

# HIGHLAND SCHOOL



## MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2011 – 2012

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### **The Mission of Highland School**

To provide a demanding academic and co-curricular program that develops the skills and character essential for students to meet the challenges of college and leadership in the twenty-first century.

### **ADMISSION AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

Highland School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational, employment, or admission policies, and its scholarship, athletic, and other school-administered programs.

*The information presented in this Handbook is intended for the sole use and benefit of the Highland School faculty, staff, students, and parents. Any other use is strictly prohibited.*

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy is informed by the Mission and rooted in four core beliefs.

1. A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION DELIVERED IN A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT IS THE BEST PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE AND LIFE BEYOND.

A program comprised of challenging academics, exposure to fine and performing arts, and the opportunity to participate in team sports and lifetime fitness activities allows students to develop in a balanced way. Educational experiences emphasize cooperation and problem-solving while developing essential skills of literacy, creative thinking and critical inquiry. A variety of experiences including competitive athletics and non-competitive activities challenges students to extend their physical limits and develops self-discipline.

A nurturing learning environment is achieved by measures that provide physical, emotional and intellectual safety. Physical safety is maintained by properly designed facilities, policies and community standards. Time devoted to small and large group assembly and interaction helps build an emotionally safe environment. The encouragement of intellectual risk-taking and differentiated instruction designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners, creates a safe intellectual environment.

2. THE SCHOOL STRIVES TO DISCOVER THE PROMISE AND POTENTIAL IN EACH STUDENT.

The School enrolls students who demonstrate the potential to benefit from the Highland program and provides an environment that fosters intellectual and personal growth. Each student is recognized as having unique gifts, and is appreciated as a valued member of the School community. A fundamental expectation is that all students have the potential to be successful and will be meaningful contributors to school life. To that end, Highland offers a wide range of opportunities where students may discover and develop their potential.

3. THE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

The Highland experience is based on small class size and a caring community that provides attention to the individual. Faculty value working closely with the individual student and utilize a variety of methods to empower all kinds of learners. The relationship that begins in the classroom is developed into a broader connection to other adults and students across divisions. Students are taught that the quality of school life depends upon the unselfish contributions of every community member. Parents are an important part of our learning community and are expected to work in partnership with the School. Highland believes in the power of community service to remind students they also have a commitment to people outside our immediate community.

4. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IS EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE TO ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT.

At the heart of character is self-knowledge. As a community of learners, Highland believes in reflective practice and the importance of knowing oneself, as this becomes the basis for growth. One of the most important ways our students come to know themselves is through the interaction with students of diverse views, abilities, interests, and life stories. A sense of personal responsibility and the appreciation for the dignity of hard work are key tenets of a Highland education. By providing leadership and character-building activities, Highland ensures that each student receives the instruction and experience necessary to become a responsible citizen. We define leadership broadly so all students can see potential in themselves as a leader. The honor code and the school-wide character themes are the covenants necessary for students to participate in the Highland community where trust and integrity are essential.

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## **ADVISORY PROGRAM GRADES 7 – 8**

The Middle School Advisory Program helps to ensure that overall student development is foremost in our approach to education. In an effective program, positive feelings develop between the advisor and a group of students in the advisory. The advisor is responsible for overseeing the overall development of each of his/her advisees. The advisor should be the main link in communication between home and school. Students are encouraged to seek their advisor when having difficulties in any area of school life, and parents are encouraged to turn to the advisor should concerns about their child arise. There are nine to twelve students in each of the advisories. Advisories meet each morning before classes begin and once each week during a class period.

## **ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Highland School considers the development of physical and athletic skills to be an integral part of a student's education. Sportsmanship, participation, and learning the basic skills of various sports are points of emphasis. Both team and individual sports make up the school's athletic program.

### **Grade 5**

Grade 5 meets five times each week for 40 minutes. The focus is on expanding and refining skills in movement and coordination. Students also learn more complex skills for individual and team sports. Students have the opportunity to participate in some in house competitive sports.

### **Grade 6**

Grade 6 meets five times each week for 50 minutes. Students may be eligible to participate in "B" teams along with some 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. If there is no "B" team they may be eligible to play on the "A" team. Every student must have an athletic physical on file for the current school year before being allowed to play.

### **Grades 7 – 8**

Grades 7 – 8 meet every day for 50 minutes. Team sports practices occur during this time period. The "A" teams will be comprised of the strongest athletes chosen by the coaches. Every student must have an athletic physical on file for the current school year before being allowed to play. All students participate in one of the following sports for each season:

#### Fall

Soccer (boys)  
Tennis (coed)  
Cross Country (coed)  
Volleyball (girls)  
Field Hockey (girls)

#### Winter

Basketball (boys and girls)  
Swimming (coed)  
X-Games (coed)  
Dance/Cheerleading (girls)

### Spring

Lacrosse (boys and girls)

Golf (coed)

Soccer (girls)

Tennis (coed)

All Grade 7 – 8 students must belong to a Highland Sports team unless:

1. The student is currently enrolled in a competitive program and is taking weekly lessons (with a letter from the coach or trainer, on letterhead, outlining frequency of lessons and/ or competition schedule), or competing in a sport not offered by Highland (with a letter on letter-head from the trainer or coach).
2. An 8<sup>th</sup> grader is participating in an US sport not offered by MS (baseball, softball).
3. The student is injured or has a medical excuse. These students will have a study hall during Sports class. Medical releases must be updated and a doctor's note is required for extensive injuries.

Any 8<sup>th</sup> graders interested in trying out as a floater for an Upper School Sport team, must see the MS Athletic Director at least 3 weeks prior to the US tryouts. Middle School sports take priority over US JV teams.

An eighth grade student playing on an U.S. sport team will follow Middle School policies in regards to participation. All Middle School students playing up must be able to handle the extra responsibilities and must continue to put forth the academic effort necessary to be successful. Any students earning an academic detention for homework while playing up will meet with the Middle School Director to review their situation. A second academic detention will result in a students' removal from their Upper School team.

Middle School students must maintain a C average and have no failing grades in a quarter to participate fully in our athletic program and extra-curricular activities. Any students earning two academic detentions during a season will need to meet with the Middle School Director to review their situation and to determine whether or not they are able to continue with their extra-curricular activities or need further academic support during that period. Grades will be reviewed each quarter and if a student does not meet the academic criteria, a team which may include the teacher, advisor, student, parents, learning specialist and Middle School Director will meet to develop an improvement plan. This may include attending study hall during the sports period until the academic average is brought up.

Any students earning a 2<sup>nd</sup> detention during a season, for either academic or behavioral reasons, will be suspended for the next game and will meet with the MS Athletic Director and the Division Director to discuss how best to help them going forward.

Parents who wish to have their child excluded from Middle School sports should send a letter to the Middle School Athletic Director outlining the details of the request.

### **Athletic Clothing**

Students must wear standard Highland shorts and shirts issued by the athletic department. They should be clearly labeled with the student's name. The first set will be distributed in Physical Education class at the beginning of the school year and will be billed to the parent/guardian by the Business Office. Additional clothing may be purchased from the School store, "The Hawk's Nest." The school sports uniform must be in good shape without rips or excessive staining. Students also must wear suitable sports gear (e.g., shin guards, mouth guards and cleats) as appropriate. Most sports gear is not available at the Hawk's Nest. **Students in grades 5 – 6 must use the Highland Sports Bag issued by the athletic department.**

### **Blue-Gold Competition**

All Highland students in Grades 3 - 8 are divided into two teams, which participate in the traditional Blue-Gold competition. Blue and Gold captains are Grade 8 students who exhibit team spirit, are academically sound, and demonstrate good sportsmanship. The captains lead their teams in intramural competition and Field Day throughout the school year. Academic achievement is also a part of the Blue-Gold competition and monthly updates will be posted outside the Middle School PE office.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance and promptness are expected in all classes and are essentials of good performance in school and in life. When students are absent they miss out on important information, group discussions, and teacher explanations that are vital to a complete understanding of the material covered. Each student should be aware that he/she is expected to be in class every day and that attendance is a part of his or her evaluation in each class. Anyone missing 18 days in any given course is in danger of failing the class and being required to do remedial work to bring up the grade. It will be up to the Middle School Director and faculty member of that class whether the student has turned in all work assigned, and has performed well enough on tests, assignments, and in the classroom to pass the subject at hand.

If your child is absent, please contact the school by 9:00 a.m. with reason for the absence.

Students are responsible for checking Edline and keeping up with missed assignments. Highland recognizes the following as appropriate and excused reasons for absence from school and any work missed may be made up for full credit:

- Illness of the student\*
- Medical or professional appointments **when a note is provided by a doctor.**
- Authorized out of school activity that has been cleared by the **HeadDirector** of the Middle School
- Death in the family
- Religious Holiday

\*If a student is ill for more than 2 consecutive days the parent must contact the school nurse. A note from the student's physician will be needed if student is sick for 3 consecutive days.

Students with an excused absence will be given an afternoon study hall to assist in the completion of missed assignments. If work is not complete at that time, the student needs to make arrangements with the teacher for an extension.

If no contact is made to the middle school by 9:00 a.m., the absence will be considered unexcused and may result in a phone call from the Middle School receptionist or school nurse. Students are responsible for checking Edline during any unexcused absence and work from any unexcused absences is due upon the first day back to school, as are any tests/quizzes that were missed.

Middle School starts at 8:00 a.m. Students may go to their lockers at 7:45 a.m., allowing students to prepare for class from 7:45 – 7:59 a.m. Students must be in their advisory at 8:00 a.m. Students who arrive at school after 8:30 a.m. will not be allowed to participate in any athletic contest or extra-curricular activity unless their late arrival has been cleared with the Middle School Director. Because tardiness affects both the students and faculty, continual lateness to any class is considered a serious concern. Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must sign in at the office to avoid being marked absent for the day. Any student who has 3 unexcused tardies in one month will lose the opportunity to dress down that month. After the 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy, the Middle School Director will contact the parents. Tardiness will be accumulated by semester.

Highland School understands exceptions need to be made for certain criteria/situations. The final decision will be at the discretion of the Middle School Director.

#### **AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Middle School Awards Ceremony is held during the last week of school. Awards are presented to Middle School students who have demonstrated notable excellence and outstanding overall academic performance during the past school year.

#### **DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

Students in Grades 5 – 8 must be in their homerooms/advisories by 8 a.m. Students should arrive at school 15 minutes early to allow for an orderly start of the school day. Students must not arrive at school earlier than 7:30 a.m. Students are dismissed at 3:30 pm.

#### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

A discipline procedure has been established at Highland to oversee discipline throughout the school. Lack of homework, tardiness, inadequate athletic dress, and inappropriate conduct, among other things, are subject to the discipline policy. The Head of School has the prerogative to suspend or dismiss a student whose conduct is unacceptable to Highland School.

Examples of one point infractions are:

- Unexcused late to class
- Chewing gum
- Incorrect dress code
- Class disruption

Examples of two point infractions are:

- Class disruption (can be a one or two point infraction depending on severity)
- Disruptive hallway or cubby behavior
- Cell phone/ipod/itouch use during school hours

Examples of three point infractions are:

- Inappropriate computer use (cyber bullying or accessing non-academic sites)
- Profanity
- Dangerous hallway or locker room behavior
- Disrespect
- Bullying
- Skipping a required activity

Discipline for infractions for the calendar month:

- 4 points - 2:20 - 3:20 p.m. detention and parents notified
- 6 points - After-school (3:30 - 4:30 p.m.) detention and parent meeting with Middle School Director.
- 8 points - Saturday detention (8:30 – 10:00 a.m.)
- All students begin each month with no accrued infractions.

Major misbehavior: (Automatic meeting with Division Director)

- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Flagrant disregard for school rules or policies
- Possession of dangerous or harmful items
- Honor Code violations
- Mean or hurtful behavior
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Harassment (verbal or physical)
- Jeopardizing the health, safety or welfare of the school community

### **Positive Reinforcement**

All students in grade 5 who go one (calendar) month with 2 or fewer infractions will earn a dress down day to be designated by the Director at the end of the month. All students in grades 6-8 who go one (calendar) month with 1 or fewer infractions will also earn a dress down day.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to look neat and well groomed at all times. All items of clothing should be clean and in good repair without tears or holes. The dress code is in effect throughout the day and when students are representing the school. Parents are expected to take an active role in helping their children conform to the dress code. The following items from the Hawk's Nest with the School logo are considered dress code. These navy blue items include: long-sleeved polo shirts, fleece jackets and vests, ¼ zip fleece pullovers, ¼ zip sweatshirts and crew sweatshirts. In addition, Land's End has appropriate dress code clothes for boys and girls. The Middle School Director is the final authority on all matters of "appropriateness" as it pertains to the dress code.

- Hair for both boys and girls must be maintained in a conservative style, length and color. Hair for boys must be worn above the collar and above the eyes. Boys may not wear beads in their hair.
- Jewelry for boys and girls must be conservative and appropriate for the school setting. Earrings, nose rings, eyebrow rings or any other facial rings are not permitted for boys. Earrings are permitted for girls. Nose rings, eyebrow rings or any other facial rings are not permitted for girls.

### **Girls**

- Skirts without slits, skorts, jumpers, or slacks, without oversized outside pockets, in navy or khaki are permitted. Slacks with belt loops must be worn with a belt. Belts must be canvas or leather. Length of skirts, jumpers, and skorts must be no higher than 3 inches above the top of the knee and no longer than mid-calf. These may be made of cotton, cotton blend fabrics or corduroy.  
**Not Permitted:** Denim fabric, any stretch fabric, satin or other shiny fabrics. Skin tight pants and pants that ride on the hips (low riders).
- Button-down shirts, tailored and collared blouses. Shirts and blouses must be made of cotton or cotton blend fabrics. Solid colored sweaters white, blue, and yellow are permitted for grades 5 and 6. Solid colored sweaters of any color are permitted for grades 7 and 8. Highland School sweatshirts (no Hoodies) are also permitted. Sweaters/sweatshirts must cover the belt. Tails on shirts/blouses must be long enough to be tucked in at all times.  
**Not permitted:** Satin or other shiny fabrics, denim, T-shirts, and sleeveless shirts and blouses. Shirts/blouses may not be skin tight.
- Socks or tights must be worn at all times.

- Black, brown or navy blue leather shoes such as flats, loafers, or oxfords are permitted. Shoes must be worn at all times.  
**Not permitted:** Heelys, sneakers, boots, sandals and clogs, shoes with stripes, mesh, or fur liners.

## Boys

- Dress-type pants in cotton, cotton blend, and corduroy fabrics in navy or khaki are permitted. Pants must have belt loops and must be worn with a belt. Belts must be canvas or leather. Pants must be sized to fit.  
**Not Permitted:** Pants that ride on the hips (low riders), pants with oversized outside pockets (cargo style pockets) and denim fabric.
- Oxford dress shirts in light blue, white, yellow or navy are permitted. Shirts must be made of cotton or cotton blend fabrics. Solid colored sweaters white, blue, and yellow are permitted for grades 5 and 6. Solid colored sweaters of any color are permitted for grades 7 and 8. Highland School sweatshirts (no Hoodies) are also permitted. Sweaters/sweatshirts must cover the belt. Tails on shirts must be long enough to be tucked in at all times.  
**Not Permitted:** Satin, shiny fabrics, and denim.
- Neckties are required during winter dress code from November 1 through April 1. Students can wear a long sleeve polo shirt in dress code colors with the Highland crest in place of the button down shirt and tie.
- Socks must be worn.
- Black or brown leather shoes such as loafers or oxfords are permitted. Shoes must be worn and tied at all times.  
**Not Permitted:** Heelys, sneakers, boots, sandals and clogs, shoes with stripes, mesh, or fur liners.

## Athletic Team Wear

- On home game days, members of a Highland School athletic team may wear their jerseys over a plain white or blue t-shirt. Students must wear dress code pants/shorts or skirts and shoes.
- Team sports jackets/warm ups (no hoodies) may be worn over dress code clothes on game/match days only.
- Students must wear standard Highland shorts and shirts issued by the athletic department. Articles should be clearly labeled with the student's name. The first set will be distributed in Physical Education class at the beginning of the year and will be billed to the parent/guardian by the Business Office. Additional clothing may be purchased from the School store, "The Hawk's Nest." The school sports uniform must be in good shape without rips or excessive staining. Students also must wear suitable sports gear (e.g., shin

guards, mouth guards and cleats) as appropriate. Students in grades 5 – 6 must use the Highland Sports Bag issued by the athletic department.

### **Summer Dress Code**

- During the months of September, October, April, May and June, Bermuda-length shorts (Bermuda length is 3 inches above the knee to the middle of the knee) in dress-code colors may be substituted for slacks, pants and skirts/skorts.
- Highland School polo shirts or a two or three-button polo shirt in dress code colors for grades 5-7 may be substituted for button-down shirts. All shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Grade 8 students may wear Highland School polo shirts or a two or three-button polo shirt in any solid color. All shirts must be tucked in at all times.

### **Dress Down Days**

- Students may wear clothing of their choice on dress down days. However, they may not wear ripped or frayed clothes, PJ bottoms, sweatpants, tank tops, overly revealing attire (anything that shows a bare midriff when arms are lifted above the head, cleavage, or shorts or pants worn low to reveal underwear), shirts with inappropriate language, advertising for alcohol, or tobacco products, or flip flops. **Length of shorts must meet dress code requirements**, shoe heel height may be no more than 2 inches, and caps/hats or winter jackets may not be worn in the building.

## **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Students are not allowed to bring computer games, tape recorders, or other electronic devices to school. Cell phones are allowed in the Middle School but must be turned off during school hours. Ipods/MP3 players are allowed in after-school study hall and aftercare with parent permission once all homework has been completed.

### **Laptops for Grade 8 Students**

Grade 8 students can use personal laptops to take notes in class as long as they follow these guidelines.

- The laptops can only be used with teacher permission at a time when they are being used to take notes, do research, or complete class or homework. They should not be out or in use at other times.
- The laptops should not be connected to the internet unless it is a part of the classroom instruction, such as researching a topic for class.

- As the laptops are being used to take notes students using them should be proficient in typing. The faculty will not slow down the class to accommodate students whose keyboarding skills are not developed enough to keep up with the pace of the class. Those students should continue to take notes by hand.
- It is the students' responsibility to make sure that their laptops are charged and ready for class. A homework or class assignment that cannot be turned in due to a dead battery or a failure to print will be marked as late.
- Per the honor code, any student caught using the computer to get unauthorized help with their work will lose the use of the computer and receive consequences consistent with an honor code violation.
- The laptops are only to be used for academic work. Students caught misusing the laptops (playing games, going to websites not related to the classwork such as Facebook) will face the following consequences.

1<sup>st</sup> time – a 3 point infraction.

2<sup>nd</sup> time – loss of the privilege for the rest of the semester.

## **EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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### **Winter Activities**

All students in Grades PK – 8 participate in the Winter Experiential Education Program which includes the optional Ski Program. Programs are full day activities for three Fridays (January 28, February 4 and 11, 2011, with a make-up date of February 25). Students who don't participate in the Ski Program are expected to attend school and participate in the on campus Winter Program.

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The Ski Program consists of three sessions at Whitetail Ski Resort in Mercersburg, PA. Parents are encouraged to join their children and participate in the Ski Program. Middle School students may participate without a parent and may take the Highland bus to and from Whitetail. There is a charge for participating in this program and for students who ride the bus.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

Highland's Extended Day Program provides an environment that fosters academic and personal growth. "The Extended Day Care Handbook" is included in the Directory. The extended day program for students in Middle School operates from 3:30 to 6:00 pm daily. Students must bring their own snacks. Drop-ins are allowed. The emphasis for students in Grades 5 – 8 is to provide a quiet environment for study in addition to free time outside.

**Any student who is not picked up within 15 minutes of the normal dismissal time, and is not participating in an organized Highland School activity, must go to the Extended Day Program.** Unsupervised students will not be allowed anywhere on campus at any time. Do not instruct your children to go to the Administration Office, the Upper School, the library or to wait outside if you are late. The School requires that they go to the Extended Day Program.

## GRADES AND REPORTS

Students in Grades 5 – 8 will receive letter grades in their core classes (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, French, Spanish, and/or Latin). Students will receive Outstanding (O), Good (G), Satisfactory (S), or Unsatisfactory (U) grades for electives, sports, library, study skills and computer classes. Students receive a Pass (P) or Fail (F) grade in Wellness.

Report cards are sent home eight times a year, four at the mid-quarter and four at the end of each quarter. At the end of the first quarter and third quarter reporting periods in the fall and spring, parent/teacher conferences are held. A report card with teacher comments for each subject is sent to parents prior to these conferences.

For students in Grade 5 - 8, the grading system is as follows:

- A - Outstanding
- B - Above Average
- C - Average
- D - Below Average
- F – Failing

Numerical equivalents are as follows:

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	94-96	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	65-66
B-	80-83	F	0-64

### Academic Probation

Middle School students must maintain a C average and have no failing grades in a quarter to participate fully in our athletic program and the Middle School play. Any students earning two academic detentions during a season will need to meet with the Middle School Director to review their situation and to determine whether or not they are able to continue with their extra-curricular activities or need further academic support during that period.

Grades will be reviewed each quarter and if a student does not meet the academic criteria, a team which may include the teacher, advisor, student, parents, learning specialist, and Middle School Director will meet to determine an improvement plan. This may include meeting with the teacher during recess or sports, or attending study hall during the sports period until the academic average is brought up.

### Honor Roll

Honor Roll for students in Grades 5 - 8 is compiled at the end of each semester. Honor Roll distinctions are based on achieving the following criteria:

High Honors      A- or higher in each core subject, O's or G's in computer, sports and electives, library and study skills and P's in Wellness.

Honors              B or higher in each core subject, O's, G's, or S's in computer, sports and electives, library and study skills and P's in Wellness.

Eighth graders who earn a B+ in either Accelerated Algebra I and/or Accelerated Spanish I may still be placed on the High Honor Roll. Eighth graders who earn a B- in either Accelerated Algebra I and/or Accelerated Spanish I may still be placed on the Honor Roll.

### HOMEROOM TEACHERS

Students in Grades 5 – 6 have homeroom teachers. The homeroom teacher is the parents' first point of contact for all issues involving their child.

### HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of every student's work at Highland. The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills learned in the classroom, to develop individual assignments, and to establish independent work habits. Homework is assigned for the purpose of study, practice, drill, and reinforcement of material covered in class. Homework assignments will be structured so that students develop independence and responsibility while allowing for the appropriate level of parent involvement. Teachers will give clear instructions about the homework's requirements regarding length, amount of time to be spent, and teacher's expectations. Teachers will explain to students not only how to study but how to complete their homework assignments. The daily guideline for the amount of time spent on homework is as follows:

Fifth Grade	1-1 ½ hours (no weekend homework until 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter)
Sixth Grade	1 ½ hours
Seventh Grade	1 ½- 2 hours
Eighth Grade	2- 2 ½ hours

Teachers will check frequently with their students to gauge the amount of time assignments take, especially at the beginning of the year.

**Homework in each class will be written on the classroom whiteboard and copied by the students into their agendas.** All tests and major projects must be listed on the grade level calendar several days in advance. Students should not have more than two projects or tests due on the same day. In addition, homework and tests will be posted on the Highland website ([www.edline.net](http://www.edline.net)) by Monday afternoon each week. Projects will not be assigned over long weekends or vacations.

Assigning a test on the first day back from a holiday break, long weekend, or field study will be avoided.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY FOR FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES**

Homework is an integral part of every student's work at Highland. The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills learned in the classroom, to develop individual assignments, and to establish independent work habits. Homework is assigned for the purpose of study, practice, drill, and reinforcement of material covered in class. Homework assignments should be structured so that students develop independence and responsibility while allowing for the appropriate level of parent involvement. Teachers will give clear instructions about the homework's requirements regarding length, amount of time to be spent, and teacher's expectations. Teachers will explain to students not only how to study but how to complete their homework assignments. The daily guideline for the amount of time spent on homework is as follows:

Fifth Grade 1 - 1 ½ hours (no weekend homework until 4<sup>th</sup> quarter)  
Sixth Grade 1 - 1 ½ hours

Teachers will check frequently with their students to gauge the amount of time assignments take, especially at the beginning of the year. Homework in each class will be written on the classroom whiteboard and copied by the students into their agendas. Students should not have more than 2 projects or tests due on the same day. In addition, homework and tests should be posted on the Highland Edline website ([www.edline.net](http://www.edline.net)) by Monday afternoon each week. We recognize that at times assignments may change depending on what material is covered in class and thus what a teacher states in the classroom about homework takes precedence over what appears on Edline. Students need to write down all assignments in their homework agendas and are ultimately responsible for knowing the correct assignment and completing it on time. Projects will not be assigned over long weekends or vacations. Assigning a test on the first day back from a holiday break, long weekend, or field study will be avoided.

#### **Why homework is assigned**

Homework is assigned to reinforce what we learned in class. It prepares students for the next lesson and/or concept that will be taught. It teaches the students responsibility, self-discipline, and organizational skills. It helps them develop good study habits.

#### **When homework will be assigned**

In Fifth grade only, homework is assigned Monday through Thursday night, with the exception of projects. Highland School policy states that fifth and sixth graders should have between one and 1-1 ½ hours (total of all subjects) each night not including studying for tests or working on projects. In the fourth quarter fifth graders can be assigned weekend homework to begin to help them prepare for sixth grade.

#### **Student's homework responsibilities**

- We expect students to do their best job on their homework.
- We expect homework to be neat and turned in on uncrumpled paper.

- We expect students to complete the work on their own. (They may ask for help if they have given the work their best efforts.).
- We expect homework to be turned in complete and on time.

### **Teacher's homework responsibilities**

All homework will be checked. Because we believe in the value that supportive and positive feedback plays in motivating students to develop good study habits, we will recognize students when they do their homework and turn it in on time.

### **Parent's homework responsibilities**

Parents are the key to making homework a positive experience. We ask that parents make homework a priority. Please provide necessary supplies and a quiet homework environment for your child. Set a daily homework time, provide praise and support, but resist the challenge to take over the process of organizing or completing homework. Learning to manage their workload is one of the most important lessons a Middle School student can learn, and at times they will struggle with this. They may miss a homework, turn in a sloppy or poorly done homework, or struggle on a quiz or test that they didn't adequately prepare for. In these cases they earn natural consequences and learn important lessons about the need to plan ahead, get organized, get help when needed, and do their best work. While these consequences are not enjoyable, they are a vital part of learning at this age and attempts to protect or excuse students from them will make it more difficult for them to recognize the cause and effect relationship of work and results later on. Please contact your child's ~~homeroom~~ classroom teacher if you notice a problem.

### **If students do not complete homework**

Learning to work hard, do your best, and be responsible are foundational lessons that Middle School students need to learn. In order to help reinforce these lessons and to make sure that our students are getting as much as they can out of their homework we have instituted the following consequences for missed, late, or poorly done (indicating a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability) homework. These consequences are enforced on a quarterly basis in each class. Thus if a student missed one homework in math, one in science, and one in social studies in a quarter they would only earn the 1<sup>st</sup> missing homework consequence in each class. If a student had 3 missing/late/poorly done assignments in math in one quarter they would then earn the afternoon study hall.

### **Homework Consequences (per quarter per class)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = 10% lost and the student must complete the assignment before the next class.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted, 10% lost.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted, 10% lost, student must complete the assignment and work on homework during the afternoon study hall (During PE for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and during sports, 2:30-3:20, for 6<sup>th</sup> grade).
- 4<sup>th</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted by Division Director, who also meets with the student. 10% lost, student earns a sports detention and must complete the homework assignment (During PE for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and during sports, 2:30-3:20, for 6<sup>th</sup> grade).
- 5<sup>th</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted, 10% lost, and student earns an after school detention from 3:30-4:30. Additional consequences may result, including removal from sports or other extra-curricular activity for a period of time.

It is important to note that these consequences are general guidelines. Individual teachers may differentiate as needed provided they communicate their policies clearly.

It is essential that faculty ensure that the student's homeroom teacher (and coach if the child will be missing practice or games), be kept involved in this process.

If there is a legitimate reason why a student is not able to finish homework, please send a note to the teacher on the day the homework was due, stating the reason it was not completed. The note must be signed by the parent.

#### **Positive reinforcement**

We also understand the importance of recognizing all the great work that our students do.

Student of the Month and Most Improved Student of the Month awards will be presented in each grade level. These winners will earn a dress down day and a pizza lunch.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY FOR SEVENTH/EIGHTH GRADES**

Teachers will check frequently with their students to gauge the amount of time assignments take, especially at the beginning of the year. Homework in each class will be written on the classroom whiteboard and copied by the students into their agendas. Students should not have more than 2 projects or tests due on the same day. In addition, homework and tests should be posted on the Highland Edline website ([www.edline.net](http://www.edline.net)) by Monday afternoon each week. We recognize that at times assignments may change depending on what material is covered in class and thus what a teacher states in the classroom about homework takes precedence over what appears on Edline. Students need to write down all assignments in their homework agendas and are ultimately responsible for knowing the correct assignment and completing it on time. Projects will not be

assigned over long weekends or vacations. Assigning a test on the first day back from a holiday break, long weekend, or field study will be avoided.

### **Why homework is assigned**

Homework is assigned to reinforce what students learned in class. It prepares students for the next lesson and/or concept that will be taught. It teaches the students responsibility, self-discipline, and organizational skills. It helps them develop good study habits.

### **Student's homework responsibilities**

- We expect students to do their best job on their homework.
- We expect homework to be neat and turned in on uncrumpled paper.
- We expect students to complete the work on their own. (They may ask for help if they have given the work their best efforts.).
- We expect homework to be turned in complete and on time.

### **Teacher's homework responsibilities**

All homework will be checked. Because we believe in the value that supportive and positive feedback plays in motivating students to develop good study habits, we will recognize students when they do their homework and turn it in on time.

### **Parent's homework responsibilities**

Parents are the key to making homework a positive experience. We ask that parents make homework a priority. Please provide necessary supplies and a quiet homework environment for your child. Set a daily homework time, provide praise and support, but resist the challenge to take over the process of organizing or completing homework. Learning to manage their workload is one of the most important lessons a Middle School student can learn, and at times they will struggle with this. They may miss a homework, turn in a sloppy or poorly done homework, or struggle on a quiz or test that they didn't adequately prepare for. In these cases they earn natural consequences and learn important lessons about the need to plan ahead, get organized, get help when needed, and do their best work. While these consequences are not enjoyable, they are a vital part of learning at this age and attempts to protect or excuse students from them will make it more difficult for them to recognize the cause and effect relationship of work and results later on. Please contact your child's [classroom](#) teacher if you notice a problem.

### **Missing, late or incomplete homework**

Learning to work hard, do your best, and be responsible are foundational lessons that Middle School students need to learn. In order to help reinforce these lessons and to make sure that our students are getting as much as they can out of their homework we have instituted the following consequences for missed, late, or poorly done (indicating a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability) homework. These consequences are enforced on a quarterly basis in each class. Thus if a student missed one homework in math, one in science, and one in social studies in a quarter they would only earn the 1<sup>st</sup> missing homework consequence in each class. If a student had 3 missing/late/poorly done assignments in math in one quarter they would then earn the afternoon study hall.

**Homework Consequences (per quarter per class)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = 15% lost and the student must complete the assignment before the next class.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted, 15% lost. Student must complete the assignment and work on homework during the afternoon study hall (2:20-3:20).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted by Division Director, who also meets with the student. 15% lost, student earns a sports detention and must complete the homework assignment
- 4<sup>th</sup> missing/incomplete/poorly done HW = Parents contacted, 15% lost, and student earns an after school detention from 3:30-4:30. Additional consequences may result, including removal from sports or other extra-curricular activity for a period of time.

It is important to note that these consequences are general guidelines. Individual teachers may differentiate as needed provided they communicate their policies clearly.

It is essential that faculty ensure that the student's advisor (and coach if the child will be missing practice or games), be kept involved in this process.

If there is a legitimate reason why a student is not able to finish homework, please send a note to the teacher on the day the homework was due, stating the reason it was not completed. The note must be signed by the parent.

**Positive Reinforcement**

We also understand the importance of recognizing all the great work that our students do. Student of the Month and Most Improved Student of the Month awards will be presented in each grade level. These winners will earn a dress down day and a pizza lunch.

**HONOR CODE**

Strength of character results from one's personal integrity and sense of responsibility for upholding the ideals of the School. An Honor Code offers the opportunity for students to develop respect for themselves and for the Highland community. In addition, through support of the Honor Code each student develops his/her character to the fullest potential and helps to establish a tone of integrity at Highland in which the entire school community can take pride. All Middle School students and their parents are asked to sign the Honor Code at the beginning of each year. The Honor Code is updated periodically. The Honor Code is as follows:

- A. *All members of the Highland School community are assumed to be honorable. The Honor Code exists to give each student the opportunity to develop and demonstrate his/her own trustworthiness and to maintain a concept of honor at Highland. Personal responsibility is a central theme for middle school students.*
- B. *Each student pledges not to disrupt the atmosphere of trust at Highland or engage in any form of dishonesty. This includes lying, cheating, stealing, using the property of others without their permission and includes plagiarism, or showing disrespect for himself/herself, peers, faculty or school.*
- C. *It shall be the responsibility of each student, upon committing an act of dishonesty, to turn himself/herself in to Director of the Middle School.*
- D. *All Middle School students will be asked to sign the Honor Code at the beginning of each year as a personal pledge to uphold the ideals of honor.*
- E. *All Middle School students will be required to write the words "I pledge" on all major academic work including quizzes and tests. The words "I pledge" stand for "I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work."*
- F. *If a student is found to have violated the Honor Code, he/she will receive a zero for the assignment, be required to apologize to the teacher, notify his/her parents, and receive additional consequences from the Director of the Middle School.*

Allowing a violation of the Honor Code to go unchallenged weakens the effectiveness of the Code. Students have four options when observing this type of behavior:

- a) The student can go to the offender and acknowledge what he/she has observed, allow the student to give an explanation, and suggest to the student that he/she talk to the teacher (where the offense occurred).
- b) The student can tell the classroom teacher in private what he or she observed in the class. The teacher will then follow up with the student in question, the (offending) student's advisor, and the Middle School Director.
- c) The student can speak with his/her advisor about what he/she observed. The advisor will speak with the classroom teacher, the student's advisor (who will speak with the child in question) and the Middle School Director
- d) The student can speak with the guidance counselor about what he/she observed. The guidance counselor will then follow up with student in question, the student's (offending) advisor, and the Middle School Director.

All conversations will remain confidential. The parents of the child in question will be notified by the child's advisor or the Middle School Director. The Director will seek recommendations from the faculty involved prior to determining consequences. In the case of an academic violation, no credit will be given for the work involved.

### **LUNCH**

Students may bring their lunches to school or they may purchase lunch from the Parents Association. Please refer to the website for the Parents Association food options and days offered.

Students must bring their own beverages for snacks and lunch. Lunch boxes, thermos jugs, etc. must be marked with the student's name.

If the office is informed of a forgotten lunch prior to 11 a.m. the parent will be contacted to bring lunch. If a child forgets his/her lunch, and the office is not informed until lunch time or the parent cannot provide a lunch, the child will be offered a packaged lunch from the office, and the parent will be charged.

Middle School students may use the microwaves in the kitchen during lunch. They should only be used for food items requiring 2 minutes of heating or less. They are not to be used for cooking frozen foods. Many students would like to use the microwave during the lunch period and there is not enough time to allow for the cooking of foods for more than a few minutes.

Students may bring a snack and a drink for morning recess. Parents are urged to send healthy food with a minimum amount of refined sugar. Sodas and candy are not permitted. Parents may not bring fast food (McDonalds, Pizza Hut, etc.) to school for their children to eat.

### **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Junior Honor Society is comprised of those Middle School students who have qualified for membership by being exemplary students and by actively making positive contributions to their communities. Applications are submitted during the school year and students who meet the criteria for membership are selected by a faculty advisory committee. A student should have a strong academic grades and at least 12 hours of community service hours to be considered for membership.

An induction ceremony is held to honor the new members. Once selected, a student must continue to meet the criteria in order to remain an active participant. The students in NJHS are actively involved with community service activities throughout the school year. A Middle School faculty member oversees the NJHS.

### **PARKING AND PICK-UP/DROP-OFF**

It is important that students be dropped off and picked up at school in a safe and orderly manner. Vehicles should move forward to the traffic cones to allow the maximum number of vehicles to safely drop-off or pick-up students.

During the morning drop-off, “greeters” will help keep traffic moving at the drop-off area. Once your child/children is safely on the sidewalk, please depart so that the lanes continue to move. If you need extra time to drop off your child, please park your vehicle in the parking lot. **Do not park in the semi-circle service drive or on any other service drive.** Drivers should form a single line and pull forward to the cone to drop students off at the curb in the Middle School circle. For the afternoon pick-up, drivers should form two lines, stay in their vehicles and follow instructions from the teachers who will escort and supervise students getting into vehicles.

### **SCHOOL BOUNDARIES**

No student may leave campus during the school day without parental permission and without first signing out in the school office. Students must be supervised by a teacher during the school day or a parent after school at athletic or social events. Students are not allowed to be in classrooms without a teacher. In addition, students should stay in designated recess and athletic areas during the school day. **Students are not allowed to enter the Upper School unless accompanied by a parent or teacher.** Special circumstances can be discussed with the Middle School Director.

The School does not recommend that parents allow their children to walk off campus after school. However, if the parents choose to allow their child to walk off campus, the parents must sign a "Request to Leave School Grounds" form. School policy states that the child may not independently return to the school grounds once having left, and the school has no responsibility or supervisory capacity for the child once the child leaves campus, or after he/she returns if he/she violates this policy. By signing the Request to Leave School Grounds form, the parents accept any and all risk resulting from the request, both on the parents' behalf and on behalf of the child.

#### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Comprehensive Testing Program is given to students in Grades 5 - 8 in the Winter each year. These tests measure the students' verbal and quantitative aptitudes and achievement in vocabulary, mechanics of writing, English expression, reading comprehension, and math concepts and computation.

#### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

The Middle School Student Council is charged with improving school life for Middle School students. The Student Council sponsors dances and fundraising activities. Revisions to this program may occur during the school year based on a program review.