class, cafeteria, etc.) • In-school suspension • Out of school suspension • ASA • Denial of privileges/extra-curricular activities • Temporary removal or full removal from bus • Restitution of property or damages • Referral to police or district magistrate • Citation

Level IV Behaviors

Definition of Level IV 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 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. Such acts will require administrative action which could result in the immediate removal of the students from school and the possible intervention of law enforcement authorities.	• Continuation of or extreme Level III misconduct • 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	• Expulsion • Citation • Confiscation • In-school suspension • Out of school suspension • Permanent removal from bus • Restitution for damages to or loss of property • ASA • Referral to police or district magistrate • Referral to outside agency

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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 to the school building on time, calling to report your child is sick, making certain 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, 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 is able to do, providing the contact with teachers or tutors to assist your child with academic weaknesses.

Decision Making Level - Become involved at the public meetings and open forums of the District-wide Title I PAC, joining the PTO Board, working with other families to create an Action Plan for your school.

Community Collaboration - Participate in Family Literacy activities at the school and in the Community Library and other locations, help to extend the contacts that our Board of School Directors have developed to involve community partners and local businesses in the education programs.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents may schedule conferences with teachers and principals during 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 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 problems at a time convenient for both parties.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The administrators and faculty of Highlands Early Childhood Center welcome the activities and efforts of the school's parent-teacher organization, which provides benefits to our children in the form of materials, equipment and special programs and events. It also provides parents with the opportunity to become more familiar with the school. PTO meetings are held each month at the school. The dates and times will be posted on the Highlands website, www.goldenrams.com, and also in the PTO newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS

Highlands School District welcomes parents and community members into the District as volunteers. The District believes it is important 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 had if it weren't for 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 Volunteering:

- Minimum of 18 years of age (unless 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, dependent upon period of time of residency in Pennsylvania
- Information about how to obtain the necessary clearances is posted on the school website at www.goldenrams.com/volunteer

TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

The Board recognizes that parental involvement contributes to the achievement of academic standards by students participating in Title I programs. The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents/guardians, and community.

2. Authority 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6318

In compliance with federal law, the district and parents/guardians of students participating in Title I programs shall jointly develop and agree upon a written parental involvement policy. When developing and implementing this policy, the district shall ensure the policy describes how the district will:

a. Involve parents/guardians in the joint development of the district's overall Title I plan and the process of school review and improvement by conducting monthly building and/or district PAC meetings attended by parents, teachers, administrators, and Board members.

b. Provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, including assistance in understanding state academic content and performance standards, state and local assessments, requirements of Title 1.

c. Develop activities that promote the schools' and parents'/guardians' capacity for strong parental involvement by promoting an atmosphere of open communication and cooperation.

d. Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with appropriate programs, as provided by law, including information on how to work with business partners and other community organizations to learn about Title 1 and to encourage school/family/community partnerships.

e. Involve parents/guardians in an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the policy in improving the academic quality of schools served under Title I through explanation and discussion of policy details.

f. Identify barriers to participation by parents/guardians who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority and find ways to strengthen outreach.

g. Use findings of annual evaluations to design strategies for more effective parental involvement that will be implemented throughout the district as appropriate.

h. Involve parents/guardians in the activities of schools served under Title I. 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6318 The Board shall adopt and distribute the parental involvement policy, which shall be incorporated into the district's Title I plan and shall be evaluated annually, with parental involvement.

3. Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's Title I parental involvement policy, plan and programs comply with the requirements of federal law. The building principal and/or Title I staff shall provide to parents/guardians of students participating in Title I programs:

a. Explanation of the reasons supporting their child's selection for the program.

b. Set of objectives to be addressed.

c. Description of the services to be provided.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that information and reports provided to parents/guardians are in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents/guardians can understand.

4. Guidelines 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6318
An annual meeting of parents/guardians of participating Title I students shall be held to explain the goals and purposes of the Title I program. Parents/Guardians shall be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation and evaluation of the program. Parents/Guardians shall be encouraged to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs. In addition to the required annual meeting, additional parent/guardian meetings shall be held at various times of the day and evening. At these meetings, parents/guardians shall be provided:

- Information about programs provided under Title I.
- Description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- Opportunities to submit parent/guardian comments about the program to the district level.

If sufficient, Title I funding may be used to facilitate parent/guardian attendance at meetings through payment of transportation and child care costs. Opportunities shall be provided for parents/guardians to meet with the classroom and Title I teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parents/Guardians may be given guidance as to how they can assist at home in the education of their child. Whenever Title I parents/guardians are involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the educational programs of the district and require transportation, child care, home visits or other services in order to participate, related expenses may, at the discretion of the district, be paid from Title I funds. The goal of our partnership is to develop programs, activities, and procedures collaboratively, airing differences as needed to increase the capacity for parental involvement to all families in the district.

ELEMENTARY STUDENT APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL TOUR OR TRIP

(Board Policy #204)

Part 1: To be completed by Parent or Guardian.

Student's Name _____Student # _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

School _____ Grade _____ Homeroom Teacher _____

Travel destination/temporary address_____

Date(s) student will be absent from school _____

Were prior requests granted during school year? ____ Yes ____No Dates_____

Please explain the purpose of the trip or tour _____

_____

_____

Itinerary _____

_____

Adult(s) accompanying the student _____

Reason trip cannot be taken when school is not in session _____

I hereby request that the above student be excused from compulsory attendance during this period of absence. I assume responsibility for supervising the completion of all assignments/responsibilities which are to be submitted upon his/her return to school or within a reasonable time period, as designated by his/her teacher(s).

Date _____ Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Part 2: To be completed by the student's teachers and signed by the parent or guardian.

Teacher	Subject	Comment/Assignments	Due Date

I have reviewed the teacher's comments and again give my approval.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Part 3: To be completed by the building Principal.
Please check one: _____ Approved _____Disapproved

Reason for disapproval _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____

Educational Tour or Trip

Please refer to School Board Policy #204

Request for Excuse

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who wishes to have the student excused from compulsory school attendance in order to participate in an educational tour or trip must submit an application to the Principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. Except for emergency situations, which must be fully explained, this request must be submitted at least one week prior to the date on which the student seeks to be excused for compulsory attendance. If a student will be absent for more than ten (10) school days, the student will be removed as a full-time student. The family will need to reenroll the child upon return.

Administrator's 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 educational 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 education tour or trip. Assignments/responsibilities may be made either prior to 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 of time, designated by the teacher(s).

Return to School

The student shall return to school on the first scheduled school day after the excused absence or date previously specified by the building Principal.

Implementation

This policy is designed for implementation at the building level. Frequent recurrence of requests for educational tours or trips during a school year shall result in disapproval, although the requested trip may be meritorious. This policy is designed to foster better school/student relationships and avoid excessive absence.

APPENDICES

Board Policy Manual

Section 200 Pupils

Title Attendance

Code 204

Status Active

Adopted August 21, 2017

Purpose

The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.[1]

Authority

Attendance shall be required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that authorized district staff may excuse a student for temporary absences upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.[5][6][7][2][3][4]

The Board shall establish and enforce attendance requirements, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and regulations.

Definitions

Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school, and which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the child reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.[9][8]

Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.[9]

Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.[9]

Person in parental relation shall mean a:[9]

1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
3. Guardian of the person of a child.
4. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.

This definition shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.[10]

School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.[9]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians, staff, local children and youth agency, and local Magisterial District Judges about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks, newsletters, district website and other efficient communication methods.[11][1]

The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the building principal, Attendance Officer, and Home and School Visitor shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop regulations for the attendance of students which:

1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.[12][13]

2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.

3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency, or the appropriate judge.

4. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

Guidelines

Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.[5]

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.[5][14][2][15][16][17][18][19]

The following students shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.[6][7][20]

2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught.[5][21]

3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools.[22]

4. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with law.[5][25][23][24][17][26]

5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.[5]

6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.[7]

7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.[7][15]

Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons.[6][3]

2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[6]

3. Quarantine.

4. Family emergency.

5. Recovery from accident.

6. Required court attendance.

7. Death in family.

8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.[6][1]

9. Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request.[27]

10. Nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:[6][28]

    a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal prior to the absence.

    b. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.

    c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Superintendent.

11. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.

12. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[6][3]

The district may limit the number and duration of non-school sponsored educational tours or trips and college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

Temporary Excusals -

The following students may be temporarily excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools:

1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.[5][14][17]

2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:[29][27]

    a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.

    b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.

    c. Following each absence, the parent/guardian shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.

3. School age children unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.[20]

Parental Notice of Absence -

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.[9]

Parental Notification -

District staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence.

Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements

Student is Truant -

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.[30]

The notice shall:[30]

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;

2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and

3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the child's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[30]

If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[30]

School Attendance Improvement Conference -

District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference.[30]

The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.[9]

The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:[9]

1. The student.

2. The student's person in parental relation.

3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.

4. Appropriate school personnel.

5. Recommended service providers.

Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.[30]

The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff.[30]

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has passed.[30]

Student is Habitually Truant -

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:[31]

1. Shall refer the student to:

    a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or

    b. The local children and youth agency.

2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.[31]

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:[31]

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or

2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such program.[31]

Regardless of age, when district staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[31]

Filing a Citation -

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled.[32]

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.[32]

Special Needs and Accommodations

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[33][34][35][36]

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[33][34][36]

Discipline

The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.[30]

Board Policy Manual

Section 200 Pupils

Title Electronic Devices

Code 237

Status Active

Adopted March 21, 2016

Last Revised May 15, 2017

Last Reviewed April 6, 2017

Authority

The Board authorizes student possession of cell phones and other personal electronic devices, such as pagers, calculators, personal digital assistants (PDAs), laptop computers, handheld computers, cameras, MP3 players, mobile phones, tablets or any other devices designed to communicate, create or store information. While the district does not prohibit bringing these devices, the district does not recommend it.[1]

Owners 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.

Students may not use such devices on school property and school-sponsored activities to access and/or view Internet websites that are otherwise blocked to students at school, such as but not limited to FaceBook, MySpace and YouTube.[9]

The following shall also be prohibited while using such devices on school grounds:[9]

1. Sending and/or displaying offensive messages.
2. Using obscene language.
3. Harassing, insulting or attacking others.
4. Violating copyright laws.
5. Using another individual's password/access codes.
6. Trespassing in digital files, work or folders.

Cameras of any type shall be prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms, swimming pool areas or during testing shall be prohibited.

The Board prohibits possession of laser pointers and attachments by students in district buildings; on district property; on district buses and vehicles; and at school-sponsored activities.[2]

Devices shall be powered off or silenced during the school day, unless otherwise permitted by district procedures, rules and/or regulations. Use of personal or district technology devices that disrupt the instructional day or includes possession, viewing, sending or sharing video or audio information which has sexual, violent or threatening content on school grounds, school events or school buses shall be prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the electronic device.[3][6][7]

Definition

Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit or receive messages or images; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Examples of these electronic devices include, but shall not be limited to, radios, CD players, DVD players, handheld game consoles, mobile phones, tablets, laptops as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities.

Electronic Images and Photographs

The Board prohibits the taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.

Because such violations may constitute a crime under state and/or federal law, the district may report such conduct to state and/or federal law enforcement agencies.

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would otherwise violate the Code of Student Conduct if any of the following circumstances exist:[3]

1. The conduct occurs during the time the student is traveling to and from school or traveling to and from school-sponsored activities, whether or not via school district furnished transportation.

2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.[4][5]

3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.

4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, for example, a transaction conducted outside of school pursuant to an agreement made in school,that would violate the Code of Student Conduct if conducted in school.

5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.

6. There is otherwise a nexus between the proximity or timing of the conduct in relation to the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the Board's electronic device policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, on the district website and in other publications mailed to addresses on file.

Guidelines

Parents/Guardians and students shall sign the acceptable use waiver acknowledging review of Board policy, register applicable equipment with the district and sign related forms.[9]

Sending text, image, sound, video or files for the purpose of cheating shall be grounds for confiscation and/or inspection of transmitted data.[6]

If a device shall be confiscated, it shall only be released and/or returned to a parent/guardian.

Students may not:[9]

1. Employ the district network for commercial or any non-educational purposes.

2. Intentionally waste resources, such as excessive downloading or creating viruses.

Exceptions to the prohibitions set forth in this policy may be made for health, safety or emergency reasons with prior approval of the building principal or designee, or when use is provided in a student's individualized education program (IEP) and other reasons determined appropriate by the building principal.

The building administrator may grant approval for possession and use of a telephone paging device/beeper by a student for the following reasons:[2]

1. Student is a member of a volunteer fire company, ambulance or rescue squad.
2. Student has a need due to the medical condition of an immediate family member.
3. Other reasons determined appropriate by the building principal.

District staff shall not be authorized to share, distribute or download any content from a student's electronic device.

If the district confiscates a student's device, it shall not be responsible for loss of data or damage to the device.

Board Policy Manual

Section 200 Pupils

Title Tobacco/Nicotine

Code 222

Status Active

Adopted January 18, 2016

Last Revised April 15, 2019

Purpose

The Board recognizes that tobacco, nicotine and nicotine delivery products present a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for both users and nonusers and the safety and environment of the schools.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, tobacco includes a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, cigarillo, little cigar, pipe or other smoking product or material and smokeless tobacco in any form including chewing tobacco, snuff, dip or dissolvable tobacco pieces.[1]

For purposes of this policy, nicotine shall mean a product that contains or consists of nicotine in a form that can be ingested by chewing, smoking, inhaling or through other means.

For purposes of this policy, a nicotine delivery product shall mean a product or device used, intended for use or designed for the purpose of ingesting nicotine or another substance. This definition includes, but is not limited to, any device or associated product used for what is commonly referred to as vaping or juuling.

Authority

The Board prohibits possession, use or sale of tobacco, nicotine and nicotine delivery products by students at any time in a school building and on any property, buses, vans and vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district.[1][2][3]

The Board also prohibits possession, use or sale of tobacco, nicotine and nicotine delivery products by students at school-sponsored activities that are held off school property.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[4][5][6][7][8][9]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the Board's tobacco/nicotine policy by publishing information in student handbooks, parental newsletters, Code of Student Conduct, posters, and by other efficient methods, such as posted notices, signs and on the district website.[1]

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Guidelines

Reporting

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving possession, use or sale of tobacco, nicotine or nicotine delivery products immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[9][10][11]

The Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco, nicotine and nicotine delivery products by students to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form.[9][12]

Additional Provisions - Tobacco Only

The Superintendent or designee may report incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco by students 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 school police, school resource officer (SRO) or to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[9][10][12][13][14]

A student convicted of possessing or using tobacco in violation of this policy may be fined up to fifty dollars ($50) plus court costs, or admitted by the court to alternative adjudication in lieu of imposition of a fine.[15]

Board Policy Manual

Section 200 Pupils

Title Weapons

Code 218.1

Status Active

Adopted January 18, 2016

Purpose

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

Definitions

Weapon - the term shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.[1][2]

Possession - a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; and under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school.

Authority

The Board prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school district buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity or while the student is coming to or from school.[2][3]

The Board shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law and Board policy. The Superintendent may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.[2][4]

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[2][5][6][7][8][9][10]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall react promptly to information and knowledge concerning possession of a weapon. Such action shall be in compliance with state law and regulations and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials and the district's emergency preparedness plan.[11][12][10]

Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report incidents involving weapons 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, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[11][13][2][14][15][10]

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[14][16][10]

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents involving possession of a weapon to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form.[13][10]

The Superintendent or designee shall report all incidents regarding expulsion for possession of a weapon to the Department of Education.[2]

The building principal shall annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Board policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, who shall prescribe special conditions or administrative regulations to be followed.[2]

In accordance with federal law, possession or discharge of a firearm in, on, or within 1,000 feet of school grounds is prohibited. Violations shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.[17][18]

Transfer Students

When the school district receives a student who transfers from a public or private school during an expulsion period for an offense involving a weapon, the district may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education, provided the assignment does not exceed the expulsion period.[2]

Board Policy Manual

Section 200 Pupils

Title Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia

Code 227

Status Active

Adopted January 18, 2016

Purpose

The Board recognizes that the abuse of controlled substances is a serious problem with legal, physical and social implications for the whole school community. As an educational institution dedicated to the holistic well-being of each student, the utilization of curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, strong and consistent administration and faculty efforts and rehabilitative and disciplinary processes shall enable the schools to strive to prevent abuse of controlled substances.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, controlled substances shall include all:[1][2]

1. Controlled substances prohibited by federal and state laws.
2. Look-alike drugs.
3. Alcoholic beverages.
4. Anabolic steroids.
5. Drug paraphernalia.
6. Any volatile solvents or inhalants, such as but not limited to glue and aerosol products.

7. Substances that when ingested cause a physiological effect that is similar to the effect of a controlled substance as defined by state or federal laws.

8. Prescription or nonprescription (over-the-counter) medications, except those for which permission for use in school has been granted pursuant to Board policy.[3][4]

For purposes of this policy, under the influence shall include any consumption or ingestion of controlled substances by a student.

For purposes of this policy, look-alike drug shall include any pill, capsule, tablet, powder, plant matter or other item or substance that is designed or intended to resemble a controlled substance prohibited by this policy, or is used in a manner likely to induce others to believe the material is a controlled substance.

School Property - for the purposes of this policy, shall include not only actual buildings, facilities and grounds on the school campus, but shall also include buses, school bus stops, school parking areas and any facility being used for a school function.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team - a multi-disciplinary team comprised of school personnel, teachers, staff, administrators, nurses, guidance counselors, probation officers, etc. The team shall be trained to understand and work on the issues of adolescent chemical use, abuse and dependency, and shall play a primary role in the identification and referral process of students.[27]

Authority

The Board prohibits students from aiding in the procurement, using, possessing, distributing, and being under the influence of any controlled substances during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity on or off school property, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and to and from school-sponsored activities.[5][6][7]

The Board may require participation in drug counseling, rehabilitation, testing or other programs as a condition of reinstatement into the school's educational, extracurricular or athletic programs resulting from violations of this policy.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[8][9][10][11][12][13]

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would otherwise violate the Code of Student Conduct if any of the following circumstances exist:[14]

1. The conduct occurs during the time the student is traveling to and from school or traveling to and from school-sponsored activities, whether or not via school district furnished transportation.

2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.[15][16]

3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.

4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, for example, a transaction conducted outside of school pursuant to an agreement made in school, that would violate the Code of Student

Conduct if conducted in school.

5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.

6. There is otherwise a nexus between the proximity or timing of the conduct in relation to the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Establish procedures to appropriately manage situations involving students suspected of using, possessing, being under the influence, or distributing controlled substances.[17][18][19]

2. Disseminate to students, parents/guardians and staff the Board policy and administrative regulations governing student use of controlled substances.

3. Provide education concerning the dangers of abusing controlled substances.

4. Establish procedures for education and readmission to school of students convicted of offenses involving controlled substances.

Guidelines

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution.[14][20]

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report required incidents and may report discretionary incidents involving possession, use or sale 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, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[17][18][21][22][23][13]

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving possession, use or sale of controlled substances as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[21][24][13]

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents of possession, use or sale of controlled substances to the Office for Safe Schools.[18][13]

In all cases involving students and controlled substances, the need to protect the school community from undue harm and exposure to drugs shall be recognized.

No student may be admitted to a program that seeks to identify and rehabilitate the potential abuser without the intelligent, voluntary and aware consent of the student and parent/guardian.

Anabolic Steroids

The Board prohibits the use of anabolic steroids by students involved in school-related athletics, except for a valid medical purpose. Body building and muscle enhancement, increasing muscle bulk or strength, or the enhancement of

athletic ability are not valid medical purposes. Human Growth Hormone (HGH) shall not be included as an anabolic steroid.[25]

Students shall be made aware of the dangers of steroid use; that anabolic steroids are classified as controlled substances; and that their use, unauthorized possession, purchase, or sale could subject students to suspension, expulsion and/or criminal prosecution.[26][20]

Reasonable Suspicion/Testing

If based on the student's behavior, medical symptoms, vital signs or other observable factors, the building principal has reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the student may be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing. The testing may include but is not limited to the analysis of blood, urine, saliva, or the administration of a Breathalyzer test.