HIGHMORE-HARROLD ELEMENTARY

Handbook



2026-2027

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Welcome to Highmore-Harrold Elementary School!

Our goal is to create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment where students can reach their full potential—academically, socially, and personally.

We expect all students, staff, and visitors to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Any action that harms others, damages property, or disrupts learning will not be tolerated.

This includes using loud, disrespectful, or profane language.

School rules apply:
On the grounds
On buses and/or other school-provided transportation
At all school-sponsored activities (whether on or off campus)

Highmore-Harrold School District
https://www.highmore-harrold.k12.sd.us/

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Phone: 605-852-2275

Elastic Clause
This handbook covers the most common situations, but it cannot anticipate every possible scenario. If an issue arises that is not explicitly addressed here, the administration will address it quickly and with the best interests of the student, school, and community in mind. Each situation is different and will be handled on an individual basis.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Learning is a continuous, lifelong endeavor that prepares students to accept responsibility for themselves, their families, their communities, and their countries, and to become positive, contributing members of our changing global society. Furthermore, we believe that education is not merely the development and refinement of mental capacity, but also a lifelong process that supports students' physical, social, aesthetic, emotional, and moral needs. Therefore, it is a shared responsibility of the Highmore-Harrold School District and the community to provide a comprehensive curriculum. This curriculum encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, including academic, vocational, arts, moral, technical, and extracurricular pursuits, guiding students through a range of educational experiences. This approach ensures that students have the opportunity to develop into wholesome, happy, and productive members of society, with the active and valued involvement of the wider community.

These educational outcomes are best achieved through mutual respect and a collaborative effort among students, parents, staff, administration, the board of education, and the broader community. This collective effort motivates students to reach their full potential and fosters a desire for lifelong learning. We believe that each student has unique capabilities, interests, and backgrounds. Therefore, the school must make every effort to accommodate students' unique needs and individual differences, ensuring that every student feels understood and supported throughout their educational journey.

While the school system's staff is a lasting force in students' development, the teacher is the most critical factor in the learning process. The Highmore-Harrold School District holds its teachers in high regard. Therefore, the teacher must possess and demonstrate qualities of dedication, enthusiasm, sensitivity, and professionalism. It is primarily the teacher's responsibility to provide a learning environment in the school that fosters maximum student growth and reflects individual differences through good study habits, techniques, and positive experiences.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-27

- First Day of School August 20 (Thursday)
- End of 1st Quarter October 16
- End of 2nd Quarter December 18
- End of 3rd Quarter March 12
- End of 4th Quarter May 19 (Last Day of School)

VACATION DAYS

- No School, September 4
- Labor Day, September 7
- Teacher Comp Day, October 2
- Indigenous Peoples' Day, October 13
- Thanksgiving, November 26-27 (Dismiss at 12:15 pm on the 26th)
- Holiday Break, Dec. 21-Jan. 5
- Martin Luther King Day, January 18*
- Teacher Comp Day February 12
- President's Day, February 15*
- Easter Break, March 26-29
- Spring Break April 16-19*
- Possible Snow Day Make Up Days Jan. 18th, Feb. 15th, April 16th and April 19th
- Graduation May 16

IN-SERVICE DAYS

- Monday-Wednesday, Aug. 17-19
- Friday, October 9 (Dismiss at 12:15 pm)
- Monday, January 4

CONFERENCE DAYS

- Thursday (2:30 to 8:00 pm), October 1st (Dismiss at 2:00 pm)
- Thursday (2:30 to 8:00 pm), February 11th (Dismiss at 2:00 pm)

ARRIVAL AND HOURS

The school building opens to students at 7:50 AM. Breakfast will be served from 7:50 AM to 8:10 AM. Arrival before 7:50 AM is discouraged, and students will not be admitted to the gym until then. When the weather is nice, students who are not eating breakfast will be on the playground to start their day.

All children are urged to return home or follow their after-school plan immediately after school. To ensure student safety at Highmore-Harrold, all students and parents must understand the supervision hours. There will be no supervision on the playground after students are dismissed from their classrooms.

The first bell will ring at 8:10 AM, and the tardy bell will ring at 8:20 AM. Students in grades JK-6 are considered tardy if they arrive in the classroom after 8:20 AM. The school day will start at 8:20 AM and conclude at 3:20 PM Monday through Thursday, with Friday's dismissal at 2:20 PM.

LATE STARTS / CLOSURE

If there is a 1-hour late start, classes will begin at 9:20 a.m. If there is a 2-hour late start, classes will begin at 10:20 a.m.

Parents' decisions about weather conditions will always be respected. If a parent determines that weather conditions are unsafe for their child to attend school or that their child must leave school early due to weather, they should notify the school office. The student's absence or missed instructional time will be documented accordingly.

If school is closed, no classes or school activities will be held unless otherwise announced.

School closings and late starts will be communicated through the district's school messaging system and announced on local radio and television stations.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to student success. Daily participation in classroom instruction, discussions, and learning activities provides educational experiences that cannot be fully replicated by make-up work. Students are expected to attend school every day unless there is a valid reason.

If your child will be absent, a parent or guardian must notify the school office as soon as possible by calling 605-852-2275. Students who become ill during the school day will not be dismissed until a parent or guardian has been contacted. For student safety, parents or authorized adults must sign students out at the main office for illness, appointments, or any other early dismissal.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The Highmore-Harrold School District monitors student attendance throughout the school year. When attendance issues arise, the school will collaborate with students and families to identify barriers and develop a plan to improve attendance.

Parents/guardians may receive attendance notifications as absences accumulate. Attendance conferences with school administration may be scheduled when a student's attendance begins to affect academic progress or when required by district procedures.

The Highmore-Harrold School District encourages every student to maintain at least 94% attendance and recognizes that consistent attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic success.

TRUANCY

South Dakota requires children of compulsory school age to attend school unless they qualify for a legal exemption. A student who is absent from school, or any portion of the school day, without a valid excuse or the knowledge and permission of a parent or guardian may be considered truant.

The district must maintain attendance records and, in accordance with South Dakota law, report to the district's truancy officer students of compulsory school age who are not legally excused and do not attend school regularly. Continued truancy may result in referral to the district's truancy officer and, when appropriate, to the State's Attorney for further action. **(Board Policy: JEDA)**

ILLNESS GUIDELINES

To help maintain a healthy learning environment, parents and guardians are asked to keep students home when they are sick. The Highmore-Harrold School District follows these guidelines:

Fever: Students with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher should remain home or be sent home if they develop a fever during the school day. Students may return to school after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

Vomiting or Diarrhea: Students who are vomiting or have diarrhea should remain home until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication.

Rashes or Skin Eruptions: Students with an unexplained rash or skin eruption may be asked to remain home until a healthcare provider has evaluated the cause or determined that the condition is not contagious.

Communicable Illnesses: Students who are diagnosed with, or have been exposed to, a communicable, contagious, or infectious disease or parasite may be excluded from school attendance when necessary to protect the health and safety of students and staff.

The Highmore-Harrold School District is committed to providing a safe, healthy learning environment and to recognizing each student's right to a free and appropriate public education. Decisions about school attendance or participation in school activities due to a communicable illness will be made on an individual basis by the building administrator or designee, in consultation with the school nurse or other appropriate health professionals, as needed. **(See Board Policies JHCC, JHCC-R.)**

In making this determination, the district may consider:

- The characteristics of illness or disease;
- The student's medical condition;
- The type of interaction the student has with others in the school setting;
- The potential impact on the affected student and the school community;
- Guidance from the South Dakota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and
- Recommendations from the County Health Officer, when applicable.

Before returning to school, additional medical information or documentation may be required. If a student is excluded from school for an extended period due to a communicable illness, the district will, as required by law, coordinate with the family to provide an appropriate alternative educational program.

HEADLICE

The Highmore-Harrold School District follows current recommendations for head lice management:

• Students with live head lice will not be excluded from school solely because lice are discovered.
• Parents or guardians will be notified if live lice are found.
• Treatment should begin as soon as reasonably possible.
• Students may remain in school for the rest of the day and return after appropriate treatment has begun.
• School staff may conduct a follow-up check 7–10 days after the initial treatment and encourage families to complete the recommended second treatment, if appropriate.
• The district will encourage practices that reduce head-to-head contact and, when appropriate, clean or temporarily remove fabric items, such as classroom pillows.

The district recognizes that head lice are a common childhood condition and are not associated with poor hygiene. Every effort will be made to protect student privacy and minimize disruption to students' education.

COVID-19:

The Highmore-Harrold School District has implemented preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the district cannot guarantee that individuals will not become infected.

BUS CONDUCT

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Students are expected to follow the same behavioral expectations on the bus as at school. The bus driver is responsible for supervising students while they board, ride, and exit the bus.

Students who do not follow bus rules may lose their bus-riding privileges. Parents/guardians will be responsible for providing transportation during any suspension of bus privileges. Appeals of long-term suspensions may be made in accordance with district policy. **(See Board Policy: JFCC, JFCC-R(1))**

REPORT CARDS / GRADING

Report cards are issued four times a year, at the end of each quarter. Unless barred by court order, duplicate report cards can be sent to parents upon request. If you would like a duplicate, please contact the school office.

Grades K-2

E = Excellent (99.5)
S+ = Satisfactory Plus (93.5)
S = Satisfactory (87.5)
I = Improving (81.5)
N = Needs Improvement (76.5)
U = Unsatisfactory

Grades 3-6

A = 100-96	B+ = 93-92	C+ =85-84	D+ = 77-76	F = 69
A- = 95-94	B = 91-88	C = 83-80	D = 75-72	
	B- =87-86	C- = 79-78	D- = 71-70	

ATTIRE

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active role in ensuring their child comes to school dressed appropriately for learning. Students should be clean, safe, and appropriate for the school environment. Clothing or accessories that disrupt the educational process, are unsafe, or are inappropriate for an elementary school setting are not permitted.

If a student's clothing or appearance is deemed inappropriate, the student may be asked to change. A parent or guardian will be contacted if necessary. Students who are unsure whether an item of clothing is appropriate should check with the building principal before wearing it to school.

Because temperatures can vary widely during the early fall and late spring, parents are encouraged to dress students in layers and ensure they are prepared for changing weather, including outdoor recess and other outdoor activities.

Temperature	School/Playground Attire
39º F and Below	Coat, Hat, Gloves Snow on the Ground: Snow pants, Boots, Coat, Hat, Gloves
40º F – 49º F	Coat and Hat
50º F - 59º F	Coats or Jackets
60º F - 69º F	Long Sleeves
70º and up	Short Sleeves

Please exercise discretion when advising your student to dress for the weather.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

All grade 6 students participating in an athletic program will follow Highmore High School requirements and regulations.

Eligibility requirements include:

- 1. Students must attend all afternoon classes on the day of an activity or practice to participate, unless excused in advance for medical or family emergencies.

  2. Students must pass. A student with an “F” is ineligible to participate in the activity.

Ineligibility is in effect for one week. Grades will be reviewed weekly, and students who bring their grade(s) up to pass may participate. However, they may practice.

BULLYING

Highmore-Harrold School District is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for all students. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. This policy applies to students, employees, parents, volunteers, visitors, and guests on school property, at school activities, on school transportation, at bus stops, and in other school-related settings. Reports of bullying will be taken seriously and promptly investigated by school administration. Students who engage in bullying may face disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Employees and other individuals who violate this policy may also be subject to appropriate disciplinary action or restrictions on school property. Respectful behavior is expected of everyone in our school community.

Bullying and harassment of students by other students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers with direct contact with students will not be tolerated. Highmore-Harrold defines bullying as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to recur over time. **(See Board Policy: JFCD)**

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is intentional behavior, whether a single serious incident or repeated actions, that creates fear, causes physical or emotional harm, damages property, interferes with a student's ability to learn, or disrupts the school environment. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying is also prohibited.

Bullying may include physical, verbal, social, or electronic (cyberbullying) behaviors such as threats, intimidation, harassment, hazing, stalking, property damage, or inappropriate messages sent via phones, social media, or other electronic devices. Cyberbullying that affects the school environment may result in school discipline, even when it occurs off campus.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Please help your child develop a sense of responsibility for school property. Instilling respect for all public facilities promotes good citizenship.

Parents will be financially responsible for any damage their child causes to school property. Students will be fined for lost or damaged books and for damage to school-issued laptops.

CELLPHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

To promote learning and minimize distractions, students may bring cell phones and other personal electronic devices (including smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, and internet-connected devices) to school; however, these devices must be turned off and kept out of sight from the time students enter the building until dismissal. This requirement applies unless otherwise specified in a student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, or Health Care Action Plan. All district rules governing the use of electronic devices on school property, on school transportation, and at school-sponsored activities must be followed. **(See Board Policy: JFCK)**

CONSEQUENCES

First Offense: Confiscation of device(s) and held in the main office until the end of the school day. Before the device is released, the student must discuss and review the policy with a staff member.
Second Offense: Confiscation of device(s), to be held in the main office until the student's parent/guardian can collect it and is informed of their student's decision to break the school's policy. The student will receive one after-school detention and be prohibited from bringing their cell phone to school for five school days.
Third Offense: Confiscation of device(s), to be held in the main office until the student's parent/guardian can collect it and is informed of their student's repeated decision to break the school's policy. The student will receive five after-school detentions and be prohibited from bringing their cell phone to school for one month.
Fourth Offense: Confiscation of device(s), to be held in the main office until the student's parent/guardian can collect it. The student will be prohibited from bringing their cell phone to school for the remainder of the school year.

DETENTION

Students may be asked to stay after school for disciplinary reasons. Parents will be notified. Children who ride the bus will serve detention the following school day so parents can arrange transportation. If a student does not attend detention, they will serve double the missed time. After three detentions, students will serve a one-day in-school suspension. Detention will end at 4 pm, and no detentions will be held on Fridays.

FOOD IN SCHOOL

Candy, pop, and other food items are permitted only with teacher or administrative approval, during approved fundraisers, in the lunchroom, or for classroom celebrations in grades JK–6. Beverages and chewing gum are allowed only at the teacher's or the administration's discretion. To help protect students with severe allergies, our school is **peanut-aware**, and students, staff, and families are asked to be mindful when bringing or consuming foods containing peanuts at school.

HOMEWORK

Homework may be assigned to reinforce or extend classroom learning. Students are expected to complete and return assignments on time. If homework is not completed, the teacher may require the student to complete it during an appropriate time at school. Voluntary projects and enrichment activities may also be offered to support learning. **(See Board Policy: IKB)**

LOST & FOUND

Lost and found items are kept near the school office. Parents are encouraged to check for missing items throughout the year. Please label your child's coats, snow gear, lunch boxes, and other personal belongings. Unclaimed items will be donated to the local thrift store at the end of the school year.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Highmore-Harrold School District offers lunch/breakfast for all students at the following cost:

Breakfast

K-12 = $2.30
Staff = $3.05

Lunch

K-6 = $3.40
7-12 = $3.55
Staff = $5.15
Adult Guests = $5.55
Extra Milk = $0.45
Seconds = $2.20

Each fall, a letter is sent to all families explaining the qualifications for free or reduced-price lunches. The letter includes an application. Families are strongly encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price lunches. You can apply at any time during the school year, but you must reapply at the beginning of each school year.

Peanut-Aware:

Due to life-threatening peanut allergies within our school community, Highmore-Harrold is a peanut-aware school. Peanut and peanut-containing products are permitted; however, students, staff, and families are asked to be mindful of those with severe allergies. Students should not share food, and everyone is encouraged to practice good handwashing and clean up eating areas after consuming peanut products. Additional precautions may be necessary in specific classrooms or areas based on individual student needs.

MESSAGES

Students may use the school telephone only with permission from their teacher or the principal. Families are encouraged to arrange transportation and after-school plans before the school day begins. The school office handles messages and deliveries for students. If your child's transportation plans change, please call the school office before 2:30 p.m. Do not email or text transportation changes, as emails may not be seen in time.

MONEY

Students are discouraged from bringing money to school for non-school-related purposes.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Students are expected to treat themselves and others with respect in their words, actions, and appearance. Positive behavior helps create a safe, productive learning environment for everyone.

School rules apply to school property, school transportation, and all school-sponsored activities. When behavior concerns arise, staff will use fair, consistent discipline, emphasizing the teaching of responsibility and self-discipline.

Consequences may include parent contact, conferences, restitution, detention, loss of privileges, suspension, referral to counseling or law enforcement, or other appropriate actions, depending on the situation. A complete copy of the district discipline matrix is available in the school office and on the school website. **(See Board Policy: JK)**

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. The district is committed to providing a safe learning environment through regular safety training, emergency planning, and accident prevention. Students and staff participate in scheduled fire, tornado, lockdown, and other emergency drills throughout the school year and are expected to follow all safety procedures and staff directions during drills and emergencies. Safety is a shared responsibility, and everyone is expected to help maintain a secure, orderly school environment.

- **Fire Drills** – Follow posted evacuation routes quickly and quietly; proceed to designated assembly areas.
- **Tornado/Severe Weather Drills** – Move to designated shelter areas away from windows; crouch low and cover your head.
- **Lockdown Drills** – Lock doors, turn off lights, move out of sight, and remain quiet until an "all clear" is given.
- **Medical Emergencies** – Notify a staff member immediately; only trained personnel should provide first aid.

STUDENT RECORDS (FERPA)

The Highmore-Harrold School District maintains student education records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Parents/guardians of students under age 18 and eligible students (age 18 or older) have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records.
- Request the correction of records believed to be inaccurate or misleading.
- Consent before the District discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except as authorized by law.
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding alleged violations of FERPA.

The district may release directory information as permitted by law unless a parent or guardian submits a written request to the school to withhold it. A complete copy of the district's FERPA policy is available at the school office or on the district website.

STUDENT DUE PROCESS

Students are entitled to fair and consistent disciplinary procedures. Before a suspension or expulsion is imposed, students will receive appropriate notice of the alleged misconduct, an opportunity to respond, and the due process protections required by law. Students receiving special education services will be afforded all rights and protections under their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and under applicable state and federal laws. **(See Board Policy: JFA)**

SUSPENSION / EXPULSIONS

Severe breaches of behavioral standards may result in suspensions or expulsions from the school. **(See Board Policy: JGD)**

TITLE IX AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Highmore-Harrold School District is committed to providing a learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. The district does not discriminate based on sex in any educational program, activity, or employment, in accordance with Title IX.

Reports of sexual harassment or sex discrimination will be taken seriously, promptly investigated, and addressed in accordance with district policy and federal law. Any student, parent, employee, or visitor who believes they have experienced or witnessed prohibited conduct should report it to a teacher, principal, or the District's Title IX Coordinator.

Additional information, including the district's full Title IX policy and grievance procedures, is available at the school office or on the district's website. **(See Board Policy: ACAA)**

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND TOBACCO

To ensure a safe and healthy learning environment, the use, possession, sale, or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia, or being under the influence of any of these substances, is strictly prohibited on school property, on school transportation, and at all school-sponsored activities. Students taking prescription medication must follow the district's medication procedures. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action under district policy. **(See Board Policy: JFCH)**

VISITING SCHOOL

Parents and visitors are always welcome at Highmore-Harrold Elementary. We encourage parents to contact the classroom teacher before visiting. All visitors must report to the school office upon arrival, sign in, and obtain a visitor badge before entering the building. An adult must always accompany children to visit the school.

WEAPONS IN THE SCHOOL

To ensure the safety of all students, staff, and visitors, weapons of any kind are prohibited on school property, on school transportation, and at all school-sponsored activities, except as permitted by law. Any weapon brought to school will be confiscated, parents will be notified, and law enforcement may be contacted. Students who possess a weapon, including a firearm, are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, in accordance with state and federal law and district policy. Special education students will receive all protections provided under applicable law and under their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. **(See Board Policy: AF)**