

August, 2019

Dear Student,

Welcome to Highlands Middle School! We are a "learning community" composed of a creative, capable staff, supportive parents, and focused on you, our approximately 500 students, who find yourselves at a unique point in your lives. You are "in the middle" -- no longer children, not quite teenagers -- yet at a very special, important point in your development.

Our job, in partnership with your family, is to help you continue to grow educationally and socially into a responsible, independent young person who knows how to learn and loves doing it! We have high expectations for you and commit our support to helping you reach your goals.

Because it is vital that Highlands be a safe, nurturing place where all are respected, we have rules that each member of our school community must follow. These rules and regulations are designed to provide structure for behavior and to enable our school to be orderly and safe so students can learn without disruption.

This handbook outlines information, procedures, and policies to help you understand our expectations for you while you attend Highlands. Because Highlands Middle School is a dynamic partnership between school and community, if at any time you or your parents have a question or concern, please telephone or make an appointment to discuss it. Open two-way communication is a necessity for making Highlands the best school that it can be! It is a pleasure to have you join our school community.

Highlands Middle School Staff

*Jamey Vermaat, Principal (616-361-3440)*  
*Michelle Bakos, Admin. Assistant (616-361-3440)*  
*Allison Dykhouse, School Social Worker (616-361-3440)*  
*Scott Korpak, Superintendent of Schools (616-363-6861)*

**VISION STATEMENT**

**Highlands is a place where students flourish academically,  
emotionally, and socially.**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**Preparing students for life's next step.**

**HIGHLANDS MOTTO**

**If there is a problem, we look for a solution.  
If there is a better way, we find it.  
If a teammate needs help, we give it.  
If we need help, we ask.**

### **ABSENCES**

When a student is unable to attend school, a parent should call the school office (361-3440) anytime before 9:00 a.m. Parents should provide the student's name, homeroom teacher's name, and the reason for the absence. If a parent fails to call, the office will call the home or work to confirm the reason for the absence.

When it is necessary for the student to leave school during the day, a parent must contact the office and arrange for dismissal. Students and parent/guardian are to report to the office and sign out. Students will only be released to a person listed on the emergency card, unless the office is notified by phone or writing of other arrangements.

Planned absence forms are available in the office and must be completed by the parent at least 2 days prior to the absence.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

When funds are available, a variety of after-school activities will be provided. Information will be sent home concerning the offerings and students may sign up as directed. Permission slips, signed by the parent, are required.

### **ALCOHOL & DRUGS**

The possession, sale or use of alcohol, drugs, any controlled substance, or any "look-alike" substances is strictly forbidden. Violation of this rule will result in immediate suspension and will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Daily announcements are made each morning. Students are responsible to watch and listen to the information provided through the announcements.

### **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

Parents who deliver or pick-up students should use the East parking lot area. The front area is reserved for bus traffic and added cars create unsafe conditions for all youngsters. Students do not need to arrive at school before 8:00 a.m., doors open at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving early will wait in the cafeteria until 8:25 a.m. Students riding a bus will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m.; all other students will be dismissed at 3:25 p.m.

### **ASSEMBLIES**

Assemblies are planned periodically as special events. P.T.C. helps provide funds for such events and student attendance is a privilege. Students may lose that privilege or be removed for inappropriate behavior or poor academic standing.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is mandated by state law and is an important factor to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence. This requires understanding each concept in the order of its presentation.

The following circumstances are the recognized excuses for school absences: (1) personal illness; (2) family illness; (3) death in the family; (4) religious holiday and (5) when after school doctor and dentist appointments cannot be arranged.

Students are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. However, when this is not possible, students will be excused for these appointments. Parents are asked to make arrangements by calling the school office.

### **BACKPACK POLICY**

Students at Highlands may wear backpacks to and from school. For safety reasons, they must be left in lockers during school hours.

### **BAND**

Northview has a strong tradition in music. Students who elect band are making a year long commitment for the band program. Parents are responsible for providing the instrument and must understand that concerts are an important part of the band program.

### **BICYCLES**

Local ordinances require the registration of all bicycles with the township. Students are encouraged to record their bicycle serial numbers. When traveling to and from school, all traffic regulations must be followed. Failure to ride safely may result in the loss of the privilege of riding your bike to school.

## **BREATH SPRAYS / ENERGY DRINKS**

Breath sprays / energy drinks should not be brought on the school bus or to the school building because of potential for abuse as inhalants or the dangers associated with consumption. Any violation of this rule will result in confiscation and following Rule of General Behavior (page 10).

## **BUS CONDUCT**

Northview Public Schools recognize that the responsibility for safety and supervision of students going to and from school is a shared responsibility of the students, parents, transportation, and school staff.

### **A. Meeting the Bus**

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide for the child's safety to and from the bus stop and to ensure that the child arrives at the bus stop on time. Students must show respect for citizens and for private property while waiting at a bus stop. In the event that a child misses a bus, the parent or guardian is responsible for providing alternative transportation. In the event that bus service is delayed, parents and guardians should be prepared to assume responsibility for the child's welfare until the bus arrives.

It is the responsibility of every student who rides a school bus to be ready at the assigned stop (5) five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. If a student is not ready at the stop on time, the driver will continue the route. The driver will not return for a student who is not ready on time.

### **B. Conduct on the Bus**

The key to ongoing appropriate conduct on buses is a solid educational program that stresses a safe, caring, and orderly environment.

These Standards of Conduct are made available to parents and students so that everyone has a clear understanding of the requirements related to the privilege of bus transportation. A copy of these Standards is provided to each student. Each parent or guardian must sign an attached consent form, return it to the classroom teacher where it will be kept on file in the Transportation Office for the school year.

The Northview Public Schools requires students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with standards for classroom behavior. The goal of these standards is to provide the optimum safety in transporting students to and from school.

## **Bus Conduct Rules**

1. Follow the bus drivers' directions the first time they are given.
2. Be on time at the designated bus stop. Stay off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Cross in front of the bus.
4. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus.
5. Remain seated at all times. The driver may assign permanent seats. It is dangerous to stand while the bus is in motion.
6. Keep all body parts and objects inside the bus.
7. No eating, drinking, chewing gum, or smoking is allowed on the bus.
8. Respect the rights and property of others.
9. Items brought on the bus must be held on your lap (e.g. books, backpacks, musical instruments, etc.).
10. Use appropriate language. No swearing or degrading, slanderous, or threatening comments will be tolerated.
11. Use a normal (indoor) talking voice. Yelling and/or screaming can be distracting to the driver.
12. Fighting will not be tolerated. School discipline codes will be followed.
13. Dangerous and inappropriate items, as determined by the district, are not permitted on the bus (e.g. lighters, alcohol, drugs, matches, firecrackers, sleds, skateboards, animals, insects, reptiles, etc.)
14. Weapons are not permitted on the bus. Immediate suspension from the bus and school pending a Board hearing will be enforced.
15. Vandalism (damaging the seats in any manner) will not be tolerated.
16. Do not tamper with the emergency door, or any bus part or equipment.
17. Students must use their designated bus pick-up and drop-off point unless a note from their parent indicates otherwise.

### **C. Bus Conduct Report Process/Discipline Policy**

The Northview Public Schools requires children to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with standards for classroom behavior. We believe that good discipline on buses is a hallmark for safety in transporting our students. The discipline policy outlined below is based on the following components:

- Education
- Parent communication
- Policy and procedures
- Corrective discipline; including, but is not limited to warning, assigned seat, suspension of riding privileges, law enforcement contact, community service and/or monetary compensation.

**1st Offense: (warning):** The driver will deal with the situation. He/she will complete the report and deliver it to the Transportation Director or designee who keeps a copy, returns one to the driver and sends copies to the parents and principal. The Principal may review the report with the student.

**2nd Offense: (2nd warning):** The driver will complete a report and give it to the Transportation Director. Copies of the report will be distributed as described above. A meeting may be held with the driver, principal, teacher, student and parents.

**3rd Offense: (up to three-day bus suspension):** The driver will provide a written report and give it to the Transportation Director who will route it to the principal. The Transportation Director will determine the appropriate penalty. A conference with the parents, driver, student, Transportation Director and principal may be convened. Copies of the report will be distributed as described above. Readmission to the bus must be accompanied by a signed agreement between the student, parents, and administration.

**4th Offense: (suspension for up to the remainder of the school year):** The driver will provide a written report to the Transportation Director who will route the information to the principal. The Transportation Director will determine the penalty. A conference will be convened with parents, the driver, Transportation Director and principal. Copies of the report are to be distributed as outlined above.

#### **Major Offenses:**

Include, but is not limited to criminal offenses, fighting, assaults, and insubordination and/or safety violations.

Penalties for major offenses will be determined in collaboration with the Director of Transportation and the Principal. Discipline may be up to and including expulsion from Northview Public Schools.

Final appeals of decisions for 1st and 2nd offenses are made to the principal.

Final appeals of 3rd, 4th, or major offenses are made to the superintendent's office.

#### **Additional Information**

1. Students are expected to ride their regular bus route unless advance written permission is granted from the driver.
2. Students are to have one regular drop-off. A form for an additional stop may be submitted to the Transportation Office for consideration. A decision will be reached by the Transportation Committee, which meets each semester. The committee consists of the Transportation Director, a representative from the board, administration and professional staff. An appeals form may be picked up at the Transportation Office.

#### **CAFETERIA RULES**

The same general rules of conduct apply in the cafeteria as in the classroom. Students cannot save places in line or at the tables. Students should return trays and papers to the proper places, and each student is responsible to clean up the table.

Failure to conduct oneself in a respectful manner as outlined in Rules for General Behavior, will result in being:

1. Assigned to restricted table/area.
2. Prohibited from participating in activity time.
3. Removed from the cafeteria for a specific period of time.

#### **CANCELLATION OF SCHOOLS**

Cancellation of schools takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure or public crisis. School will only be cancelled because of a safety risk created by unusual circumstances. Anytime school is cancelled such notification will be given to the local radio and TV. Students and parents should listen to any one of these to obtain such notice.

#### **CELL PHONES/COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Students are prohibited from using cell phones or other electronic communication devices (ECD) or having them "On" during the school day. This includes before school, lunch periods and passing periods, as well as on school-sponsored trips. However, students are permitted to use their devices for classroom purposes under the supervision of their teacher. The District is not responsible for loss, theft, damage or vandalism to student devices as well as other student property. Students and parents are strongly encouraged to ensure that, if students have these devices in their possession, they should not leave them unattended or unsecured. They are a popular theft item.

#### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE**

It is **very** important that every student maintain an up-to-date emergency information card. Parents need to notify the school office immediately if there is a change in address, phone or other required information.

#### **CHEATING**

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and should never be tolerated by the parent or school. If a youngster is caught cheating, the work will be confiscated and a failing grade may be recorded for the work. The teacher will notify the parent within 24 hours.

#### **CHOIR**

Choir is a class that incorporates many facets of music. Students who select choir are making a commitment for the year and are required to attend the concerts.

#### **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

In order to protect the learning environment within the classroom, we would like to keep the classroom interruptions to a minimum. If you have messages for your student throughout the school day, please contact the office. The office will contact your student at the appropriate time."

#### **CLASSROOM PARTIES**

Each team will determine what parties will be held. In addition, treats may be brought in for birthdays after the date and time is cleared with the classroom teacher.

#### **CONFERENCES**

Northview conducts conferences in the fall and spring. The conferences are scheduled with the homeroom teacher by calling the school office (361-3440) and arranging a specific time.

If you have a concern, it is not necessary to wait for the regular conference times. Please call the teacher and arrange a conference or speak with them directly whenever you have a concern.

#### **CONTROL OF CASUAL-CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND PESTS**

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the group is at risk. The school's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease or highly-transient pest, such as lice

Specific diseases include; diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella, and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments.

Any removal will only be for the contagious period as specified in the school's administrative guidelines.

In the case of non casual-contact, communicable-diseases, the school still has the obligation to protect the safety of the staff and students. In these cases, the person in question will have his/her status reviewed by a panel of resource people, including the County Health Department, to ensure that the rights of the person affected and those in contact with that person are respected. The school will seek to keep students and staff persons in school unless there is definitive evidence to warrant exclusion.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Teachers, as well as any adult staff member, have the responsibility and authority to maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom and throughout the building. Each teacher, in order to provide safety for all students, establishes classroom rules.

When a child is having a behavioral problem, the adult may take any combination of the following activities:

1. conference with the student
2. contact the parent
3. use classroom disciplinary procedures
4. remove the student from the classroom and/or
5. send the child to the Student Responsibility Center.

## **DRESS CODE**

Our school is a place of learning. Our goal is to educate our students and offer to them the best learning environment possible. Although the primary responsibility for student dress rests with the parent/guardians, it is our responsibility to establish and maintain an atmosphere that enhances the opportunity of individuals to learn. If a student's clothing is disruptive to the educational environment or it may possibly subject that student to any type of harassment, the student will be asked to change into something more appropriate. Parents may be contacted to assist their child if necessary. The school will make the final determination as to whether a child's clothing is appropriate. The following is a partial list of items that are not appropriate for school:

1. Outdoor wear in the classroom including hats, bandanas, coats and/or oversized boots.
2. Tops with spaghetti straps or bare midriffs.
3. Short-shorts and very short skirts - general rule - finger tips with arms at side.
4. Pajamas, lounge pants or other nightwear, other than designated days.
5. Excessively high heels, slippers or footwear not allowing a child to walk quickly and safely in case of a need to evacuate the building.
6. Any clothing that contains inappropriate wording or pictures and/or inappropriate advertising.

## **EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY**

It is the policy of this District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students.

Any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against on the basis of her/his race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin, while at school or a school activity should immediately contact the School District's Compliance Officer listed below:

Liz Cotter  
Assistant Superintendent  
(616) 363-6861

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the procedures as described in Board Policy 2260. Any student making a complaint or participating in a school investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The Compliance Officer can provide additional information concerning equal access to educational opportunity including homebound instruction.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS / SAFETY LOCKDOWNS**

Fire and tornado drills are conducted throughout the school year to better educate everyone on the required procedures. The cooperation of everyone is essential to the safety and welfare of all of us.

Fire drills require that everyone leave the building as instructed.

Tornado drills require we safely move to the designated areas. Adults will provide students with specific directions to better ensure everyone's safety.

Lock Down drills - Passive/Active will be conducted throughout the school year and any unusual situations which occur, staff reserve the right to react with common sense and good judgement for the safety of the students.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARDS**

Each student is given a registration form the 1st day of school and is required to return it. The form provides the school with the following information:

1. student and parent names
2. address
3. home and work phone numbers
4. emergency phone numbers of friends or relatives
5. physician's name and phone
6. medical alert numbers.

Always notify the school when any of this information changes. It is vital that we be able to contact a parent in an emergency situation. Students will only be released to a person listed on the emergency card unless the office is notified by phone or writing of other arrangements.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Throughout the school year a variety of trips may be scheduled to supplement our classroom curriculum. Teachers will notify parents of the trip and may require written parent permission to participate. All school rules apply to students on field trips. Non-academic field trips are a privilege. Students may lose that privilege or be removed for inappropriate behavior and/or poor academic standing.

### **FIGHTING / AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

Fighting is defined as aggressive physical action toward another individual. Any such action will not be tolerated. If a student is being intimidated or threatened by another, he or she needs to tell a teacher, principal or an adult so they can provide assistance. All students have the right to feel safe and secure at school. Any occurrence of fighting may also include notification to local law enforcement agencies.

- First Violation: Notification of parent and possible suspension up to three (3) days.
- Second Violation: Same as above but possible suspension up to five (5) days.
- Further Violations: Same as above but possible suspension up to ten (10) days and/or referral to the Superintendent's office for expulsion consideration.

### **FOOD SERVICE**

Northview Public Schools is pleased to offer a computerized method of paying for student meals. All students are provided with a student I.D. number. Parents deposit money in their child's account and students enter their I.D. number at the cashier station. The amount of the purchase is automatically deducted from their account. Each account is coded to charge the proper rate for the students (free, reduced, or full paid). This system guarantees complete privacy for free and reduced students and speeds the time of service. If students use their card to access their account, and the card is lost or stolen, we can not guarantee the accuracy of their accounts. Please report lost cards to the Food Service office. New cards may be purchased in the Food Service office for a fee of \$5.00.

With this system, parents can request a printout called a Meal History to find out exactly what their child is purchasing.

Student Accounts are NOT a charge account, but rather a debit system. Students are expected to keep a positive balance in their accounts. The food service department will allow students a maximum of two Type A lunches to be charged against their account. Food service staff will notify students that their account has a negative balance. Parents are expected to send in a deposit immediately.

We will not let your child go without anything to eat. If the maximum negative balance is reached (two lunches), your child will not be eligible for the standard meal menu, but will be offered a sandwich and drink.

If you have questions concerning the debit system for student meal accounts, please contact: Food Service at 361-3473.

### **BIOMETRIC IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM**

The finger scan system is the easiest and most secure way for our students to access their account. The system is a finger imaging program that measures unique points of each student fingerprint and transfers it to a numerical number. To register students within the system, they hold their finger on the scanner while the points are measured and transferred to a unique number. That number is now what identifies each student when they return to the lunch room and is unique only to that student since it was created from the unique points of each student's fingerprint. It is important to know we are not taking fingerprints and no fingerprint can be made from the numerical number connected to each student.

All students are also given a Student ID card, which contains the information necessary to access their account.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Throughout the year, various groups and organizations will sponsor fundraising events. The principal and the school improvement team must approve any classroom or group-sponsored fundraiser. All fundraisers must be well publicized with parents. We ask that you participate in order to help provide the financial means to offer a variety of enrichments to our students. Any participation in fundraising is a parental choice.

## GANGS

Gang activity of any kind on school property or at school activities will not be permitted. The gang-related behavior or mannerisms which will not be tolerated, include, but are not limited to the following:

- \* clothing or colors depicting gang affiliation
- \* hand signals
- \* hand shakes
- \* personal graffiti

## HEAD LICE

- School officials will immediately inform the parent/guardian if any student is found to have live lice or nits after confirmation from the school designated personnel.
- Immediate treatment at home will be advised. Parents will be given education on appropriate treatment.
- The student will be readmitted to school after treatment and a clear examination.
- If, upon examination, the school designated personnel find no live lice on the child and/or nits farther than one quarter inch from the scalp, the child may re-enter the school.
- If, upon examination, the school designated personnel find live lice or nits closer than one quarter inch from the scalp on the student, the school nurse should be notified immediately. In this circumstance, the student may be sent home based on the school's discretion and more education and guidance will be given to the parents by the school nurse.
- Operations should be notified by the school designated personnel if live lice are found, and a thorough classroom cleaning will be requested.

## HOMEWORK

We believe that homework, an integral part of the educational process, reinforces and enhances learning. In order to make homework a meaningful and positive experience, we believe a need exists for cooperation among teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Homework is an activity assigned for students to prepare (for), reinforce, and extend learning. Homework is designed to strengthen and develop study habits, skills and responsibilities.

The quantity of homework is based upon an average of 10 minutes per grade per day (50 minutes for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 60 minutes for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students). The amount of time each student takes to complete assignments will depend on the student's abilities, nature of the assigned work and work habits within the classroom.

Our teaching staff will make every effort to be sensitive to winter break and spring break with regard to homework assignments. In general, we will not assign work that can be done only over a break period. Assignments might be made, however, over a time period that encompasses a break period, so the student can choose to work during the break if desired. If a parent has a concern about a specific assignment, please contact the teacher who assigned the work.

### Expectations for the Student

1. Ask for assistance and/or clarification of assignments.
2. Write down all assignments in daily planner.
3. Take home necessary materials to complete assignments.
4. Plan time to complete work.
5. Complete and return assigned work.
6. Take responsibility for work missed due to absence.

### Expectations for the Parent

1. Establish homework as a family priority.
2. Provide assistance and encouragement.
3. Provide a quiet place in the home and help the child schedule a regular study session.
4. Notify the teacher when difficulties occur in completing homework assignments.
5. Contact the school for assignments, due to absences.
6. Check the child's student planner nightly.

## HOURS

School Hours:                   OPEN DOORS AT 8:00 A.M.  
1. Dismiss from cafeteria at 8:25 a.m.  
2. Classes begin 8:30 a.m./ HTV Announcements  
3. Lunches 11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
4. Dismissal@ 3:30 p.m.  
5. Half Days - Dismissal 11:45 a.m.

## ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of illness or injury a student will be cared for temporarily by the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. A parent will be contacted to provide further medical treatment or to transport the youngster home.

The school is not equipped or staffed to provide long term medical or custodial help to ill youngsters. It is the parent's responsibility to pick the sick child up from school.

#### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

In compliance with NVPS Board Policy 5320, all students must meet the immunization requirements set by the State for attendance at school in order to enroll or attend. Students who do not meet the immunization requirements on the opening day of school, and who have not properly waived or delayed the required immunization obligations, will not be admitted.

#### **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but to all individuals who have access to the District's programs and facilities.

A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parent involvement in this procedure is important and required by Federal (IDEA) and State law. Contact **(616) 361-3446** to inquire about evaluation procedures and programs.

#### **LASERS**

Laser lights can be dangerous and should be left at home and not be brought to school. Laser lights will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian.

#### **LEAVING SCHOOL**

Students are not allowed to leave school during the day unless the parent has made arrangements in the office. Permission to leave school grounds will only be granted upon request from the parent. Once the arrangements are made the student and parent are required to sign out in the office. Students who go home sick or due to other circumstances other than dentist or doctor appointments are not to be back on school grounds until the next school day.

#### **LIBRARY (Instructional Media Center or I.M.C.)**

1. Students may use the library when school begins and throughout the school day. They must have a pass from their teacher.
2. Library books, magazines and vertical file materials circulate for two (2) weeks.
3. Up to three (3) books may be checked out at any one time. These are checked out through the computer.
4. Books may be returned at any time. Books are to be returned in the book-return slot at the end of the checkout desk.
5. Current magazines and reference materials MUST BE USED IN THE I.M.C.
6. The I.M.C. is used for reading, studying, and testing. All behaviors must be appropriate to these uses. Students are expected to use the library often for both schoolwork and personal enjoyment.

#### **LOCKERS**

A locker with a combination lock is issued to all students at the beginning of the school year. These lockers are the property of Northview Public Schools. Two students share a locker. Students are expected to keep the combination private. Lockers are to be kept clean by both partners and are never to be abused in any way. Switching lockers without permission from the office or abuse to the locker can result in the loss of locker privileges. Band instruments are not to be stored in lockers, a band storage room is provided for instruments.

#### **LOST AND FOUND**

Any items found within the building will be turned in at the office. Any unclaimed items of clothing will be donated to charity two weeks after the last day of school for students.

#### **MEDICATION**

If a student is to take medication while at school, the parent must complete a medication form which is available in the office. All medication must be distributed through the office. Medications must be in their original containers. State law mandates this. A parent at the end of the school year must pick up all medications. Medication may be allowed to be sent home at vacation breaks only with a written parental request.

#### **MOTORIZED VEHICLES**

Students are not allowed to operate motorized vehicles on school property. Because of age laws, Highlands' students cannot drive such vehicles to school.

#### **NEWSLETTERS / COMMUNICATIONS**

Our newsletter is distributed monthly online (Highlands website) throughout the year. Paper copies are in the office if needed. The newsletter contains important information. Principal also sends out monthly e-mails on upcoming events.

#### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parent volunteers are a special resource to Highlands. Parents can provide classroom assistance, work in the library and reading centers, provide one-on-one help to students, and assist with special projects and field trips. Please contact the teachers or the office to offer your help.

#### **PETS**

No pets of any kind are allowed at school without prior approval of the principal. Teachers may request permission for pets to be brought to school as part of an activity, speech or display. A parent must make arrangements for bringing and picking up the pet. This policy is in place to help protect the growing number of asthmatic and allergy prone students.

#### **PICTURES**

Early each school year student pictures will be taken. Pictures will be made available for purchasing and also be used in the Highlands' Yearbook.

#### **PLANNERS/PASSES**

Each student will be provided with a planner. This is a great communication tool for all as well as helping students to accept personal responsibility. Planners are expected to be signed by the teacher and a parent on a regular basis. Planners will be used for hall passes.

#### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Teachers will often report a youngster's progress between report card markings. A teacher initiated progress report will be sent home when a teacher desires to report to a parent. Parent/students may request a progress report at any time and can do so by contacting the homeroom teacher.

#### **PROMOTIONS, ADVANCEMENTS & RETENTIONS**

Promotion, advancement or retention is based upon an evaluation of academic, physical, social and emotional growth. Parents and teachers will work together to make the best decision for the next year's placement.

#### **PARENT TEACHER COMMITTEE**

Highlands' P.T.C. is highly involved in helping improve our school. Meetings are conducted throughout the year to plan and carry out the committee's business. The P.T.C. sponsors various events to raise money to help support student activities. All parents are urged to become actively involved in the projects and meetings.

#### **RELEASE OF RECORDS**

The school is required to maintain records (CA60) on all students. Parents have the right to review these records according to the Northview Board policy and state law. Occasionally the school or the school district will receive requests for information from individuals. By law, the school district can only give out "directory information" i.e. information which is not generally considered an invasion of privacy such as grade level, name of current teacher, athletic team affiliations, etc. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act allows a parent to request that their child's directory information not be released. To do so, please drop off a signed letter stating your wishes to not disclose any directory information if requested.

Personal information such as full name, address, phone number, educational records, etc. is not directory information and will not be released at any time without parental information.

#### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued four (4) times a year. Report cards contain information concerning behavior and academic progress. Please carefully review your child's report card and contact the teacher if you have questions.

### ParentVue / StudentVue

ParentVue is an Internet-based system that provides parents the opportunity to view their child's academic progress. It is a software system that provides our parents with current reports of their student's progress.

### RULES FOR GENERAL BEHAVIOR

Students of Highlands Middle School are expected to foster and support a learning environment that is safe, caring, orderly and productive. Previous students have developed a theme of "Expect Respect" to help provide such an environment. Students should always act in a manner that displays:

- Expect Respect
- Respect for myself and other people.
- Respect for my things and other people's things.
- Respect for my space and other people's space.

By demonstrating these traits we can ensure for others and ourselves a safe, caring and orderly environment. Growth opportunities and consequences will be given to students who are disruptive to the educational process and/or display behaviors that do not support our theme of "Expect Respect".

The "Expect Respect" theme will be supported by the rubric entitled Consequences for Disrespectful and Aggressive Behavior. (See rubric at the end of this handbook.)

Behaviors that severely disrupt a respectful environment will not be tolerated. These types of behavior include, but are not limited to: threats of violence and/or fighting; defiance of school staff; profanity; possession of weapons or other dangerous objects; possession of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs or any type of "look-alike" substance; theft or destruction of personal or school property; sexual harassment; false alarms or deliberate false reports. These and other severely inappropriate behaviors will result in notification of the proper law enforcement agencies as required by Public Act 102 signed into law in 1999, suspension and/or referral to the Superintendent's office for expulsion.

### SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

A professional school Social Worker is available to assist parents and students. A variety of individual and group sessions are conducted to help with social concerns, family matters and crisis situations.

### SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Search of a student and his/her possessions including but not limited to vehicles, lockers, desks, backpacks, any other equipment to store materials; As well as, computers, personal electronic devices, and online/network files may be conducted at any time the student is under the jurisdiction of the board of education, if there is reasonable suspicion that a student is in violation of law or school rules. A search may also be conducted to protect the health and safety of others. All searches may be conducted with or without the student's consent. Anything that is found during a search that may be evidence of a violation of law or school rules may be taken and held or turned over to the police. The school reserves the right not to return items which have been confiscated. In the course of any search, student's privacy rights will be respected regarding any items that are not illegal or against school policy.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Northview Public Schools prohibits sexual harassment of students. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, any unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by or unwelcome to the student and/or has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational environment.

Sexual harassment of students may take many forms. Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- \* verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature;
- \* pressure for sexual activity;
- \* repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications to students;
- \* unwelcome touching of a sexual nature;
- \* suggestions or demands of sexual involvement that are accompanied by implicit or explicit threats concerning a student's grades, graduation, or other school related matters;
- \* sexual name-calling, gestures, jokes and spreading sexual rumors about students.

The district will take appropriate corrective action when violations of this policy occur. This policy is posted and is available upon request.

### STUDENT COUNCIL

A student council is formulated each year with one or two representatives from each homeroom. The purposes of the council are: (1) to provide students with the opportunity to better understand the principals of self-government (2) to learn about and exercise student leadership.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY CENTER**

No student is allowed to disrupt in class or anywhere else in school. When they do, they are given the choice of remaining where they are and following the rules or going to the Student Responsibility Center (SRC), where they stay until they indicate to the teacher that they are willing to follow the rules. When they do make the choice to leave and go to the SRC because of continued disruptions, they are taught by the SRC teacher how to work out a plan which they will use to negotiate their return with the person who was in charge of wherever they were disrupting. They are only in the SRC for the time they are scheduled with the person in charge of where they were disrupting. Students are permitted to go to all other classes and other areas, such as the cafeteria, recess, and the library, where they are following the rules.

Students who are disruptive and/or non-cooperative while in the SRC will then be given the following choices of consequences for their continued disruptive behavior:

- 1. Sign-up for an SRC Saturday. (Three hour Saturday study session.)
- or 2. Contact a parent and go home for the rest of the day.
- or 3. Remain at school and be suspended from school the following day.

Students will contact a parent/guardian every time, excluding the first visit, they choose to go to the SRC. After five visits in any semester the student will automatically be signed up for an SRC Saturday.

## **STUDY SKILLS**

Specific skills and techniques can make learning easier and more enjoyable. Students are expected to:

- 1. come to class prepared with a pencil, paper, needed books, and completed assignments;
- 2. be an active participant in class -- listen and take part in class;
- 3. ask questions to clarify problems;
- 4. plan and schedule time for homework, and
- 5. strive to do the best work possible.

## **SUSPENSIONS**

Suspensions from school are given for the worst infractions of the rules. Suspensions are given for those infractions as listed throughout this handbook, or when behavior becomes so disruptive that the rights of others must be protected and can be achieved by suspending the disruptive student. Parents/guardians will be notified. Students will be afforded their due process rights before any suspensions take place.

"Due Process Rights- Before a student is suspended either in or out of school there are specific procedures that are followed. When a student is being considered for a suspension of ten (10) days or less, the administrator in charge will notify the student of the charges. The student will then be given an opportunity to explain his/her side and the administrator will then provide the student the evidence supporting the charges. After that informal hearing, the principal will make a decision whether or not to suspend. If a student is suspended, she/he and his/her parents will be notified, within one (1) day, of the reason for and the length of suspension. The suspension may be appealed, within two (2) school days after receipt of the suspension notice, to the Superintendent. The request for appeal must be in writing."

## **TARDINESS**

Prompt arrival to school and throughout the day is expected of all students. Tardiness to school is excused when returning from a doctor or dentist appointment or parent excuse.

Individual teachers handle lateness to class. When a teacher holds a student after class, the student will have his/her planner signed for the next class. The classroom teacher will determine all other tardiness using the policy stated below:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Violation - one warning will be given
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy - 15 minute lunch in SRC
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy or more - 30 minute lunch in SRC

## **TELEPHONE**

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students, except in an emergency. Students are however, allowed to use the office phone before school, after school or on their lunch time to make personal arrangements.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are issued to classroom teachers. Students are expected to care for all school materials issued to them. If a book is damaged beyond reasonable wear or lost, the student is responsible for the cost to repair or replace the book.

## **THEFT**

Theft or stealing of school property or personal property is a violation of school rules as well as against the law.

- 1. First violation: Up to a three (3) day suspension - possible police referral.
- 2. Second violation: Up to a five (5) day suspension - police referral.
- 3. Third violation: Up to a ten (10) day suspension - police referral.

## TOBACCO

Smoking or chewing tobacco is not allowed on school grounds or in the building by any student. Students are not allowed to use tobacco at any school function or activity. Tobacco products that are seen will be confiscated.

1. First violation: One (1) day out-of-school suspension.
2. Second violation: Up to three (3) days out-of-school suspension.
3. Further violations: Up to ten (10) days out-of-school suspension.

## TORNADOES

**Watch:** A tornado watch means that a tornado may develop in the area. No tornado exists yet, but weather conditions favor tornado development.

**Warning:** A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted in the area.

### **A. SCHOOL DAY**

1. If a tornado "watch" is announced prior or during the regular dismissal time, students **will normally be dismissed at the regular dismissal time for all schools.**
2. If weather conditions get worse or tornado "warning" exists during the regular dismissal times, the Superintendent or designee will determine when to dismiss students. In no event will students be dismissed if a tornado "warning" has been declared by the National Service that includes this School District in the "warning" area.
3. In the event that there is not sufficient time to evacuate students to their homes during emergency conditions, students will be housed at school in areas which have been designated as providing the best available protection.
4. In the event of damage to a school the responsibility of the building staff will be the safety and welfare of students and others using the building.

### **B. AFTER HOURS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

1. If a tornado watch or warning is announced during school hours, all after-school activities will be  canceled  unless an **ALL CLEAR** is announced prior to 4:00 p.m.
2. In the event a watch is issued while an activity is in progress, the activity shall be curtailed as soon as notification is received.
3. In the event a warning is issued while an activity is in progress, the activity shall be curtailed and all persons present should seek shelter immediately. As soon as the warning is lifted, those present should leave the building.

### **SUGGESTED TORNADO EMERGENCY FOR PARENTS:**

Your school has made plans to safeguard your children during a tornado. Here is how you can help.

### **C. DURING A TORNADO WATCH**

1. Do/don't send your child to school: Use  your  judgment.
2. Do/don't pick students up from school: Use  your  judgment.
3. School buses will/will not run, depending on weather conditions. Decision will be made by the Superintendent.

### **D. DURING A TORNADO WARNING**

1. Do not try to pick your child up from school until the warning has been lifted. You should take shelter immediately.
2. Please do not call the school. Lines need to be open for emergency communications.

## TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is a service provided by Northview Public Schools to students who abide by the rules set forth below. Families are requested to discuss these rules and regulations with their children since stressing their importance will assure safer transportation for all. For more detailed information about transportation guidelines, please visit our website at: <http://nvps.net/transportation/>.

### NVPS Transportation Guidelines

- School and District rules and regulations shall apply while being transported in school-owned or contracted vehicles.
- Students shall ride their regularly assigned bus, unless permission to do otherwise has been granted by the Transportation Department.
- Students should be at their assigned bus stop five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled pickup time. The driver will not delay, nor return, for students arriving late at their stop.

- Students waiting to board the bus should stand at least ten (10) feet back from the curb or roadway until the driver opens the door of the bus.
- The driver is in full charge of the bus and its passengers and may assign seats. Students must obey the driver promptly and willingly.
- Students are required to remain in a seat and in a sitting position when bus is in motion.
- Courteous behavior is expected. Profanity, vulgar language, excessive noise, fighting, teasing, pushing and shoving is prohibited.
- No eating, drinking, or chewing gum is allowed on the bus during routine, daily trips to and from school. Eating and drinking may be allowed at the driver's discretion on ACTIVITY TRIPS ONLY.
- Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus shall cross at least ten (10) feet in FRONT of the bus and only upon a signal given by the bus driver.
- Students are required to keep all body parts and items under their control inside the bus. Articles are not to be thrown on the bus or out of the bus windows.
- As provided for by State of Michigan law, parents/guardians may be held financially liable for damage caused by their child's act of vandalism (MCLA 600.2913).
- Routine circumstances do not allow for the bus driver to make unscheduled bus stops.
- Emergency exits are to be used only in cases of emergency. Tampering with emergency exits is prohibited.
- Animals of any type are not to be brought on the bus.
- District buses are equipped with video cameras to monitor events and student actions. If a student misbehaves on a bus and his/her actions are recorded, the recording may be used as evidence of the misbehavior. Privacy laws dictate who may view, and under what circumstances, these recordings may be viewed.

#### **TRUANCY / TRANSFER / WITHDRAWAL**

When a student's lack of attendance is creating academic and social difficulties, a referral will be made to the Kent Intermediate School District. Appropriate legal action will be taken by K.I.S.D. and the courts.

Transfer out of district- Parents must notify the principal about plans to transfer their child to another school. If a student plans to transfer from Highlands Middle School, the parent must notify the principal. Transfer will be authorized only after the student has completed the arrangements, returned all school materials, and paid any fees or fines that are due. School records, may not be released if the transfer is not properly completed. Parents are encouraged to contact the building administrative assistant for specific details.

#### **VALUABLES**

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. For example, walkmen radios, cd-players, ipods, or mp3 players should not be brought to school. Games, pogs and athletic cards are all popular items and can come up missing. Any personal items a student brings to school are his/her responsibility. Highlands Middle School and the district of Northview are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

#### **VANDALISM**

Willfully damaging or destroying school property is cause for suspension and/or expulsion and reporting to the proper law enforcement agency.

#### **VISITORS**

All visitors are required to report to the office upon entering the building. **PARENTS ARE WELCOME AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO VISIT THE SCHOOL.** To visit a specific classroom, please call and arrange an agreeable time with that classroom teacher. Students who plan to invite a guest from another school must request a visitor form from the office and have it approved by the teachers and the principal.

#### **WALKERS**

Students who are walkers are encouraged to consider their safety at all times. To help, students should always:

1. remain in the classroom at the end of the day until the buses have departed;
2. remain on sidewalks at all times; do not cross through yards;
3. cross only at designated crosswalks;
4. walk facing the traffic;
5. walk with a friend;
6. never accept a ride with a stranger.

#### **WEAPONS**

District students who possess a dangerous weapon in a weapon free school zone, or who commit arson or criminal sexual conduct in a public school or on public school grounds, shall be permanently expelled from this District and all Michigan public schools in accordance with applicable law.

This policy supersedes any prior policies and/or practices with respect to student discipline for the student behaviors described in this policy.

A dangerous weapon is any object defined as a dangerous weapon by state or federal law: a gun, revolver, pistol, dagger, stiletto, knife with a blade over three inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, brass knuckles, any exploding or incendiary item. In addition, a firearm, as defined by federal law, is prohibited. A weapon free school zone includes all public and private K-12 school buildings, school grounds and school vehicles used to transport K-12 students. Arson and rape are also defined in the Michigan criminal codes.

Students expelled under this policy may not attend a regular Northview program and are expelled from all public schools in the State of Michigan. However, such students may be enrolled in an appropriate program at the discretion of the district that operates or participates in the program. Such a program must be operated in facilities and at times separate from the general student population. The district is not obligated to provide an alternative program.

Students who are in grades 5 or below at the time of expulsion may petition for reinstatement after 90 school days of expulsion. Students who are in grades 6 or above at the time of expulsion may not petition for reinstatement until after 180 school days of expulsion.

Suspension and expulsion of special education students will follow the Michigan Department of Education policy and the Northview Board of Education Policy.

The District will comply with all reporting and other requirements of the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act and Michigan Public Act 328.

This policy is posted in various locations throughout the building and is available upon request.

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