



THOMPSON FALLS SCHOOLS ATHLETIC & ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

THOMPSON FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT #2

Updated July 2023



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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to inform parents, students, and coaches of proper guidelines, procedures, and policies that are essential for successful extracurricular activities at Thompson Falls High School. Our School District understands that interscholastic athletics are a significant part of the educational process. The combination of academics and athletics enhances the quality of students' lives and expands their options for learning and personal growth. Athletics and activities provide an educational opportunity in which students can learn essential life lessons beyond those that can be learned in an academic classroom.

Ethics, integrity and respect are values important in our daily lives. On the playing field, they are translated into the word sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is one of the most educational lessons and lifetime values taught by interscholastic athletics and activities. REMEMBER, BE A GOOD SPORT!

It is the responsibility of the school administration to apply the guidelines of this handbook within school board policy and standard administrative procedures. All concerns should be addressed by following the proper chain of command outlined in this handbook.

Please feel free to call or visit the athletic director with any questions or concerns.

Bud Scully
Superintendent

Jodi Morgan
High School Principal

Len Dorscher
K-8 Principal

Jake Mickelson
Athletic Director

THOMPSON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL SONG

STAND UP AND CHEER

STAND UP AND CHEER
STAND UP AND CHEER FOR THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL

PLEDGE YOUR LOYALTY
FOR IT'S YOUR ALMA MATER TRUE

OUR TEAMS ARE FIGHTING AND WE WILL HELP
TO SEE THEM THROUGH

WE'VE GOT THE TEAM RAH - RAH
WE'VE GOT THE STEAM RAH - RAH

SO THOMPSON HIGH SCHOOL HERE'S TO YOU

T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N

(Repeat above)

B-L-U-E-H-A-W-K-S

BLUEHAWKS - - - - - FIGHT!

APPROACH TO ATHLETICS/EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics offers a student a chance to participate in an organized and supervised program of controlled competition. While programs are sometimes evaluated based on win-loss records, it is wise to remember that success often takes forms not reflected on the scoreboard or stat sheet. Perhaps the greatest measure of success in athletics is the development of strong, positive values in each of our athletes. We have the responsibility of promoting such attitudes.

Thompson Falls High School and coaches are committed to producing well-rounded, involved individuals who are ready to assume their role in society. To this end we must strive to demonstrate the importance of values such as teamwork, sacrifice, self-discipline, respect, pride, and commitment in the athlete to his/her work in both athletics and in the classroom academically.

In all of our programs WE HAVE A DESIRE TO WIN, yet, we must be realistic in recognizing that losses will occur. Therefore, we must teach our athletes to treat victory with grace and humility and defeat with their heads held high, determined to improve.

Finally, and most importantly, our athletic programs must be fun, both for the athlete and the coaches. Success in terms of character development and victories will be enhanced if the program is enjoyable.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY / TITLE IX

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Thompson Falls School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, in the educational programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. The District is required by federal law, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and their regulations to not discriminate against individuals in violation of these laws.

TITLE IX

Thompson Falls School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and adheres to the provisions of Title IX and the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement.

The Ridgeway Settlement Agreement deals with sex equity in interscholastic athletics in multiple areas, including but not limited to the number of sports offered, coaches, coaching salaries, publicity, team support, scheduling and facilities, laundry facilities, recognition, meals, overnight accommodations, uniforms, equipment and supplies, Booster Club, transportation and officials.

The Title IX Coordinator, the high school principal and athletic director are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement and Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator is also responsible for handling inquiries or complaints arising under Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator is:

Jase Miller
601 Golf Street
406-827-3561
jmiller@tfalls.org

If you have questions regarding the provisions of the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement or Title IX, contact one of these people at the high school.

Inquiries may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

A balanced activities program is an essential component in the achievement of the educational goals identified in the basic statement of philosophy for Thompson Falls High School. The activities program should provide opportunities for youth to further develop interests and talents in areas outside the regular school classroom. Participation in these activities should provide many students with a lifetime basis for personal values, work and leisure activities.

The opportunity for participation in a wide variety of activities is a vital part of the student's educational experience. Such participation is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the activity, the student body and the community.

Young people learn a great deal from their participation in activities. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation, competition and how to win and lose gracefully are integral parts of all activities. Activities also play an important part in helping the individual student develop a positive self-concept, an alert mind and a chemical-free, healthy body. Competition enhances school spirit and helps spectators, as well as participants, develop pride.

Every effort is made, within the priorities of the District, to support the activities program with quality staff, facilities, and equipment. Advisors, directors and coaches, through leadership and example, should teach the specific skills necessary for improvement in activities and provide guidance in the development of self-esteem, good sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership, ethical behavior, artistic sensitivity and an appreciation for the importance of practice.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Sub-Varsity Programs

Junior Varsity and "C" Teams: The Junior Varsity and "C" Teams are intended for those students who display the potential for continued development into varsity level performers. Sub-varsity teams are primarily underclassmen. Occasionally a younger player will be moved up to a higher level depending on his or her individual skills and abilities, and the varsity coaches' discretion.

Squad sizes may vary depending upon the program. Therefore, cuts may take place. While it is the philosophy of the school to promote broad participation, the reality is that some sports can only provide a quality, safe experience with squad size limitations.

The understanding that practice sessions are critical to individual as well as team success needs to be demonstrated. A specified amount of game playing time is never guaranteed. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for the heavy demands of varsity sports. While practices and contests are rarely conducted on holidays, practices are sometimes scheduled during school vacation periods. With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of commitment is expected at the sub-varsity level.

At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, the team and to continued self-development. Accordingly, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of skills and developing an understanding of strategies associated with the sport. Sub-varsity programs work toward achieving a balance between individual player developments and striving for team victory. The final outcome of a contest is a consideration.

Varsity Programs:

Varsity level competition is the culmination of each sports program. Normally, a squad is composed of junior and senior athletes. Occasionally a sophomore, and infrequently a freshman, may be included on the team, provided evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate socio-emotional development are demonstrated.

Squad size at the Varsity level may be limited depending upon the sport. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct effective and meaningful practices as well as to adequately meet the strategic requirements for successfully playing in athletic contests. It is important that each squad member recognize and accept the role that they will serve on the team. The number of roster positions is relative to the student's acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specific amount of playing time at the Varsity level is never guaranteed. It is important that all involved understand this aspect of varsity competition.

A positive attitude and a higher level of skill are prerequisites in order to win a roster spot on a Varsity team. There must also be a realization that Varsity athletics requires a major time commitment. In most sports, a six-day per week regime may be required. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons. Preparing to compete at a high level, striving for victory in each contest and working to reach the group's maximum potential should be the goals of a Varsity team.

The Varsity coach is responsible for the entire sport program within the school district. In adherence to all school district and board policy, they will help guide the system of instruction and strategy for that program. Communication among the all levels of the program within the school district is the responsibility of the Varsity coach.

Junior High Team Programs:

Normally, junior high teams are composed of 8th and 7th grade athletes. Occasionally a 6th graders may be included on the team, when numbers permit. The 6th graders role would be to help fill a junior high grade team. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct effective and meaningful practices as well as to adequately meet the strategic requirements for successfully playing in athletic contests While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specific amount of playing time is never guaranteed. There must also be a realization that athletics requires a major time commitment. In most sports, a six-day per week regime may be required. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons.

8th Grade Participation on High School Teams: Participation by 8th graders on a high school athletic team will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the administration and must be approved by the School Board.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all academic and activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior that are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

The concept of sportsmanship is taught, modeled, expected and reinforced in the classroom and in all competitive activities. Activities are an important aspect of the total educational process in our school. They provide an arena for participants to grow and excel, and to understand and value the concepts of good sportsmanship and teamwork. They are an opportunity for coaches and staff to teach and model sportsmanship, to build school pride, and increase student and community involvement. Ultimately this translates to improved academic performance. All students, in-season or out, are encouraged to represent themselves, the team, Thompson Falls High School, their families and communities with the highest level of sportsmanship.

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS – STUDENTS, COACHES, PARENTS, FANS

- During the National Anthem, students, parents, coaches, and fans may stand or may otherwise engage in an alternate activity that does not materially and substantially disrupt the activity or discipline of students and fans.
- Proper language is to be used at all times. No swearing or language offensive will be tolerated. Individual and group vulgarity is unacceptable, as is taunting, trash talk and other verbal forms of harassment and booing of players, coaches, and officials.
- Obscene gestures are unacceptable.
- Making degrading and/or critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either at the competition site or from the bench, locker area or stands is unacceptable.
- Arguing with officials and/or coaches or going through inappropriate motions indicating dislike or disdain for a decision is unacceptable.
- Respect is the key to good sportsmanship. Opponents should be respected. They are not enemies but fellow teenagers, parents, and fans who happen to attend other schools and live in their communities.
- Be modest and humble in victory or defeat. It is easy to be a good winner. Have the courage to show class when you lose.
- Acts of unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to the following: Actions detrimental to the health, safety and well-being of others; disrespect; insubordination; abusive or improper language; taunting and/or inciting; harassment; hazing; destruction of school equipment; vandalism; conduct detrimental to the team or school or any other conduct as determined by the coach(es) or administration which could cause embarrassment or criticism to the team and/or school, or which is inconsistent with a student-athletes position as a leader and role model.

STUDENT PENALTIES

Disciplinary action for improper conduct described in this section is based upon the severity of each case as outlined under **District Policy 3310**. Examples of discipline for behavioral infractions include, but are not limited to the following: a conference involving the student athlete with his/her coach and/or school officials and/or parents to resolve the issue; suspension from practices and/or contests; suspension from the team for the remainder of the season; suspension from athletic participation for a longer period of time in the event of severe or recurring infractions; suspension from athletic participation pending a resolution with school officials; withholding of athletic letter/award; monetary restitution for vandalism and/or destruction or loss of property; hours of school-based community service.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

All athletic activities, ordering, scheduling, etc. will be done through the Athletic Director. Input from coaches within each program is needed and wanted to allow for an even flow of ideas and events. With input from each head coach, and other school district administrators, the Athletic Director will finalize all event scheduling.

PRE-SEASON MEETING

The school will have a pre-season meeting before or during the first two weeks of practice of each sports season. This meeting will consist of administration, athletic director, coaches, athletes and parents of athletes. Attendance at this pre-season meeting is required by all of the above mentioned groups. This meeting opens the lines of communication in an informal setting and presents important school policies and season information for all involved.

HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS

Annually, the district will distribute a head injury and concussion information sheet to all parents and guardians of student athletes in competitive sport activities prior to the student-athletes initial practice or competition. The student and parent/guardian must read and sign the **BLUE SHEET** and the coach must have it in his/her possession prior to practicing. This information will be available at the office and is also included in this handbook – see *Addendum A*. It is important that both participants and parents clearly understand that any player diagnosed with a concussion may not return to practice or competition until the athlete has been cleared by a licensed healthcare provider (MD, DO, PAC or NP). All incidents involving concussions will adhere to school **District Policies. (3415, 3415P)**

BULLYING IN ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The coach is responsible for the safety and well-being of all kids involved in their sport. If bullying is reported or suspected, the incident will be reported to the administration. The issue will be documented and promptly investigated. Administration and coaches will discuss the issue and determine appropriate action to be taken. Each case will be evaluated individually with necessary action taken. The results of the investigation and the school's action will be communicated to the complainant and individual(s) alleged to be engaged in bullying within a reasonable amount of time. Repeat offenses will receive appropriate disciplinary action allowed for under consequences stated in **District Policy 3226**.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

All informal complaints of a minor nature should first be dealt with between player and coach. If this does not work or an understanding is not reached, the parent and coach should meet. If either of the initial meetings are not satisfactory or deemed too contentious to begin with, administration can sit in to oversee the discussion between the concerned parties. The administration will document the complaint and work with the concerned parties to remedy the complaint and/or reach an understanding of position.

All areas of concern and complaint should proceed through the proper chain of command as outlined below and in accordance with District policy (see **District Policy 1700**):

1. Head Coach
2. Activities Director
3. Principal
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Trustees in accordance with District policy

If after meeting and discussing a matter at one level the issues are not resolved, the complainant may take the matter to the next level on the chain of command as set out in Policy 1700.

EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Students often lose sight of the fact that they are students first and athletes second. They may believe their participation in athletics affords them some preferential treatment. Activities are voluntary. Participation is not required.

STARTING DATES FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

- It is the policy of the District that any returning student from TFHS wishing to participate in an interscholastic sport **MUST** commit herself/himself to that sport within 5 practice days of the first practice day of that sport. Exceptions to this will be given to new and/or transfer students who meet all eligibility requirements. Extenuating circumstances may be considered by the Athletic Director.
- Any student who quits a sport will not be permitted to participate in any other in-season sport without permission from the Athletic Director. This is to include a student who quits prior to a cut. Exceptions to this rule will be permitted to athletes who leave a sport and are able to start the first day of the season for another sport or athletes who within the first five (5) days of practice decide they wish to join another in-season sport. After the first five (5) days of practice, athletes will be allowed to leave and or join another sport only if both head coaches and the athletic director agree this is in the best interest of the student athlete. The intent here is to allow athletes a chance to find out if they have an interest in a sport they have never tried before and be allowed to participate in an activity that is best suited for their skills and interests.
- A student who does not make a final team (i.e., cut from squad) will be permitted to join another sport for the season, provided he/she does so within five (5) school days of the date notified that

he/she has been cut from the squad and if the student receives permission from the head coach and athletic director.

- In the case of starting dates which conflicts between sports, a student who is cut from a team and has already passed the 5 days practice day limit for commitment to a sport will still be given a 5-day period to join another in season sport, providing he had originally committed himself/herself to one sport and was subsequently cut (did not quit) by the coach or designated representative.
- If a student is removed from a team for disciplinary reasons, he/she will not be allowed to participate in another in-season sport.

MHSA GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING REQUIRED PRACTICES

FOOTBALL

The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practice and the first allowable date when any contests may be played. No individual shall play in any association contest until he/she has a minimum of ten (10) days of football practice and at least one practice session per day on ten (10) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable game. The first three days of football practice will be a period of acclimation with no contact and no pads. The only football equipment to be used is shoes and helmets. Non-contact is defined as no student-to-student contact. However, participants may contact dummies/shields held by others.

BASKETBALL, VOLLEYBALL, WRESTLING, CROSS COUNTRY, SOFTBALL, BASEBALL, TRACK

The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practices and the first allowable date when any contests can be played. No individual shall play in any Association basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, softball, baseball, or track contest until he/she has a minimum of eight(8) days of practice with at least one practice session per day on eight(8) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday) prior to the date of the first allowable game. Athletes participating on teams competing in MHSA post season play, which overlaps the beginning of the next MHSA sanctioned activity starting practice date, may be credited for practices during the overlap period toward meeting the minimum practice requirement of the overlapped activity season.

GOLF

The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practice and the first allowable date when any match can be played. No individual shall play in any association golf contest until he/she has a minimum of two (2) days of practice of at least one practice session per day on two (2) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday) prior to the date of the first allowable game. Athletes participating on teams competing in MHSA post season play, which overlaps the beginning of the next MHSA sanctioned activity starting practice date, may be credited for practices during the overlap period toward meeting the minimum practice requirement of the overlapped activity season.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Physicals are required BEFORE a student can participate in ANY athletic practice or event. Physical Exam Forms can be picked up at the high school office. The approved MHSA physical form is the only form that can be used but it can be taken to the doctor or physician assistant of student's choice. Payment for physicals is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian. If problems should arise, contact the A.D.

CONCUSSION STATEMENT READ AND SIGNED BY ATHLETE AND PARENT/GUARDIAN

MHSA requires all athletes and parents are required BEFORE a student can participate in ANY athletic practice or event, to sign and initial the concussion statement of understanding.

PROOF OF INSURANCE

All students participating in a sport must either purchase an insurance policy offered through the school or provide proof of insurance prior to the start of the season and the first practice for the sport they are participating in.

MEDICAL RELEASE/PARENT PERMISSION

All students participating in a sport/activity must complete and turn in to the coach a signed medical release and parent permission form prior to the start of the season and the first practice for the sport they are participating in.

PARTICIPATION FEES

A Participation Fee of \$35.00 will be assessed to each in-district student/athlete per sport. This fee must be paid prior to the first competition of the season.

A Participation Fee of \$50.00 will be assessed to each out of district student/athlete per sport. This fee must be paid prior to the first competition of the season

Waivers or scholarships may be available under certain circumstances. Contact the Athletic Director or High School Principal for questions regarding this.

TEAM RULES

In addition to complying with school rules while participating in school sponsored activities, students are also subject to the individual extracurricular/co-curricular rules of the coach/program sponsor.

SENIOR NIGHT

In order to participate in Senior Night, a student must be a current member of the team. Any student who has quit or been removed from the team will not be allowed to participate in this event.

DRESS/APPEARANCE

At a minimum, the approved school district dress code is in effect for all extra-curricular activities and events. In addition, coaches may have a dress code as part of their team rules and expectations. It is understood that we want to be classy and professional as we interact with area schools in events and competitions. Students and teams should take pride in how they dress and make every effort to have high standards in this regard.

ACTIVITIES AS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Activities are just one of many parts of the education program that is provided to students. The reason students are in school is to learn, therefore academics will always come first. Maintaining academic eligibility is the student's responsibility, not that of coaches or teachers. Eligibility can be lost because of poor attendance, sportsmanship, or citizenship. Participating in activities and being on a team may mean

sacrifices. The commitment a student makes to his/her team and coach requires that choices be made and priorities kept.

BEING A PART OF THE TEAM

Students learn many skills by participating in their chosen activity but the most important skill that must be learned is teamwork. To be successful, every member of the team must work together to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

COME READY TO PLAY

Students should come to practice on time, ready to listen and ready to learn. Students should be prepared physically and mentally for the season. This includes training in the pre-season and taking care of your body and mind during the season and off-season.

CONDUCT ON AND OFF THE PLAYING ARENA

On The Field	Students are respectful towards their teammates, coaches, opponents, fans, and officials. They play by the rules of the game at all times.
On Campus	Students set an example of good citizenship. They help promote school spirit and they should strive to be positive leaders in school activities.
In The Classroom	Students show respect for teachers and fellow students. Students should be in class on time and ready to learn.
At All Times	Students represent their team, school, and community. Students should be conscious of their appearance and manners at all times.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

Upon completion of the season, students must return all school issued equipment to their respective coach. Any student who does not return their school issued uniform and equipment will not be allowed to participate in another sport/activity until it has been returned or proper compensation has been made. In addition, the administration may take further steps to ensure the return of and/or compensation for the equipment as they see necessary.

EXPECTATION OF PARENTS

KEEPING ACTIVITIES IN PERSPECTIVE

- *Emphasize that academics always come first.*
- *Assist the student to structure time wisely so that activities do not interfere with academics.*
- *Use activities as a way to teach your children how to react and interact with other people during tense situations. Help your student understand that ability varies with body maturity and that effort is just as important as natural ability.*

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

- *Keep in mind that it is your child's team and competitive event and that he/she needs a supportive parent when returning home.*

- *Encourage participation by both girls and boys. Allow the student to select the sport based on her/his perceived ability and likes. Provide a pressure free environment regarding scholarship expectations.*
- *Be supportive of your child; see that her/his medical needs are met; see that she/he has proper equipment; attend as many of your child's contests as possible.*
- *Stress the importance of the complete athlete, both mental and physical preparation.*
- *Do not emphasize "quitting" as the best way to solve problems, but rather perseverance.*

SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM

- *Be supportive of the coaching staff. Go to all meetings requested by coaches. Being on a successful team is important to your child. Support the coaches' preparation plan. Talk to your child frequently about how things are going with her/his activity. Make arrangements to talk to the coaches privately and early about perceived problems. Approaching a coach immediately following a game or contest is not the best time to discuss concerns that a parent might have with the coach. A parent should wait a minimum of 24 hours after a contest to discuss these concerns with a coach.*
- *During the season, take into consideration practice and games when planning family events. Missed practice time may have consequences that affect a student's playing time.*
- *Understand the needs of the particular activity. Some take more equipment, some take more time, and others call for some year-around preparation.*
- *Support the district policy of no alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco/vapor products/alternate nicotine products.*
- *Model positive behavior toward everyone involved in the events as described in the Sportsmanship Expectations and in using the chain of command when there is a complaint.*

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

All students, parents, coaches, and fans need to understand that comments about school personnel, students, coaches, players, and officials must reflect a positive and proper environment through whichever medium or means comments are made. Negative comments in person, through the press, or via social media demonstrate a lack of sportsmanship, proper modeling, plus foster ill will. Remarks which hurt or demean the mentioned parties may be viewed and investigated as bullying or harassing behavior and therefore subject to the consequences per school **District Policies #3630 & 4015.**

BLUE HAWK SPORTSMANSHIP – POSITIVE IMPACT OF PARENTS

Because of the great and positive impact parents and fans can have on our students, school, and community, it is vital we all strive to demonstrate, promote, and model the ideals of sportsmanship. See *addendum B* at the end of this hand book for a handout that discusses the positive impact parents and fans can have on the athletic and activity programs here at Thompson Falls High School.

TFSD #2 ELIGIBILITY POLICIES AND ACTIVITY CODES

PARTICIPATION BY A STUDENT IN A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL OR HOME SCHOOL

A student attending a nonpublic school or home school that meets the requirements under MCA § 20-5-109 may participate in extracurricular activities offered by Thompson Falls High School subject to the student's eligibility as set out in this Handbook. The student's academic eligibility must be verified by the head administrator of the nonpublic school or educator providing the student instruction in the home school as verified by the principal.

SCHOOL DISTRICT AND MHSA GUIDELINES

Academics come before student activities. Students involved in extracurricular activities or those activities that come under MHSA guidelines must follow those rules specific for state and local participation at the secondary level and building specific rules at the elementary and junior high levels.

In order to be eligible to compete in extracurricular activities the MHSA standards for academic eligibility must be met first before Thompson Falls High School requirements are met. The MHSA standard states that the student must have received a passing grade and credit in at least twenty hours of prepared class work. This means four subjects that grant one unit of credit each, for the school year, or their equivalent, e.g., three classes carrying one unit of credit for the school year and two classes carrying one-half unit of credit for the school year would meet this requirement. After the MHSA academic standards have been met the student must then meet TFHS requirements which are based on quarter grades and mid-term grades. If the MHSA academic standards are not met that student is not eligible till the next semester at which point the semester grades will be checked again.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION POLICY A STUDENT IS NOT ELIGIBLE:

1. If you reach 19 years of age prior to midnight, August 31.
2. If you did not do passing work in at least twenty hours of studies for high school credit in the previous semesters grade reporting period. Twenty hours of prepared class work means four subjects that grant one unit of credit each, for the full school year, or their equivalent, e.g., three classes carrying one unit of credit for the school year and two classes carrying one-half unit of credit for the school year would meet this requirement.
3. If you have attended eight semesters after entering grade 9.
4. If you have participated in four seasons in a specific sport in Montana after entering grade 9.
5. If there has been an illegal transfer as determined by the MHSA Handbook.
6. If you have not passed a physical examination that has been certified by a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner for the current year and had the report on file at your school. The examination must be completed before your first practice.
7. A student must fill out A PARENT PERMISSION FORM signed by a parent or guardian and also have the PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM signed by a parent or guardian.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICY

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Thompson Falls High School students must meet MHSA eligibility requirements to participate. Grade checks begin the 2nd week of the school year. Eligibility for the first week of the 2nd semester is based on the student's final semester 1 grades. All work must be completed and grades posted by 8:00 am on the Monday following the end of the semester. There will be no grace period and incomplete grades will be considered the same as an F. No "F's" during the season. Students can practice, but not participate in games or travel until the grade is above failing and they have completed Study Table requirements.

Coaches/advisors will be informed by the Activities Director or administrator of student eligibility the first day of each week beginning the 2nd week of school and adhere to the status of each student. The Activities Director or administrator is responsible for informing the students. A student is ineligible if they are failing any classes.

HIGH SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

JUNIOR HIGH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Eligibility checks begin the second week of practice for each sport.
- Eligibility checks take place on the first day of the week at 8:00 am.
- A student is academically ineligible if he/she receives one or more failing grades at the time of the weekly grade check.
- If students fail to meet the eligibility standard, they will be considered ineligible for that week (Monday-Saturday).
- An academically ineligible student will have the opportunity to submit class work and become eligible for event participation by noon on the day prior to a competition. Students must give teachers enough time to check assignments and post grades.
- Homeschooled students participating in activities will be required to submit grades to the junior high office by 8:00 am the first day of the week, for each week of competition.
- A junior high student who is ineligible will:
 1. Attend mandatory study time after school until 4:00 pm until the failing grade is passing and/or any missing assignments are submitted. Students will participate in practice after study time is complete.
 2. If the student fails to complete the required study time, they remain ineligible for the week.
 3. Students with a failing grade can practice, but CANNOT: participate in games, sit on the bench, be in the dugout, be on the sidelines, or travel with the team when they are ineligible.

ATHLETIC CODES

Thompson Falls High School students who participate in inter-school athletics representing the school during activities outside the school are subject to the following regulations throughout the school calendar year. For monitoring and enforcing the Athletic Codes and Regulations, this includes when a student is participating in a sport during the school year.

CODE OF CONDUCT/SCHOOL RULES

The immediate objective of the student code of conduct is to maintain a school climate of effective learning conditions. The ultimate objective is to establish discipline, which enhances student growth in abilities, attitudes, and habits essential for acceptable and self-controlled behavior.

State and federal law prohibit false statements, the use of vulgar language, discriminatory language as well regardless of the disruption. For example, the student may not, by speech or conduct, materially disrupt class work or educational programs, cause substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others, or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline.

Students shall submit to the reasonable rules of the school. Refusal to comply with written rules and regulations established for the governing of the school shall constitute sufficient cause for a discipline consequence that may include suspension by the administration or expulsion by the Board of Trustees. A staff member or administrator has the right to hold a student accountable for the student's behavior. The administrator may consider extenuating circumstances prior to dispensing disciplinary action. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- seriousness of the offense;
- program/placement;
- attitude and age of student;
- pattern of conduct;
- degree of cooperation;
- attendance record;
- grades; and/or
- other educationally relevant circumstances.

Offenses

The following list of behaviors outline activities that are never appropriate. The list may not cover all behaviors that could be considered serious violations of the student code of conduct.

Minor Offenses

1. **Attendance.** Truancy, Unauthorized absence, or Chronic Tardiness from class or school.
2. **Dress Code.** In order to help provide a safe and orderly school environment, and to prevent any disruption to the educational process, the high school will enforce a dress code. Students have limited freedom of expression. See "Dress Code" for specific language, exceptions to, and consequences for violating the rules.
3. **Inappropriate Display of Affection.** Physical contact that is not generally acceptable in a school setting includes hugging/kissing.

4. **Inappropriate Internet activity.** See “Internet Use Policy” for specific language, and consequences for violating rules.
5. **Inappropriate Vehicle Usage.** Reckless driving, speeding, or illegal parking. Students may lose parking privileges.
6. **Littering.** It is prohibited to litter on school grounds or in the buildings.
1. **Trespassing.** Any unsupervised pupil in school buildings after school hours will be considered trespassing. Students must remain in supervised areas at all times. Students may not use the weight room or the gym without an approved supervisor. Students may not go into the wooded areas or outside buildings without permission or supervision.
2. **Plagiarism/Cheating.** Plagiarism is the improper use of, or failure to give credit to another person’s writing, visual or musical representation or ideas. Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain or aiding another to obtain credit for work, or any improvement in evaluation of performance, by any dishonest or deceptive means. Cheating includes but is not limited to: lying, copying from another’s test, or taking copies of exams.
3. **Providing False Information.** It is improper to provide false information to school officials or hinder an investigation.
4. **Unauthorized Use of Telecommunication Devices.** See “Telecommunication Devices” for specific language, and consequences for violating rules
5. **Skateboarding.** Skateboards cannot be used on campus because of liability issues, with the exception of the tennis court area.

Major Offenses-

All major behavioral incidents will be referred to law enforcement.

* Denotes major offenses with automatic minimum disciplinary action of suspension for 3 days.

**Denotes major offenses with recommendation for expulsion/exclusion in a hearing in front of the Board of Trustees, but different procedures may apply to students with disabilities.

1. ****Arson.** Willful intent to set a fire.
2. ****Assault of staff.** Striking a teacher, school employee, or other person lawfully permitted by the building principal to be on the school premises.
3. ***Assault or Fighting** in school, on school property, or at a school. This could include pushing, pulling, tripping, etc. In addition, students at a fight and encouraging the fight will be disciplined.
4. **Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing.** See “Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, and Hazing Policy” for more information.
5. ***Controlled Substance.** See “Controlled Substance policy” for specific language, and consequences for violating rules.
6. **Disrespect to School Personnel.**
7. **Disruption to the Educational Process.**
8. **Engaging in Any Activity Forbidden by Law.**
9. ***Falsely Initiating Emergency Response.** False report of a threat to the safety of the school community (i.e. bomb threat, activating the fire alarm).
10. **False or Fabricated Charges.** Knowingly, and with malice, present false or exaggerated facts.

11. **Forgery.** Any signature, or the making of any false entry, or the authorization of any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of the school, or making a fraudulent phone call.
12. **Lewd or Licentious Behavior.**
13. **Open Defiance of Authority.** Students must, upon request, meet with an administrator. School officials have the right to talk to a student without a parent present. Refusal to comply with a staff member's directions (**M.C.A. 20-5-201.c**). Continuous violation of school regulations also constitutes open defiance of authority.
14. ****Possession, Use of, or Sale of Explosive Materials or Devices**
15. **Possession, Use of, or Sale of Inflammable Materials or Devices.**
16. **Profanity.** This includes blasphemous, obscenity, racist remarks, prejudiced or sexist language or gestures.
17. **School Safety Issue.** Intent to harm (ex. Throwing rocks, reckless endangerment, improper physical contact).
18. **Sexual Harassment.** See "Title IX and Sexual Harassment policy" for more information.
19. **Stealing, Extortion or Attempted Extortion and/or Possession of Stolen Property.** Includes theft while on school-sponsored activities.
20. ****Threatening and/or Verbally Abusing School Personnel.** Threatening any school personnel verbally, physically, or in writing including the use of profanity directed toward school employees.
21. ****Weapons.** Using, possessing, or transferring any object that could reasonably be considered or used as a weapon, a look-a-like weapon, including pocket knives/multi-tool (regardless of blade length), and firearms (loaded or unloaded) on school grounds. In accordance with the Gun Free School Act, any student who brings a firearm onto school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year unless the Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis.
22. **Willful Destruction and/or Defacement of Personal/School Property.** When a pupil defaces or damages school property, and the proof of such damage has been shown, the parent/guardian shall be liable for the cost of repair or replacement. Report cards, transcripts, and diplomas will be held pending payment of bills and fines. In addition, the Board may deny a high school pupil the honor of participation in the graduation exercise or exclude a high school pupil from participating in school activities. Such action shall not be taken until the trustees have investigated the incident and are reasonably certain the student was involved in the incident or infraction **MCA 20-5-201(2)-(3)**.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE: DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

ATHLETIC DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

The Thompson Falls Public Schools has established the following policy for governing participation in the extra-curricular athletic activities. This policy is in effect beginning with the first sports practice in August and consequently whenever a student is participating in a sport throughout the school year.

It is the school's belief that participation in organized activities can contribute to the all-around development of young men and women and that implementation of this rule will serve the following purposes:

1. To emphasize concern for the safety of students while participating in activities;
2. To provide a chemical-free environment that will encourage healthy development;
3. To promote a sense of order and discipline among students;
4. To confirm and support existing state laws which restrict the use of mood-altering chemicals;
5. To emphasize standards of conduct for those students who through their participation are leaders and role models for their peers and younger students;
6. To assist students who desire to resist peer pressure which often directs them toward the use of mood-altering chemicals.

It is the position of the Thompson Falls Public Schools that participation in these activities is a PRIVILEGE extended to students who are willing to make the commitment to adhere to the following minimum rule: Students will not use, have in their possession, buy, sell, or give away, or **knowingly be in the presence of** those who are illegally using or in possession of alcohol, tobacco, vapor products, alternative nicotine products, marijuana, or any other substance defined by law as a controlled "substance" or "dangerous drug". This includes if there are other adults present during the illegal use of banned substances by underage minors. Legitimate use of prescription drugs is permitted.

(The player or participant will receive the regular penalty from being a student if the offense occurred during school time or on a school sponsored trip, as outlined in the Student Handbook plus an additional consequence as defined below in order to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity)

1ST OFFENSE A student will be suspended for the upcoming 2-week slate of games or events they were scheduled to participate in. This begins with formal notification of suspension by a school official. (For example, if a student is formally suspended on a Tuesday, they will miss that week's games or events, as well as the following week's games or events through the weekend. The suspension cannot resume during a week without scheduled games or events. If the suspension occurs during a week when no games or events are scheduled, the suspension will not resume until a week where there are games or events scheduled. When possible, a school official will begin the formal suspension on a Monday or Tuesday of the upcoming week). Students are allowed to practice only and may not travel with the team or be present on the bench while serving the suspension. A record of involvement with illegal substances will be made and follow the student through their high school career. If a subsequent offense occurs during a student's high school career, they would move on to the 2nd Offense penalty listed below.

2ND OFFENSE Upon a second offense the student will be suspended for a 4-week slate of games or events that are scheduled. If the 4-week slate is not served in its entirety during the given season of suspension, this suspension will carry over to the next sport the student participates in. (For example, if a student is suspended with only 2 weeks of scheduled games or events left in the given season, that student's suspension will carry over to the next sport the student participates in). The suspension will continue during the first week of scheduled games or events of that sport. Students are allowed to practice only and may not travel with the team or be present on the bench of games or events while serving the suspension.

3RD OFFENSE Upon a third offense the student will be recommended to the Board of Trustees for suspension of **one full calendar year** from all extracurricular athletic activities. The student will not participate in games or events until the Board of Trustees has made their final decision.

DUE PROCESS

Due Process is as follows:

1. The decision to suspend a student for violation of a provision of this handbook is made by the Athletic Director.
2. The Athletic Director's decision may be appealed to the High School Principal and Superintendent. This appeal must occur within 2 school days of formal notification of the suspension, and the appeal must be in written form and received by the High School Principal and Superintendent. The written appeal must explain what is being appealed and the reason (s) why it is being appealed. During the appeals process, the student appealing would be eligible to participate in games or events until completion of the appeals process. Their decision is final except where Board action is required because exclusion of the student from participation in the extracurricular activity is recommended.
3. If exclusion of a student is sought due to the repeated nature and/or severity of the misconduct, the Athletic Director shall investigate the conduct. If the investigation substantiates that the conduct occurred, the Athletic Director, Principal, and/or Superintendent may recommend to the Board of Trustees to exclude the student from participation in extracurricular activities.

Exclusion

If the administration seeks the exclusion of a student from participation in extracurricular activities, the administration shall send notice to the student and the parent of the following:

- the intent to recommend the exclusion and period of exclusion recommended;
- the specific charges against the student;
- what rule or regulation was broken;
- the nature of the evidence supporting the charges;
- the date, time and place where the hearing will be held;
- a copy of the procedure that will be followed by the Board; and
- a reminder of the rights the student and parents have, including the right to counsel, the right to cross examine witnesses, and the right to present witnesses.

A formal hearing will be held before the Board of Trustees. This hearing must meet the following minimum requirements.

- a. The student may choose to utilize legal counsel at his/her own expense, without prejudice.
- b. The student may present witnesses.
- c. The student or his/her counsel may ask questions of witnesses presented by the school district administration or its counsel.
- d. The administration also has the right to cross-examine witnesses and to be advised by legal counsel.
- e. The burden of proof of the offense lies with the school district.
- f. The hearing may be recorded on either tape or an official record kept in some other appropriate manner.

The parent/guardian may reschedule the hearing by submitting a request showing good cause to the Superintendent at least 3 school days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. The Superintendent shall determine if the request shows good cause.

ADDITIONAL PENALTIES

Any student who violates provisions of this handbook will be disqualified from lettering, being considered for any post season individual team awards, as well as all conference and all state recognition for the particular sport they were participating in when the violation occurred.

ATTENDANCE

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

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

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

CURFEW

Athletes are expected to be home by 10:00 p.m. during the week and the night before a contest. Weekend curfew (Saturday night or Friday night with no game Saturday) will be midnight. Coaches should emphasize the importance of rest to athletes to rebuild muscle tissue broken down and electrolytes (lost during practice sessions). The head coach of each individual sport will determine the consequences of a curfew violation based upon their predetermined training rules and guidelines. In-season coaches may use their discretion to change curfew rules for extenuating circumstances.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND HAZING POLICY

The Board will strive to provide a positive and productive learning and working environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing, by students, staff or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Bullying is any harassment, intimidation, hazing or threatening, insulting or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe or repeated and that:

- causes a student physical harm, damages a student's property or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
- creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
- substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom or school system.

Bullying also includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school-sponsored organizations or groups. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment.

Harassment, intimidation and bullying can take many forms - verbal, written, electronic, visual, physical and psychological - and is often, but not always, associated with race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or physical differences.

No person, including a district employee or agent, or student, shall bully, harass, haze or intimidate another based on the provisions of applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination or any other reason. It is the policy of the board to comply with all nondiscrimination laws. The school district will not accept a reason for bullying, harassment, or intimidation as that someone did not "intend" to bully, harass, or intimidate another. The impact of unwelcome behavior on the subject will determine if the behavior constitutes bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the District's Title IX coordinator.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), , or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense.

Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure. Please refer to Policies 3225 and 5012 for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Students traveling on school sanctioned field trips and participating in athletics are subject to the same policies as those in attendance at school. School officials may search a student, the student's personal effects (e.g., purses, backpacks, coats, etc.), and/or District property under the direct control of the student when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the District's policies or rules. Reasonable suspicion shall be based on the specific and objective facts that the search will produce evidence related to the alleged violation. The parent of the student shall be notified of the search as soon as possible. If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the District's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities. **District Policy 3310 and 3231.**

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

All students, parents, coaches, and fans need to understand that comments about school personnel, students, coaches, players, and officials must reflect a positive and proper environment through whichever medium or means comments are made. Negative comments in person, through the press, or via social media demonstrate a lack of sportsmanship and class, and foster ill will. Remarks which hurt or demean the mentioned parties may be viewed and investigated as bullying or harassing behavior and therefore subject to the consequences per District Policy #3630.

TRAVEL RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

For liability purposes all activity participants are required to ride the activity bus both to and from events unless the coach, sponsor, or chaperon consents and has a WRITTEN NOTE from the student's parent or guardian that their child will be riding with them or with another parent or a responsible adult. At no time will we release students to ride with a boyfriend, girlfriend, recent graduate, or any other student. Remember parents only, or responsible adults as per coaches' discretion and only AFTER the conclusion of the athletic event. Exceptions will be made to those students who live along the bus route home. Example - Trout Creek students. At no time will the school release students to ride with anyone other than the above. We have a gender-equitable policy for transportation of teams, meals, and overnight housing and also on return from tournaments after elimination.

DEPARTURE AND RETURN TIME

Coaches will clearly communicate departure times for away events. In order to avoid parent/guardian concern, students should inform parent/guardian of the approximate return time in addition to where the bus will unload. Parent/Guardian should be either waiting at school or expecting a phone call from the student upon return to the school. Coaches will permit students to have access to a telephone. Also, students need to stay in the well-lighted area near the front of the foyer. A member of the coaching staff is responsible for supervision of all team members until they have been picked up.

RETURN FROM EVENTS

If the bus returns home later than 11:30pm and there is school the next day, students will be excused from 1st period.

WEATHER

The decision to run or not to run a bus during inclement weather will be made by the administration and the transportation supervisor after carefully assessing the most current reports on road conditions. The safety of the passengers will be sole consideration.

Based upon time of year and weather conditions it is always necessary that all passengers have clothing that is suitable for the current and potentially cold weather situations.

MEALS

Payment of meals for student athletes will be determined by the financial status of the district and must be approved by the Athletic Director and Superintendent. Any meals provided will be on an equitable basis and in accordance with Title IX and the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

Hotel rooms are bedrooms. Under no circumstances will students male or female, from our school or other schools, who are not part of the sponsored team or activity, be in the hotel room of a team or activity member without direct supervision of the head coach, assistant coach or approved adult chaperone.

No student will be permitted to leave and visit relatives or friends while on a trip without arrangements and approval being made between the head coach or chaperone, and parent/guardian.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Any student involved in committing a crime (i.e., theft, assault, use and/or possession of alcohol, controlled substance, or theft) while on an activity trip will be turned over to the local law enforcement. An attempt will be made to contact the parent.

All students involved in athletics and extracurricular activities that involve travel and overnight stays must remember that they remain under the guidelines of this handbook and all approved school district policies during the entire duration of their trip. Students are expected to maintain proper behavior at all times.

ADDENDUM A - (CONCUSSION FACT SHEET)



A Fact Sheet for **ATHLETES**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical checkup.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you

have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.

- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:

- > The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
- > Worn correctly and fit well
- > Used every time you play

Remember, when in doubt, sit them out!



A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

Be Prepared

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. So, all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appears dazed or stunned •Is confused about events •Answers questions slowly •Repeats questions •Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall •Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall •Loses consciousness (even briefly) •Shows behavior or personality changes •Forgets class schedule or assignments 	<p><u>Thinking/Remembering:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Difficulty thinking clearly •Difficulty concentrating or remembering •Feeling more slowed down •Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy <p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headache or “pressure” in head •Nausea or vomiting •Balance problems or dizziness •Fatigue or feeling tired •Blurry or double vision •Sensitivity to light or noise •Numbness or tingling •Does not “feel right” 	<p><u>Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Irritable •Sad •More emotional than usual •Nervous <p><u>Sleep*:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Drowsy •Sleeps less than usual •Sleeps more than usual •Has trouble falling asleep <p><i>*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.</i></p>

LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

CDC –Concussion in Sports : <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

National Federation of State High School Association/ Concussion in Sports: www.nfhslearn.com

Montana High School Association – Sports Medicine Page: <http://www.mhsa.org/SportsMedicine/SportsMed.htm>

**** BLUE HAWK SPORTSMANSHIP ****

As coaches and parents, it is important that we model and demonstrate behaviors that we are teaching our athletes. These behaviors include: showing respect for the opponent; showing respect for game officials and accepting their decisions; knowing and understanding the rules of competition; maintaining self-control; refraining from making disrespectful remarks or booing. We want our teams, coaches, and athletes to strive for competitive greatness and do so within the rules and with good sportsmanship. Positive support from Blue Hawk fans is a very important part of this and it is much appreciated. Inappropriate behavior cannot be tolerated. Please help demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times and encourage those around you to do the same.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF PARENTS AND FANS:

1. Attend as many activities as possible.
2. Be a model, not a critic. Model appropriate behavior, poise, and help instill confidence in your child, team and coaches.
3. Be a part of the program by attending pre-season meetings, team functions, and other school activities that show your support for your child and Thompson Falls High School.
4. Do everything possible to help be a part of making the best athletic experience for your child and the team that you possibly can.
5. Look upon the opponent as friends involved in the same experience.
6. After the game, give the coaches and player's time and space. Always work to keep things in perspective. Be a reflective listener and remember why your kids are playing the game.
7. View the game and program with the team goals in mind. Consistently support all the players, coaches, and officials.
8. Attempt to relieve competitive pressure, not increase it.
9. Encourage multi-sport participation. Be a multi-sport supporter.
10. Accept the judgment of the officials and coaches. Demonstrate respect and remain in control. Parents should not interact with a game official. Let the players play, the coaches' coach, and the officials officiate without any interference from the bleachers.
11. Accept the results of each game and do not make excuses.
12. Demonstrate winning with humility and losing with dignity.
13. Allow the coach to be the one to offer advice and correction. Maintain an encouraging voice. Trust the coach. Have an instructional voice only in a way that supports the overall team concept.
14. Focus on athletic effort and improvement instead of outcome.
15. Dignify mistakes made by athletes who are giving their best effort. (Support and understand the need and value there is in learning from mistakes.)
16. Be an encouragement. Encourage athletes to keep their perspective in both victory and defeat. This will instill confidence in all involved in Blue Hawk athletics. Confidence is a major key to success.
17. Model correct behavior before, during, and after the games. What adults do in moderation, young people feel free to do in excess.
18. Be a great listener.
19. Enjoy being a part of our school and community. Your role as parents and fans is a huge and important part of Blue Hawk Athletics.

**** Material adopted from West Albany High School Athletic Department (West Albany, Oregon)**

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND DETACH THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT PAGES AND RETURN TO
THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S OFFICE PRIOR TO YOUR SON/DAUGHTER'S FIRST
COMPETITION.**

**STUDENTS CANNOT COMPETE UNTIL THESE SIGNED FORMS ARE ON FILE. SEPARATE
FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED FOR EACH STUDENT-ATHLETE.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING

Participating in Thompson Falls High School extracurricular activities is an integral part of the curriculum. It is a privilege and should elicit great pride in both the student and his/her family. While our number one goal as a school district is to provide a sound academic experience for all of our students, extracurricular activities provide unique opportunities for students to promote their mental, physical, social and emotional development. Participants who comply with this handbook and code of conduct demonstrate a desire to dedicate themselves to self-improvement as well as to enhance the best interests of fellow teammates, advisors/coaches and school. If accepted, this privilege carries certain responsibilities, and this handbook and code presents these responsibilities.

Parent/Guardian:

By signing this document, I (print) _____ parent/guardian, indicate that I have knowledge, understanding and agreement to these standards, set forth in order for my son/daughter _____ to be afforded the privilege of representing Thompson Falls High School as a participant in an extracurricular activity. I am also aware that any violation on the part of my child, to any of these standards, shall result in the consequences contained within this policy.

Parent /Guardian Signature

Date

Extracurricular Participant/Student:

By signing this document, I (print) _____ extracurricular participant, indicate that I have knowledge, understanding and agreement to these standards, set forth in order for me to be afforded the privilege of representing Thompson Falls High School as a participant in an extracurricular activity. I am also aware that any violation to any of these standards shall result in the consequences contained within this policy.

Student Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK

The District offers extracurricular activities, events, and programs to the Student, including, but not limited to, sporting events, athletics, band, cheerleading, and transportation and lodging to, from, and associated with these activities (collectively "Activities").

In consideration of the District accepting the Student and in consideration of the District's provision of activities, the Student and Parents hereby:

1. Represent the Student is fully capable of participating in the Activity or Activities and agree to disclose all known limitations to the District, including, but not limited to; medical conditions, physical limitations, and any other limitation known to the Student or the Parents.
2. Understand and acknowledge that the Student may not be skilled in one or all of the Activities;
3. Understand and acknowledge that the District has informed us that certain risks are inherent in some Activities and cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of the Activity. These risks may include, but are not limited to; the inherent dangers related to sports, athletic events, hazards of traveling in and to areas without medical services or care, dangers due to the forces of nature (including, but not limited to, avalanches, lightning, fire, inclement weather, exposure, flooding), dehydration, falls, injury caused by malfunction or failure of any equipment, injury or sickness resulting from food, allergies, transportation accidents, and others;
4. Understand and acknowledge that the foregoing description of risks is incomplete, and these risks and other unlisted, unknown, or unanticipated risks may result in injury or death;
5. Understand and acknowledge that engaging in any Activity may require a degree of skill and knowledge which the Student may not possess;
6. Understand and acknowledge that engaging in any Activity may require a participant to listen to any instructions, warnings, or risk assessments of the District, to ask for instruction or clarification whenever needed, and to follow instructions; and
7. Understand and acknowledge that the District may remove the Student from Activities for any breach of safety policies, or any conduct that the District deems unsafe.

The Student and Parents hereby consent to the Student participating in each Activity in spite of, and with full knowledge of, risks which may be associated with that Activity.

By signing this Agreement, the Student and Parents acknowledge they have carefully read and understand its contents.

STUDENT NAME

STUDENT SIGNATURE

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

PARENT OR GUARDIAN

DATE

DATE