



HIGHLANDER

CHARTER SCHOOL

Learning as diverse as our students

Student and Parent Handbook

Warren Campus

2025-2026

OUR MISSION

Using innovative, research-based education practices through a social justice lens to ensure all students have access to learning opportunities and supports that meet their individual needs

OUR VISION

A community of learners where everyone is supported to engage, grow, and reach their full potential

OUR VALUES

Accessibility, community, advocacy and educational excellence

Warren Campus (Grades 7-12)

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School History & Philosophy

The Highlander Charter School opened in the fall of 2000 as a K-5 school serving 78 students. At that time, Highlander addressed several of the issues state officials identified by providing a small, diverse learning community utilizing some of the best practices available in education to all Rhode Island families. The Highlander student population is drawn largely from the greater Providence area; 75% of our students come from the city of Providence while the remaining 25% come from the surrounding towns and cities. We are now in our 16th year of operation and have grown to 534 students, Pre-K - 12.

We are named after the Highlander Folk School, founded in 1932, located just outside of Knoxville, Tennessee. Their history demonstrates that social concerns are best addressed when solutions come from the people who are experiencing the problem. They have a rich history of training labor and civil rights organizers, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and others in an experiential-based, hands-on model.

We remain as committed today, as we were when we opened our doors in 2000, to the values of the Highlander Folk School. We actively teach social justice in developmentally appropriate ways to all of our students, addressing the issues of inequity prevalent in the world today. We encourage students to explore their interests and passions through a rich curriculum and empower our students and families to work together to solve problems in our own community by using the world as our classroom.

At maximum enrollment in grades Pre-K-12, we have a total of 632 students. The culture and community that is key to Highlander's success is a major focus as we continue to grow.

In the spring of 2025, Highlander began the strategic planning process for the 2025-2026 school year. This process and plan will be shared out through our SIT meetings along with our school improvement plan for the upcoming school year.

School Information

Academic Calendar

Please see the Highlander Charter School Website (highlandercharter.org) for the most up to date academic calendar. (subject to change during the school year)

Staff

- [Administration](#)
- [Full Staff Directory](#)

School Hours

- 7:20 am - 2:00 pm
- A light breakfast will be available for students as they enter the building. Homeroom advisory begins at 7:20 am, and any student who arrives by car after that time is considered tardy and must sign in at the main office to get a late slip.

Attendance

Good attendance habits are critical to student success. Research shows that students who are chronically absent, or miss more than 10% of the school year, are less likely to be proficient readers and are more at risk for dropping out of high school. Students who miss 2-3 school days in the first month of school are likely to miss more than 10% of the school year. The State of Rhode Island passed legislation in the Spring of 2024 aimed at improving attendance throughout school districts. This legislation does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences when evaluating whether a student is chronically absent.

ABSENCES

Strong communication with families in the Highlander Community is needed to provide the best support possible for all students. It is critical for the office staff at Warren to know as early as possible if a student will need to miss a school day. **In order for an absence to be marked as excused, a parent or guardian needs to notify the main office of the student's absence by 9:00 a.m.** In order for absences to be excused after the student has been out for 3 or more days, the parent or guardian must submit a written excuse from a doctor. Acceptable reasons for student absences to be excused include but are not limited to illness or medical appointment with a doctor's note, a death in the family, court appearances, and religious holidays. In the event that a student needs to travel following a death in the family, we can excuse up to five (5) days. **We cannot excuse student absences due to other family trips!** Students must be present in school in order to attend after school events and activities such as after school programming, social events, and sporting practices or games. Guardians will be notified by the main office staff when a student is absent.

When a student returns to school after being absent, they are responsible for:

- Speaking with their teachers to get access to any assignments they missed while they were absent.

- Completing and submitting any assignments for which they missed the deadline

TARDINESS TO SCHOOL

Students should arrive at school at 7:20 am each day. If they arrive after the school day has started, students are considered “tardy to school” and should report to the main office for a late pass. A parent or guardian should provide a written, clearly stated reason for the student arriving late.

- Any student who arrives between 7:25 and 2nd period will be marked tardy
- Any student who arrives towards the end of 3rd period will be marked absent for a half day
- Any student who arrives after the beginning of 4th period will be marked absent for a full day

TARDINESS TO CLASS

Students have 3 minutes of passing time between classes. This is enough time for them to stop at their locker and be in their next class prior to the bell ringing. Please see information in the community principles section for specifics on supports students receive when struggling to arrive to their classes on time.

TRUANCY

Prolonged or excessive tardies or absences will result in one or more of the following:

- Review of the student’s attendance record
- Guardian meeting with the Administrator and/or Restorative Specialist
- Filing of a petition of truancy in the Rhode Island Family Courts (Truancy is absence from school without an acceptable excuse)

Early Pick-Up & Special Dismissal Arrangements

Special dismissal arrangements must be communicated in writing or over the phone to main office staff no later than the morning of the dismissal. Otherwise, the student will be dismissed according to regular procedures.

Individuals picking up a student early need to be listed in the school’s student information system. If they are not listed in the student information system, the parent or guardian needs to include their name and relationship to the student in the communication with office staff. Any person(s) picking up a student early will be required to show a photo ID to pick up the student and must be at least 18 years of age. Once a student is picked up early, they should not return to school on that day without a note from a medical care provider.

Any student who is over 18 may sign themselves out of school early, however, their guardian will be notified of their departure. Students under 18 need written parental permission (see student drive policy) to ride home with another student driving. High school students attending dances or proms may not be dismissed prior to their assigned lunch. **Any special dismissal requests that include the riding of an unassigned bus require administrator approval prior to the day of the special request.** We will do our best to honor these requests but it is not always possible.

School Cancellations, Delays, or Early Closings

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, officials will do their best to make timely decisions regarding school closings, delayed openings or early dismissals. Any closings, delays, or early dismissals will be announced on TV Channels 6, 10, and 12 as **“Highlander Charter School” and not “Providence Schools”**. In addition, a recorded message will be communicated to you by phone. Messages will also be posted on Class Dojo and the Highlander Facebook page.

Emergency Operations Plan

Students will practice emergency response plan safety drills in accordance with RI general law. This may include but are not limited to: intruder alert drills, lockdowns, on and off-site evacuation drills, and fire drills.

At the sound of the fire alarm, every person must vacate the school building immediately. The exit routes are posted in each room. Staff will remain with their class and take attendance. Below are the instructions for students:

- Stop all activity, leave all materials in place, and walk quickly and quietly out of the building according to pre-planned routes to the designated waiting area.
- Follow Emergency Response Plan Procedures
- Remain outside until the signal is given to re-enter the building, then resume former activities
- The elevator cannot be used during a drill
- There will be no talking during a drill
- The return to the building should be as quick and orderly as the exit with students reporting directly to class

Lost & Found

Please label all your child's belongings so that if they are found, they can be returned directly to him or her. The school is not responsible for lost items. Lost and found for small items like glasses or airpods is located in the main office. Larger items like clothing and backpacks can be found outside of the Principal's office on the first floor. **Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each quarter so please remind your child to look for lost items frequently.**

Guardian Role & Responsibilities

- Ensure that your student attends and arrives at school on time, prepared to learn daily. This includes having a charged chromebook.
- Help your student plan for each day, week, and school year
- Share in the mutual respect of all the school's policies
- Regularly check Skyward to be aware of student grades
- Attend Student Learning Conferences (SLCs) at the end of first and third quarter Read and respond to teacher messages on Class Dojo. SLCs will be on November 10, 2025 and April 13, 2026.

Family Pledge 2024-2025

In an effort to keep our community safe and healthy, we are asking everyone to pledge that they will:

1. Keep your student home if they have the following symptoms that cannot be explained by allergies or another non-infectious cause:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
2. Do not give your son/daughter fever reducing medication prior to sending them to school
3. Pick up your student within one (1) hour if the school calls and says they are sick with any of the above symptoms that can't be explained by previously diagnosed illnesses (asthma, allergies, etc)
4. Inform the school of changes in contact information
5. Provide at least 2 updated emergency contact phone numbers

Contact Information

For the wellbeing of your student(s), the school needs to know how to contact you. It is very important that the school office has your **current** email and home address, place of work, and home, work, cell, and emergency phone numbers. If any of this information changes, you must inform the school right away. Please contact School Life at schoollife@hc.school immediately when any of this information changes. The school can only communicate with family members who are on the emergency list. Please make sure this list is complete.

Communication

Communication between home and school is a high priority at Highlander Charter School. We as guardians, staff, and faculty share the responsibility of modeling for our students the process of working together and of teaching the benefits of *open*, *honest*, and *respectful* communication. This includes the professional & positive representation of the school on social media outlets. Highlander Charter School relies on Class Dojo as our primary means of communication. If families need support to get access to Class Dojo they can request assistance from the Director of Culture, Engagement & Partnerships

Please use the following communication guidelines:

- The first point of contact regarding your student is always their **advisor** for general concerns or content-specific teacher for class specific questions
- If there is an emergency or a message that needs to be passed on to your student in a timely manner, call the main office.
- **Do not call or text your student on their cell phone during the school day. Cell phones are locked in Yondr pouches and cannot be accessed by students during the school day.**
- If you need to connect with a teacher, contact should be made through **Class Dojo**. It is a communication app that can be translated and used in over 35 languages, including Spanish. Please download the app on your cell phone and make sure to accept the email or text invite to join the school and your student's class.
- When setting up class dojo, be sure to enable alerts. Check class dojo messages at least twice a week.
- After sending a Dojo message, please allow up to 48 hours for a response.
- If there is a specific concern that has not been resolved *after* connecting with a teacher or advisor, reach out to your student's Guidance Counselor for academic concerns or the restorative specialist for behavior concerns

Academic Performance

Throughout the year, guardians are expected to monitor their student's academic progress using Skyward. Providing an up to date email address at the beginning of the year will give you access to automatic notifications from Google Classroom. There are different settings you can use to be notified about your student's progress. You may also contact teachers for updates via Class Dojo. **Skyward, Google Classroom and Class Dojo are available as free apps for your phone and are strongly recommended.** If you need assistance in accessing Class Dojo, please contact our Director of Culture, Engagement & Partnerships at tromero@hc.school. If you need assistance accessing Skyward, please contact School Life at schoollife@hc.school. At the end of each quarter, report cards will be available through Skyward. You will be notified by Class Dojo when they are ready for viewing.

Below are the links to Skyward and Class Dojo:

- [Skyward](#)
- www.classdojo.com
- classroom.google.com

In addition to guardians regularly monitoring student academic progress online, HCS will send home regular communications relating to academic progress:

- Progress reports will be posted on Skyward halfway through each quarter
- Report cards will be posted on Skyward one week after the end of each quarter
- Any students who are academically at risk for not earning credit in any course will receive letters at the end of each quarter

- Guidance counselors will reach out to families to schedule meetings with students who are at risk

School Events

We will invite families to join us at a variety of school events throughout the year. We understand that families may not always be available to attend events that occur in person during the school day. It is important for all students to maximize their learning in class time, therefore, siblings will not be permitted to miss classes to represent their family at events during the school day.

- **MANDATORY: New Family Orientation Night is required and scheduled during the first quarter.** During this time families will familiarize themselves with the school systems and policies as well as meet the staff and faculty that will be working with their students throughout the school year.
- **MANDATORY: Student-Led Conferences** are scheduled around the close of quarters 1 and 3. During this time, families will have the opportunity to meet their child's advisor. The student will provide an overview of how they are doing and where they need support to improve. These are typically 15 minute meetings. If a parent would like a more in depth meeting, or to connect with a specific classroom teacher, they should reach out via dojo to schedule an additional meeting.
- **OPTIONAL: School events** include family engagement events, academic nights, guardian workshops, and sporting events. Families are an equal partner in our community and are highly encouraged to attend as many events as possible to show their school spirit while continuing to strengthen and support our Highlander community.

Giving Back to Highlander

Education and strong community ties are important to all of us, especially Highlander students and families. That is part of the reason Highlander is so successful. We know that we need the community to work together to change the lives of students.

Highlander is working hard to increase our philanthropic capacity as we grow and our state and government funding decreases. The strength of our staff and family giving will send a strong message of support for the work of the school and set the pace for a more robust annual giving program.

All staff and families can play a role to elevate annual giving to Highlander by helping us to expand our base of support, acquire new annual donors, and asking current donors to increase their annual gifts.

Each year we have at least one large event, a golf tournament, and we send out donation mailings to a broad audience of people who have donated in past years. We have many annual grants that we solicit for funds as well. We are asking all staff and families to join us and give a meaningful gift to Highlander. This can be through Workplace giving such as the United Way, corporations such as CVS Health, and via our website. Many companies will match an employee's donation. This includes Citizens, FM Global and many more. Please consult with your Human Resources office to see if your company matches donations.

We truly understand that each of us has a different capacity to give personally, but collectively we can do great things!

You can help by:

- ☐ Participating in one or more events
- ☐ Sending a gift during the annual mailing or for special occasions and recognition of staff or students
- ☐ Refer us to new donors, individuals, and foundations or corporations
- ☐ Introduce us to new friends
- ☐ Tell your friends and family how much Highlander means to you

For more information contact our Development Director, Jeanne D'Agostino, at: jdagostino@hc.school

The Highlander Way

Grades 7-12

Advisory

Every student at Highlander has a staff or faculty member as an advisor to whom the student turns to for advice. **The advisor will be your first line of communication between school and home.** This relationship is fostered during Beginning of Year Meetings at the end of the summer and throughout the school year during regular advisory periods.

The advisor will:

- Form a positive and caring relationship with advisees
- Conference with individual students, monitor progress, and communicate concerns to teachers and families
- Foster community through restorative circles and a curriculum that focuses on community building and conflict resolution
- Provide a safe and supportive environment to bolster students' sense of belonging
- Help students engage in self-evaluation, set goals, learn problem-solving techniques, and develop respectful relationships with peers
- Provide students with academic advice and serve as a resource

Grading Policy

Grading Philosophy

At Highlander Charter School, our approach to grading is grounded in our **mission** to provide innovative, research-based educational practices through a social justice lens. In line with our **vision** of supporting everyone to grow and reach their potential, grading must be fair, clear, and focused on students.

Grades should accurately reflect a student's mastery of course content, skills, and standards. This includes a variety of both formative and summative assessments, which are designed to be inclusive, culturally responsive, and accessible. We recognize that students learn in diverse ways and at different paces; therefore, grading must be responsive to the individual needs of each learner, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

In keeping with our value of **accessibility**, grades must reflect what students know and can do, not their ability to complete tasks without support. Teachers will provide the necessary scaffolds, resources, and interventions to ensure students can fully engage with the curriculum. For students with significant learning needs or skill gaps, grades will take into account both academic growth and sustained effort, with appropriate instructional supports in place.

Aligned to our commitment to **advocacy**, students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning by communicating their needs, including requesting extensions on assignments or assessments in a timely manner when circumstances warrant additional time. All extension requests must be made prior to the due date, and will be handled with compassion and consistency.

Our value of **community** is reflected in grading practices that build trust, uphold high expectations, and honor the strengths and potential of every learner. Feedback and grading are viewed as tools to support ongoing learning and foster meaningful dialogue between students, families, and educators.

Ultimately, in pursuit of **educational excellence**, our grading philosophy affirms that all students deserve the opportunity to be challenged, supported, and celebrated as they demonstrate mastery. Grades are not the end goal but part of a broader commitment to equitable access, strong relationships, and every learner's success.

Grading Scale

In order to earn credit, a student's final average must be 60% (D-) or higher.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Grading Components

- A student's final grade is calculated as follows:
 - 40% formative assessments
 - 60% summative assessments
- All courses (semester or year-long) will teach and assess all content based standards.
 - If a curriculum map with aligned standards is not provided by the curriculum used in your subject area, you must create a curriculum map and ensure standards are addressed and assessed.
- Teachers are expected to grade at least 2 summative assessments and 5 formative assessments per quarter.
- *Formative assessments* provide information about progress being made throughout a unit of study as students prepare for the summative assessment(s). These assessments should focus on practice and growth; grades should reflect effort and progress. Consider leniency for formative work to encourage engagement. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Benchmarks (related towards summative assignments/assessments)
 - Classwork
 - Homework
 - Quizzes
- *Summative assessments* evaluate student learning at the end of a unit by comparing it against the standards. These *must* include opportunities for revisions and reassessments (see section that follows). These include, but are not limited to written and/or oral:
 - Lab Reports
 - Papers
 - Presentations
 - Projects
 - Tests
 - Midterm or Final Exams

Late Work, Make-Ups, Revisions, and Extra Credit

All teachers will clearly communicate this section with additional department-specific expectations in their course syllabi.

Medically Excused Students

- There are times when students are absent for extended periods of time due to illness or hospitalizations. Once the district has become aware of this absence, the school will follow a protocol in prioritizing assignments as well as transitioning students back to the building successfully. All teachers that have an educational interest will follow the [Medically Excused Protocol](#).

Missing/Late Work

Teachers will maintain firm deadlines while also providing flexibility and incentives for late submissions.

- Teachers will score an "MI" (valued at 0) for missing assignments/assessments
- Students can submit any missing assignments or assessments by the end of each quarter during a "forgiveness window." Teachers may also, at their discretion, allow submission of work from previous quarters. A late penalty of no more than 15% may be applied to the final score, at the teacher's discretion.
- Assignments not submitted by the forgiveness deadline will remain at "0."

- Teachers will provide built-in school-day and afterschool opportunities for students to complete assignments, including support measures (e.g., tutoring, WIN).

Make-Ups & Extensions

- Students who are absent will have the opportunity to make up missed work within a reasonable timeframe, at minimum, equivalent to the number of days absent, without penalty.
- Teachers and students will connect to touch base about missing work. At the middle school level this should be initiated by the teacher. At the high school level, students should be empowered and taught to seek out their teachers to acquire the missed work.
- For students with extended absences, teachers and departments have the discretion to reduce makeup workload and revise assessments and assignments.
- Teachers may approve or deny extension requests based on student rationale for extension

Revisions/Reassessments

- Revisions/reassessments are essential for student learning because they allow students to correct misconceptions, learn from mistakes, and demonstrate mastery.
- Teachers will regularly encourage students to take advantage of this opportunity.
- For summative assessments, teachers are required to allow at minimum one reassessment opportunity to demonstrate mastery up to 100% (including those at the end of a quarter). These may be:
 - An alternate version of the original assessment
 - A smaller assessment that focuses on the areas that a student needs to reassess
 - Completion of test corrections
 - Oral reassessments or conferences
 - Revision of work
- Departments will determine if and how revisions and reassessments will be handled for formative assessments.
- Teachers will give at minimum, 2 days to revise or prepare for a reassessment.
- Scores from revisions/reassessments will replace previous scores if higher.

Extra Credit

- It is at the teacher's discretion whether or not they will provide extra credit opportunities in their courses. If allowed, they cannot have more than one per quarter.
- These extra credit assignments cannot be in lieu of regular assignments.
- If allowed, extra credit opportunities must be presented and made available to *all* students.

Special Education Process & Procedures

Highlander follows all State and Federal requirements for identifying and servicing students with special needs. Highlander employs resource teachers, a speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, a social worker, and a school psychologist, as well as multiple specialized reading tutors.

Special Education

Highlander collects data from all available sources to determine a student's individual needs, including type(s) and level of care, resources, and settings for delivery of services. This information will be used to determine if additional resources are needed to best serve the student. Additional information regarding special education referrals can be found in our Special Education Policy at highlandercharter.org.

MTSS System of Supports

Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) is a 3 tier academic and behavioral framework in which Response to Intervention (RtI) serves as a core system for academic support.

- Tier 1 focuses on the grade levels and school wide instruction that all students are receiving and making it the best it can be.
- Tier 2 focuses on providing supports to small groups of students who are struggling with grade level or school wide instruction.
- Tier 3 focuses on providing individualized supports to students who are struggling after tier 2 interventions have been provided

Response to Intervention Process (RtI)

The RtI process is a way to identify students who may not be making expected progress in the areas of academic learning or social emotional functioning. Teachers or parents may refer a student to RtI in order to brainstorm some possible reasons why the student is not making progress and to develop strategies that can be put in place to assist the student. It is a cyclical process and progress is monitored to determine if the strategies or interventions are working. If not, more intensive interventions may be tried, or a student may be referred for a Special Education Assessment.

Further information about MTSS and RtI can be found on our website with other listed school policies.

504 Plan

Students who do not qualify for an IEP but have a diagnosis that impacts school performance, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), may qualify for a 504 plan that will outline modifications and accommodations they can receive.

MLL Programming

Program Placement Options and Goals for Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner program is an instruction program for students who are native speakers of a language other than English. The program is designed to aid students in English language development and includes teaching strategies that are differentiated for each student's level of English language proficiency. The goal of the program is to develop and master English communication and academic language skills so that students are able to successfully meet grade level academic standards and be actively engaged in the school community.

MLL Students in Special Education

If your child has an individualized education plan (IEP), the child's MLL program will support meeting the instructional objectives of the IEP.

Delivery of Services

The MLL specialist(s) provide small group instruction to MLL students and collaborate with the classroom/content area teacher to make content accessible for all MLL students. Once your student meets a specific level of English proficiency based on the Rhode Island Department of Education's MLL regulations, they will exit the MLL program and will be monitored for an additional two years. Should a guardian decide to waive MLL programming, the student's progress will still be monitored and the student will continue to be tested until they reach proficiency.

Community Principles

Every member of the Highlander community has the right to work, learn, and grow in an environment of mutual respect, compassion, and support. This is especially true when considerations of socially significant identities are involved, such as those based on race, class, ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. In order to create such an environment, the school has adopted the following community principles:

Be Safe • Behave in a manner that does not cause harm to self or others • Resolve conflicts peacefully • Establish and maintain an environment that is free from harassment, violence, and bullying • Be aware of surroundings at all times • Report unsafe situations and conditions • Keep hands, feet, body and objects to yourself	Be Respectful • Treat everyone with dignity and respect • Use appropriate language • Be kind • Cooperate with school personnel
Be Responsible • Follow through on commitments • Be prepared • Be accountable for our choices and actions and understand the consequences • Express our needs in a responsible manner • Complete and submit all work on time and to the best of our abilities	Be Courageous • Encourage our peers to behave appropriately • Hold ourselves and others accountable for our/their actions • Speak up for others when they can't speak up for themselves • Stand up for what is right • Be empathetic to those in our school community • Do the right thing even when it isn't the easy thing to do

PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention System)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) focuses on positive behavior. Students are taught and acknowledged for following the expectations in all areas of the school.

Staff will:

- Explicitly teach, model and practice all school wide community principles
- Reteach expectations as needed, and when new students join an advisory and/or classroom
- Establish and post classroom expectations based on school wide expectations. These will be posted on Google classroom in addition to visibly posted in the classroom
- Acknowledge students verbally, in writing, and with parent communication when students are following the expectations
- Prior to school wide events, review expectations, sit in designated section (if assigned) and provide feedback to students as needed

Administrators will:

- Circulate among students, classes, and common areas to observe school wide expectations
- Provide staff and students with feedback by recognizing prosocial choices and redirecting challenging behaviors in a culturally responsive way.
- Follow discipline procedures for handling infractions

Restorative Specialist will:

- Use restorative practices and language when engaging with students about behavior challenges
- Follow systems for correcting challenging behaviors with consistency
- Acknowledge students verbally, in writing and with parent communication when students are following expectations

Reinforcement and Acknowledgement System

As part of PBIS, Highlander uses reinforcement and acknowledgement to recognize students who are consistently making good choices or who demonstrate strong improvement towards making good choices.

Positive Staff Attention

Staff will give simple positive reinforcement at least 5 times for every 1 correction of a problem behavior. These include but are not limited to:

- Simple verbal acknowledgement (thank you for...)
- Message to parent on ClassDojo
- Thumbs up or fist bump
- Eye contact with a smile

Token Economy

Middle school: 7th and 8th grade will be using class dojo points as a token economy. Students can earn points during each class for upholding our community principles. Teachers will give the opportunity for students to earn at least one point per class period for one of the four aspects of the community principles. At the end of each month, students will have the opportunity to earn a reward period based on a percentage of dojo points possible for that month. This percentage will be tiered during the school year, becoming more challenging as time passes.

High School: Student council will work to develop a token economy or other rewards plan that is developmentally appropriate for 9-12th graders by the end of first quarter for the 2025-2026 school year.

Restorative Practices at Highlander

Restorative practices is a method used to strengthen relationships between individuals and throughout communities. These practices fall on a continuum starting with informal and proactive use of language throughout the school community. As more serious issues arise, the continuum shifts towards more formal circles and conferencing using the same language to help resolve conflicts and repair any harm that was done.



McCold, P., & Wachtel, T. (2001). Restorative justice in everyday life. In J. Braithwaite & H. Strang (Eds.), *Restorative justice and civil society* (pp. 114-129). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Affective Language

Affective language is the most informal end of the restorative practices spectrum. It is a part of the everyday structure and routine of a classroom. Teachers model affective language by making statements to show students how their behavior impacts others. Examples of this language include:

- I'm glad you worked so hard today.
- I'm frustrated that you continue to be disruptive, because I'm concerned you and others might not be prepared for the test.

Affective Questions

Affective questions are used by teachers and other staff members when a student is struggling to meet the agreed upon classroom agreements. These questions are asked as way to help anyone involved in a situation to process the events. It is unlikely that these questions can be used right at the moment during instructional time, but HCS strives to use them as soon as possible after a student is struggling with behavior. Examples of these questions for the student struggling with behavior include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about when...?
- Who was affected by...?

Examples of these questions for the student or other staff members impacted by other's actions include:

- What impact has this had on you?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Impromptu Conversations

These 1:1 conversations with students happen when an expectation isn't being met or a student is showing different behavior than normal. Affective questions are used by a staff member to help with their concerns about a student.

Circles

Circles are used regularly in advisory programming and throughout daily classes at HCS. Circles vary in size, format, and make up of who is included, but all circles give students a voice and help to build a sense of community and belonging. There are several different types of circles used to accomplish different goals:

- Circles can be sequential or nonsequential. Sequential circles have a set rotation direction and usually set the expectation that everyone will speak. Nonsequential circles don't go in a particular order and not everyone needs to speak.
- Proactive circles are used to build community and belonging. They are not used in response to a particular situation. These are the type of circles that are often used first thing in the morning during advisory.
- Responsive circles are used when a situation happens in a classroom, school or the broader community. These circles give students the opportunity to discuss events that might affect their learning in a safe and structured space.
- Instructional circles are used by classroom teachers as part of content lessons.
- Problem Solving Circles are a specific type of responsive circle. An issue or concern is presented and members of the circle are able to provide suggestions for moving past the issue or concern.

Formal Conferences

Formal conferences are necessary when harm has been done or a behavior is occurring repeatedly. These conferences are led by an administrator, the restorative specialist, or other trained staff members. The student will have the opportunity to acknowledge their behavior and who they harmed with it, as well as talk about how to repair harm. The goal of these conferences is to avoid punitive consequences whenever possible.

Discipline Levels and Actions

This section of the handbook will continue to be updated and edited throughout the 2025-2026 school year with the support of staff, students and families to more accurately reflect our use of restorative practices.

Staff and Classroom Managed Behaviors

Day to day behavior challenges are managed by staff during the course of their daily activities. These challenges interfere minimally with teaching and learning. Staff members use a variety of strategies to reteach and remind students of the expectations. Any student struggling multiple times with these behaviors in one day will be removed from the community for the remainder of the day. If the student continues to struggle with the same behavior over time, the staff member will refer the student to MTSS for additional support from the behavior team.

Behavior Expectation	Description	Tiered Consequences
Academic honesty	Highlander students are expected to submit work that is their own and maintain academic honesty throughout their secondary school career - A student would not be meeting this expectation if they are suspect of cheating, plagiarizing for using AI to generate responses - Cheating includes but is not limited to giving, receiving or obtaining any help on an assignment or assessment where collaboration is not allowed - Plagiarism is the presentation of another's word, ideas or work, including AI generated, as one's own	1st offense: - Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student - Student completes the assignment again or is offered a replacement assignment as determined by the teacher 2nd offense: - Restorative conference with classroom teacher and student - Alternative assignment required 3rd offense: - cheating/plagiarism referral in Skyward - Assignment cannot be made up, no credit given - Restorative conference with the, classroom teacher, student and parent - Ineligibility for academic awards for quarter
Bathroom Use	Students may use the bathroom between classes as long as they can make it to their next class before the	1st offense: - Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student

	bell - Students may use the bathroom with teacher permission using E-Hall Pass. - Students are expected to go to and from the bathroom within 5 minutes - Students may not use the bathroom during the first or last 10 minutes of a class period	2nd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher and student - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference 3rd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher, student, and parent - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference
Class Cut (leaving without permission)	Students are expected to get permission and a signed pass from their classroom teacher before leaving the room	1st offense: - Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student 2nd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher and student - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference 3rd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher, student, and parent - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference
Class Cut (no show)	Students are expected to arrive in their scheduled classroom for the entire scheduled class period. Attendance is taken within the first 10 minutes, and any students not in their class at that time will be considered a no show.	1st offense: - Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student 2nd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher and student - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference 3rd offense: - Restorative conference with the classroom teacher, student, and parent - Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices	Highlander students are expected to be present and engaged in their classes to maximize their learning. Electronic devices hinder a student's ability to be fully focused. • Student cell phones and smartwatches should be turned off and locked in Yondr pouches upon entering their advisory each morning • A student will be considered to be not following this expectation if: ○ Their cell phone/smartwatch is not in their pouch ○ Their cell phone/smartwatch is in their pouch but the pouch isn't locked ○ Their cell phone/smartwatch is in their pouch but not turned off ○ Their pouch is broken and does not stay locked • Other electronic devices (tablets, handheld gaming systems and computers other than school issued Chromebooks) should be left at home as students are not allowed to use them during the school day	• 1st offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ device is confiscated and returned at the end of the day • 2nd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ device is confiscated and returned to a parent for pick up • 3rd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ device is confiscated and returned to a parent only after a meeting is held ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference **please see section on Yondr pouches for consequences related to broken pouches**
Disorderly Conduct	• Students are expected to behave in a manner that allows themselves and others to learn effectively. This behavior is expected in the classroom, hallways, bathrooms and all common areas inside the school building and on school grounds.	• 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student • 2nd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ student may be removed for remainder of class period if needed ○ Disorderly conduct referral in Skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference • 3rd offense: ○ student removed from that class for the remainder of the period

		○ Disorderly conduct referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the classroom teacher and student ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative conference
Dress Code and Uniform	Please see the dress code and uniform section later in this handbook for specifics on our uniform policy. Students are expected to be fully in uniform after stopping at their lockers in the morning.	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ● 2nd offense: ○ uniform referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ● 3rd offense: ○ uniform referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ loss of 1 dress down Friday ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of restorative consequence
Food and Beverages	Highlander students are provided with breakfast each morning and may take it to advisory to eat in the classroom. Other than this, students are asked to only drink flavor free and carbonated free water in classrooms and not to bring food in classrooms with them. We ask that families provide students with water bottles to be refilled at bottle filling stations in the school building.	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between classroom teacher and student ● 2nd offense: ○ Insubordination referral in skyward ○ Restorative conference with the classroom teacher and the student ○ food/beverage confiscated and returned at end of day ● 3rd offense: ○ Insubordination referral in skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ Food/beverage confiscated and not returned ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference
Hallway Expectations	Students have 3 minutes to move from one class to the next. During this time, students are	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between staff member and

	expected to be calm and move safely. Movement in the hallway during class time should be minimal. Students are expected to respond respectfully when redirected by any adult in the hallways	student ● 2nd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ disorderly conduct referral in Skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference ● 3rd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ Disorderly conduct referral in skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference *see tardy for offenses related to students being late to classes*
Headphones	Headphones (including over ear and earbud styles) are allowed only in classrooms and with the permission of the classroom teacher Students are expected to not have headphones on or in once they leave the classroom. It is important that they are able to hear and respond to any directions from staff when outside of a classroom.	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between staff member and student ○ Headphones are confiscated and returned at the end of the day ● 2nd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ Headphones are confiscated and returned to a parent for pick up ● 3rd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student and the parent ○ device is confiscated and returned to a parent only after a meeting is held ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference
Inappropriate Language	Students are expected to speak using respectful language at all times. Inappropriate language occurs when: ○ A student slips-up and swears ○ A student uses language that would not be approved for a public facing workplace	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between staff member and student ● 2nd offense: ○ Restorative conference with the student ○ Inappropriate language referral in Skyward ● 3rd offense:

		○ Student removed from class for remainder of period ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ Inappropriate language referral in Skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference ● At any offense level, a student who continues to use inappropriate language or escalating language may have a parent called for disciplinary dismissal
Insubordination	Students are expected to follow directives of any adult employed by or contracted to work for Highlander Charter School	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between the staff and student ● 2nd offense: ○ Student removed for the remainder of the class period ○ Restorative conference with the staff and student ○ Insubordination referral in Skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference ● 3rd offense: ○ Student removed for the remainder of the class ○ Restorative conference with the staff, student and parent ○ Insubordination referral in Skyward ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference ● At any offense level, a student who continues to be insubordinate or demonstrates escalating behavior to any staff member may have a parent called for disciplinary dismissal
Tardiness	Students are expected to attend their scheduled classes on time. There are 3 minutes of passing time in between classes. At the time of the second bell, students are expected to be in their scheduled classroom <u>ready to learn as defined by the classroom</u>	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between the teacher and student ● 2nd offense: ○ tardy referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student

	<u>teacher</u>	● 3rd offense: ○ tardy referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference
Technology	Each student at Highlander is issued a Chromebook for educational purposes. Educational purposes includes the appropriate use of google chats and email. Students are expected to keep their Chromebook in good working order and report any issues to their advisor as soon as possible. Students are expected to charge their Chromebooks at home each night so they are ready to learn.	● 1st offense: ○ Restorative check-in between the teacher and student ● 2nd offense: ○ technology referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student ● 3rd offense: ○ technology referral in Skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent ○ Further consequences may be determined as a result of the restorative conference

Behavior Team Managed Behaviors

Major behavior challenges are managed by members of the behavior team. These challenges are ones that severely disrupt teaching and learning. These challenges may also be unsafe or illegal.

Highlander Charter School is committed to building strong, supportive partnerships with our local police department. This collaboration is a vital part of our school's commitment to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students.

While we always strive to handle student issues internally, there are times when serious offenses require us to work with the police department. In these situations, our goal is to partner with law enforcement to ensure the safety of our entire community and to provide the necessary support for our students and their families. This cooperative approach allows us to address challenging situations effectively while upholding our commitment to student well-being.

Behavior Challenge	Description	Tiered Consequences (All consequences for high level behavior challenges are the same)
Assault	The department of education defines assault as intentional touching or striking of another against their will, or intentionally causing bodily harm to another. This includes an attack or threat with a weapon. (Note: Assault differs from fighting in that one student is an aggressor while the other is a victim in an assault.)	● 1st offense: ○ referral in skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent followed by disciplinary dismissal ○ Out of school suspension and other consequences to be determined during the restorative conference, including a restorative circle to repair harm with the victim and others affected ● 2nd offense: ○ referral in skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent followed by disciplinary dismissal ○ MTSS Referral Submitted ○ Out of school suspension and other consequences to be determined during the restorative conference, including a restorative circle to repair harm with the victim and others affected ● 3rd offense: ○ referral in skyward ○ Restorative conference with the student and parent followed by disciplinary dismissal ○ Out of school suspension and other consequences to be determined during the restorative conference, including a restorative circle to repair harm with the victim and others affected **At any offense level, school administration and/or the victim may choose to involve local law enforcement**
Bullying, Threats and Intimidation	Students are expected to treat other students and staff members in a way that allows everyone to feel safe in our school community. Bullying, threats and intimidation include any behavior that: ● places another member of our community in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to property ● Creates a hostile or abusive education environment	
Controlled Substances	Students are not permitted to use or possess any controlled substances or paraphernalia on Highlander Charter School campuses. These substances include but are not limited to: ● Alcohol ● Tobacco (including vape and vape devices) ● Marijuana (including vape and vape devices) ● Other illegal drugs ● Prescription drugs not approved by doctor and administered by the school nurse	
Distribution of	In addition to the above description, students are	

Controlled Substances	not permitted to distribute any of the substances mentioned above. Distribution includes providing any controlled substances to another in exchange for goods, services, favors, or free.	
Fighting	Students are expected to resolve conflicts with others peacefully, and with the support of staff if needed. Restorative practices are used regularly to help manage conflict resolutions. Any students involved in a physical altercation will face consequences for fighting.	
Larceny/Theft	Students are expected to respect the property of others, including students, staff and the Highlander organization. Larceny and theft occur when a student takes the property of another without threat, violence or bodily harm	
Obscene, Hateful or Inappropriate Language Directed at Others	Students are expected to use respectful language when communicating with each other or staff members. Language that is considered obscene, hateful or inappropriate in any way should not be used by students at Highlander Charter School	
Robbery	Students are expected to respect the property of others, including students, staff and the Highlander organization. Robbery occurs when a student takes the property of another by force, or by threat of force or violence, or by putting the owner in fear	
Weapons Possession	Students are not permitted to possess any object or material that is used for or capable of causing bodily harm to another person. This includes but is not limited to: ○ Firearms ○ explosives/explosive devices ○ Knives and other sharp objects	

	○ Blunt objects ○ Realistic replicas ○ Pepper spray, mace or other harmful chemicals	
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Guidelines, Policies, & Procedures

District Policies

Many district policies can be found on our school website at highlandercharter.org under the “For Families” tab. This includes:

- School Uniforms
- Family Yondr and Chromebook Contracts
- Acceptable use of Technology
- Transportation and Bus
- Anti-Discrimination
- Transgender & Gender Identity
- Title IX
- Harassment & Bullying

Body Sprays & Scented Lotions

Use of some products with fragrance may be detrimental to the health of those with chemical sensitivities, allergies, asthma, and chronic headaches and migraines. Therefore the school follows a fragrance-free policy. Students may carry their body sprays and lotions and leave them in their backpacks, but are not allowed to use them in the building during the school day. Any body sprays or scented lotions used in the building will be confiscated. Non-scented lotion can be kept in lockers and used as needed.

Cell Phones & Personal Electronic Devices

Research shows that the presence of cell phones and other electronic devices in a school setting are detrimental to both student academic progress and relationship building and engagement in school. To ensure these devices are not a distraction to the Highlander community, students in Grades 7-12 are expected to turn off their phones and smart watches and place them in their assigned Yondr pouch. The pouches are locked during advisory and will be unlocked at the end of each day. The safest place for a student's yondr pouch once it has been locked is in their locker. This prevents the pouch and device from being lost! **The school is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or personal electronic devices. In addition, any other communication or electronic device other than a cell phone (like tablets) should remain at home during the school day.** Any phones found not in cases or being used will be confiscated and held as described in the staff managed behaviors. Please note that after the first offense, the confiscated item will not be returned to the student. A parent **must** come to the Warren campus to retrieve it. If the Yondr pouch has been damaged, the family will be charged \$25 to replace the pouch.

If a student is found to have repeatedly violated this policy, or while the school waits to receive payment for the pouch, the student is expected to turn their phone in to the Building Administrative Assistant in the main office upon entry to the building. If the student refuses to turn in their phone, their guardian will be contacted for further support.

Chromebooks

Students are assigned chromebooks for **learning purposes only**. Students are responsible for proper care of their chromebooks throughout the school year. This includes bringing their charged chromebook and their charger with them on a daily basis. If any damage is found not to be accidental, or if the chromebook is lost, the family will be charged \$316 for a replacement machine. **Parents will be held financially responsible for reckless, negligent, or intentional damage.** If the chromebook is used for cyber bullying, illegal purposes, or searches deemed threatening in nature to self or others, authorities may be contacted.

To protect Student and Staff data and information, Highlander utilizes security systems installed on all student assigned chromebooks. For this reason, we ask that students do not bring outside laptops or tablets with them for use during the school day. Students will not be given access to the wifi to use these devices and as previously stated, Highlander Charter School is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged devices that should be kept at home.

Dress Code

Uniforms

Uniforms are required Monday-Thursday. Students are expected to wear clothing that meets the Highlander dress code. When looking at the school uniform shop on the Highlander Charter School Website, all items are clearly marked “uniform” or “non-uniform”. If an item is allowed only at certain grade levels, the grade levels are also clearly marked. Clothing must be neat, clean, in good repair, and appropriate at all times.

Head Gear:

Hats, caps, visors, doo-rags, sweatbands, and other headgear are not to be worn during uniform school days. Headphones should not be worn in the hallway to ensure that students can hear any instructions given by teachers. Students may be exempt from the dress code policy under special circumstances (religious beliefs, health, or handicapping conditions).

Bottoms: *Unripped* khaki pants, shorts, or skirts (shorts and skirts must be at least below fingertips when arms resting at side). Sweatpants material is not permitted.

Shoes: Closed toe shoes (no sandals)

Tops:

- All uniform tops must have the embroidered Highlander logo on it. (Please note that although the images on the website show the circle logo, the shirts are produced with the embroidered name)
 - 7-12: Red, Black or White Polo Shirts
 - 9-12: Red, Black, or White Button-Up Shirts
 - Crewneck sweaters must be gray.
 - Cardigans must be black.
 - Black, red, gray, or white Highlander hooded sweatshirts purchased from our online school store.
 - ¼ zip shirts from the school store
- Shirts must be fully worn, not around the neck or through a single arm.

- Long-sleeve shirts under a short-sleeve uniform shirt must be **solid red, white, black, or khaki-colored**.
- Non-uniform sweaters or jackets are not allowed during the school day.

Dress Down Fridays

Fridays are dress-down days *unless a student has lost the privilege*. While we value students' rights to express themselves through their dress, we expect all students to conform to certain standards of cleanliness, neatness, and appropriateness for school. Faculty and administration reserve the right to determine what is appropriate. In general, no student's clothing should be such as to distract others from the educational purposes of school.

- Tops must cover the torso, abdomen, and undergarments. Inappropriate tops include but are not limited to:
 - midriffs
 - muscle shirts
 - spaghetti straps (2" minimum straps on tanks)
 - see-through tops
 - strapless/tube top
 - halter top
 - plunging neckline
 - tops with inappropriate wording or images
- Bottoms must cover undergarments through the knees. Inappropriate bottoms include but are not limited to:
 - Pajama bottoms or onesies (except for school activities approved by the principal)
 - shorts/skirts/dresses that are shorter than fingertips at side
 - Torn pants with rips above the knee (unless tights are worn underneath)
- Hats, durags and other headgear are allowed on Friday

Physical Education

Students are encouraged to change for physical education classes and may keep an extra set of clothes in their locker. This includes sneakers as appropriate footwear. A student's ability to participate in physical education may be limited if they do not change, which may in turn impact their grade in the course.

Field Trips

Educational field trips are an extension of learning that takes place in the community. All expectations for students in school apply to students during field trips. Those field trips that are related to curriculum are considered to be part of the educational experience and therefore all students will attend the field trips unless misbehavior and disrespect is a major concern based on in-school behavior. All non-academic or reward field trips are privileges that are earned and students may be omitted for in-school behavior and/or lack of work completion.

Some field trips will require payment in advance. Whenever possible, we encourage families to give monetary donations towards funding the field trips. **Parents/guardians interested in chaperoning school field trips must provide the school a BCI (background check) and proof of COVID 19 vaccination prior to the date of the trip.**

Food Policy

- Free breakfast and lunch are provided for all students. There is no application required. We are able to provide this only by following the board approved wellness policy outlined below
- If a student arrives with breakfast and/or drinks from an outside vendor (i.e. Dunkin Donuts), it must be finished by the time the bell rings for the start of the first period. Otherwise it must be thrown out. If a student arrives late with breakfast and a drink, s/he must finish it in the cafeteria within 10 minutes and then report to class.
- Students are encouraged to bring and consume water from reusable water bottles each day.
- Healthy snacks are encouraged during lunch time! Keep in mind that we are a peanut-free school.
- Food and beverages (other than water) are not allowed in the classroom except during the school provided breakfast.
- Students are not allowed to use the microwave.
- Parents are not allowed to purchase and drop off lunches during the day.
- Soda and candy of any kind are not allowed at Highlander. Students are also not permitted to bring family size chips, cookies or other snacks. All of the above will be confiscated according to the guidelines in the community principles above.
- In the upper school, birthday celebrations are kept to singing and verbal acknowledgments. Students cannot bring in any food or drink items to distribute on those days.
- **For the 2025-2026 school year, we are a peanut-free district. There are students in attendance at Highlander Charter School that are highly allergic to peanuts and can have a reaction without coming into direct contact. Please make sure not to send in any peanut products as part of your child's snack or lunch.**

Google Chat

Google chat is a valuable tool that can enhance communication and collaboration for students. When use responsibly, it allows for direct and timely interactions with teachers and classmates, which is particularly helpful for asking questions, getting feedback and working on group projects. To ensure a positive and safe online environment, students should adhere to the following guidelines:

Appropriate use of Google Chat:

- Communication with Staff: Students are permitted to use Google Chat to communicate with staff members, including outside of regular school hours. This can be a helpful way to get extra help or ask clarifying questions about an assignment. Students should only be communicating with the teacher of the class they are in at any time.
- Communication with other students: Students can communicate with one another only for group work and with the permission of the classroom teacher. Students shouldn't be using Google Chat outside of class/school time to communicate with peers for social purposes.
- Safe and Appropriate Communication: Remember that all communication on Google Chat should be respectful, school-appropriate and related to academic tasks. Avoid sharing personal information, engaging in off-topic conversations or using language that would not be acceptable in a classroom. Students who struggle with safe and appropriate use of Google Chat risk having the app blocked on their account, which would prevent them from productive communication with peers and teachers.

Students are not permitted to create or use group chats that do not include a staff member for any reason.

Hall Passes

Every effort must be made to minimize interruption of instructional time. However, in the event that a student is required to leave the classroom during class, they MUST:

- Request a digital hall pass on the SmartPass system following the expectations of the classroom teacher
- Wait until the first ten minutes of class has passed to ask to leave
- Go where they asked to go in a timely fashion (5 minutes)
- Travel in the appropriate hallway
- Keep all noises in the hall to a minimum
- Do not enter/disturb other classrooms
- Wait until the next class once it is the last ten minutes

Harassment

Highlander's comprehensive and Board approved Harassment and Bullying Policy can be found on our website under the "For Families" tab. The Rhode Island Department of Education identifies three specific types of harassment in their discipline documentation: stalking, prejudice/hate crimes, and sexual. Stalking is defined as threatening by repeatedly watching or following another, and placing them in fear of physical or emotional harm. Prejudice and hate crimes are defined as any action motivated by hostility or hatred towards someone due to some characteristic (actual or perceived) of another. This includes any attempt to cause physical or emotional harm to another due to their actual or perceived race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, political beliefs, disability, family background, etc. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct or communication which causes another discomfort or humiliation. All types of harassment include harassment that is carried out with the use of technology, electronic devices and/or social media.

Students, staff and guardians who are the victims of or who witness any harassment are expected to report the incident(s) to a member of the behavior team. Upon the receipt of a report of any harassment reports, the behavior team will initiate an investigation. This investigation will include the gathering of statements from the complainant (alleged victim), the respondent (accused) and any witnesses identified.

If the report includes any allegations of a sexual nature, the investigation will be carried out according to the regulations in Highlander's Title IX policy. This policy can also be found on our website under the "For Families" tab.

Lockers

Each student will be assigned an individual locker with a working combination lock. Students are responsible for keeping the locker in good working condition. Students should not give their combination to any other student. Home lunches or snacks that are stored in lockers must be taken home daily.

Search & Seizure

Periodic searches of lockers, backpacks, or purses may be conducted based upon reasonable suspicion that school rules or town, state, or federal laws have or will be violated. A search may only be conducted by the Building Administrators or the Restorative Specialist. Administrators are authorized to seize illegal items or contraband that may present a threat to the safety of the individual or others. Items seized shall be retained in proper order to preserve a controlled chain of custody for purposes of prosecution by the police department if necessary. Items that are used, or may be used, to disrupt or interfere with the educational process or environment may be temporarily removed from a student's possession. This includes any items that are not permitted as per our handbooks.

Social Media

We recognize that access to technology gives students opportunities to engage and communicate using social networking or social media. While social networking is fun and valuable, the lines are blurred between what is public or private.

This policy applies to:

- all conduct on Highlander's premises and at school-sponsored events
- conduct during transportation to and from school and school-sponsored events
- conduct off Highlander's premises, including through the use of social media and technology, that has an adverse affect upon a student's educational environment.

Misuse of social media in this manner includes, but is not limited to:

- Posting material that is threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, slanderous, or hostile towards another student or staff member
- Posting defamatory or discriminatory statements, images, audio files, or videos
- Posting confidential or sensitive information about another student or faculty member

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the restorative specialist in coordination with Administration.

Student Drivers

Driving to school is a privilege available to any licensed drivers, but priority will be given to graduating seniors and students who are over 18. Students who wish to drive to Warren and park their vehicle in the school lot must register their cars with the main office by:

- Completing a student/guardian driving contract
- Provide proof of license, registration and insurance for copies to be made
- Student drivers will lose the right to park on campus if they are unable to follow the expectations listed below:
 - All Rhode Island traffic laws, including seatbelts and 15 mph speed limit on campus must be followed
 - Student drivers are expected to arrive at 7:20 am each day, and remain in school until 2:00 pm unless an appointment is scheduled and a note is provided.
 - Student drivers are expected to drive cautiously while entering and exiting school property

- Student drivers may only transport other students with the express written permission of a guardian unless the student is over 18 years of age.
- Student drivers are not permitted to access their cars during the school day unless given permission by the Principal or Assistant Principal
- In addition, Highlander Charter School
 - reserves the right to search any vehicle if there is suspicion that any rules, regulations or laws are being violated.
 - Is not liable for damage to any vehicle or items stolen from the vehicle
 - Will revoke driving/parking privileges as described in the contract signed by students and families.

Tardiness

Tardiness has a negative impact on student success. Students who are tardy miss important instruction and often disrupt the delivery of instruction. Students will have 3 minutes to pass in between classes. This is more than sufficient time to be seated and ready to learn BEFORE the bell rings. Please see the community principles above for consequences related to tardiness.

Transportation (School Bus)

Students attending Highlander Charter Middle and High School have the option of riding the bus to school. **Riding the bus is a privilege. Students are expected to follow Highlander's community principles while on the bus in order to maintain the privilege. This privilege may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if misconduct of a student jeopardizes the safe operation of the school bus, bus riders, or other drivers in vehicles.**

Students arriving by bus are expected to report directly into the school building. In order to ensure that students are safe while riding the bus, we expect all of our students will behave responsibly by:

- Following directions given by bus personnel willingly and promptly
- Sitting in assigned seats if necessary
- Respecting the bus driver, bus monitor and other students
- Remaining seated with body inside the bus at all times
- Refraining from throwing objects at others and out of the bus
- Keeping the bus clean
- Refraining from the use of controlled substances

Highlander's specific school bus policy is as follows:

- Students are expected to ride their assigned school bus at all times, unless permission has been given by School Life or Administrative Staff. This permission will only be given when a request by a guardian is made in writing.
- Guardians are expected to sign a bus contract. Students will not be assigned to a bus or provided transportation until the contract is signed.
- In the event that a student creates an unsafe situation and/or engages in disruptive behavior on the school bus, the school bus personnel will submit a written referral to the main office. The student will be warned about the behavior and potential consequences. Guardians will be notified in writing (e-mail and/or class dojo) within 24 hours of the offense.

- After a **second bus offense**, the student will serve a detention and guardians will be notified in writing (e-mail and/or dojo) within 24 hours of the offense.
- In the event of a **third bus offense**, the student will be suspended from the bus for one week. Absences during this week will be unexcused.
- In the event of a **fourth bus offense**, the student will be suspended from the bus for one month.
- If the student is written up again after the one-month suspension, the student will lose the privilege of using transportation provided by Highlander Charter School for the remainder of the year.

School Yearbook

Two yearbooks are published annually at Highlander Charter School; Lower School Grade Pre-K to 6 and Upper school grade 7-12. In order for a student to have their picture included in the yearbook, they must be present on picture day. If a student is absent on picture day and takes their picture on make-up day, their picture will be included in the yearbook.

If a student is absent on picture day and make-up day or chooses not to take a picture on either day, their picture cannot be included in the yearbook.

- Each student is given an opportunity to purchase a school yearbook.
- Highlander is not responsible for any errors/omissions made by the yearbook provider.
- Highlander does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender or ethnicity.

Student Health & Support Services

Physical Health

Highlander has a certified school nurse teacher on staff who:

- evaluates the health status of students and staff. When appropriate, they provide care and contacts guardians as necessary;
- maintains school health records (guardians must provide annual physical examination results and up-to-date immunization records);
- counsels students, guardians, and staff regarding health matters;
- creates health plans and emergency care plans for students as needed;
- performs and/or arranges health screenings (vision, dental, and hearing, flu clinics); and
- teaches a health curriculum.

Please notify the school nurse teacher if your student has any allergies, life threatening conditions, asthma, dietary restrictions, or has sustained an orthopedic injury. A medical note must be provided.

Health Guidelines

Please DO NOT send your student to school if they have any of the symptoms referenced below within the previous 24 hours. Notify the school on the morning of each absence. If while at school your student displays any of the following symptoms, you will be notified and asked to pick up your students immediately:

- Fever (temperature above 100.4 degrees)
- Sore throat/swollen glands
- Earache (may include discharge from the ear canal)
- Itchy, red eyes (with or without drainage)
- Frequent or uncontrollable cough and/or runny nose
- Severe headache
- Unidentified rash
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Seizure(s)

If your student is absent due to an extended illness or injury, please send a medical excuse to the main office.

Over-the-Counter Medication

Annual guardian authorization is required in order for students to take over-the-counter medications in school. Forms for this purpose are completed digitally upon student registration. A limited supply of Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Benadryl ointment, and cough drops, are available in the health office for the treatment of unanticipated ailments during the school day. These may be given at the nurse's discretion.

Over-the-counter medications sent in by a student's guardian must be in the original container, and the guardian must sign a consent form. These medications, including cough drops, must be kept in the health office. Students may not carry these in school with them. If a student requires over-the-counter medication on a daily basis, the physician must sign consent as well.

Prescription Medication

Highlander students who take medication at school must have a School Medication Form completed and signed by the child's doctor, and signed by the guardian as well. **Medication forms must be renewed annually.** Medication should be brought to school at the beginning of the school year by a guardian and must be kept in the nurse's office.

Highlander's nurse will administer prescription medication during school hours only as approved by a licensed physician.

- Prescription medication must arrive at the school in a pharmacy-labeled container, and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the health office.
 - Students may not carry medication with them, with the exception of Epi-pens and bronchodilator inhalers with physician approval.
 - All medication will be dispensed under the supervision of the school nurse except for students approved for self-medication by the prescribing physician and by the guardian.

In the case of school-sponsored field trips, accommodations will be made for safe administration of medication. We ask that guardians request their student's physician sign off for self-medication inhalers, in case the nurse or the student's parent is unable to accompany the student on the field trip.

Social-Emotional Health

The school psychologist and social worker meet with students individually or in groups to address behaviors that impact school performance. Students can seek them out, or they can be referred by staff, faculty, or guardians. The school psychologist and social worker in turn consult with staff, faculty, parents, and other agencies to give students a well-balanced educational setting. This includes supporting guardians in accessing resources, completing applications, and finding services in their communities.

Grief and Loss Support for Students

While death is a natural part of our human existence, dealing with the death of someone close is difficult and challenging for each of us. As a school community, we seek to provide a positive, supportive environment to meet students' and adults' needs during a period of grief. Obviously, each person's needs are unique, so for us to respond it is essential that parents/guardians communicate with the school about deaths and other challenges (serious illness of a family member, etc.) that occur in a student's life.

Please contact your student's advisor, guidance counselor, or school administrator with any relevant information. Knowing the basics of the situation as well as how the student prefers to be supported, helps us use community to support one another. The student may prefer to have some individual time with a trusted adult, some encouraging words from a teacher, or simply to know that teachers are aware of the challenge but will not bring it up. We want to ensure that students know the school

community is a support for them in times of crisis as well as happiness. This is essential to each student's success in school.

Student Safety

- **Mandated Reporters:** All school personnel are legally defined as mandated reporters and are legally required to report any suspected or stated abuse or neglect to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Abuse is defined as emotional, physical, sexual, or medical mistreatment.
- **Risk Assessments:** If a student verbalizes or demonstrates in some manner that s/he is contemplating causing injury to self or others, a risk assessment will be completed. A guardian will be notified and further action may be recommended or required, including collaboration with law enforcement or outside mental health agencies.
- **Student Restraint:** If attempts to de-escalate an unsafe situation fail, physical restraint of a student may be required. Only staff members who have been trained in safe and appropriate physical restraint techniques will respond in these situations. Guardians will be notified if restraint is required in a given situation.

Guidance (Grades 7-12)

Guidance and school counselors are professional educators who work diligently to support the everyday challenges faced during middle and high school years. Their goal is to promote and enhance student learning. At Highlander, our counselors will support all students in various areas such as academics, social/emotional health, career exploration, and post-secondary plans. The counselors will work closely with all teachers, staff, administrators, and families to ensure the most positive outcome for each individual student. Together, the team will help students create a pathway that best suits their needs. The Guidance team includes

- Helena Johns (hjohns@hc.school) A-M
- Barbara Wnuk (bnwuk@hc.school) N-Z