

FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

Student & Family Handbook

2026-2027

BRONCO POWER



Home of the Broncos

International Falls, Minnesota

Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to a new and exciting year at Falls High School! We are proud to welcome you to the Bronco community and look forward to partnering with students and families throughout the 2026-2027 school year.

This year marks an important new chapter for Falls High School. Our transition to a trimester schedule provides greater flexibility, more opportunities for students to explore their interests, and expanded access to engaging electives in career and technical education, fine arts, business, communications, natural resources, technology, family and consumer sciences, physical education, and other areas designed to help students discover their strengths and prepare for life after high school.

Students also have opportunities to complete significant college coursework - potentially including an Associate of Arts degree or the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum - while remaining on the Falls High School campus. Through college partnerships and College in the Schools courses, eligible students may earn both high school and college credit while staying connected to teachers, classmates, activities, and the FHS community.

Our building will continue to be transformed through community-supported renovations that create updated learning environments, expanded student gathering spaces, and new opportunities for hands-on learning, wellness, collaboration, and school engagement.

Even as programs, courses, and spaces evolve, our commitment remains the same: to provide a safe, caring, inclusive, and academically challenging environment where every student feels welcomed, supported, and encouraged to succeed. We want students to be proud of their school, engaged in their learning, and prepared for their next steps.

This handbook is designed to make important school expectations, opportunities, procedures, and required notices easy to find. Please review it together and contact the school whenever questions arise.

Welcome to Falls High School - Home of the Broncos!

Melissa Tate

Falls High School Principal
mtate@isd361.org
218-283-2571 ext. 1232

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is a student- and family-facing guide. It summarizes key school expectations, procedures, opportunities, and required notices. Complete Board of Education policies remain the controlling authority. If handbook language conflicts with an adopted district policy or applicable law, the policy or law controls. Current Board policies are available through the district website and district office.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year	2
Table of Contents	3
Quick Reference	4
I. General Information	5
II. Academics	9
III. Student Expectations & Discipline	13
IV. Health & Safety	18
V. Student Life, Activities & FHS Opportunities	20
Required Notices & Policy References	22
Bronco POWER	23

Quick Reference

Item	Information
School Office Hours	7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Regular School Day	8:00 a.m.-2:54 p.m.
Student Drop-Off	After 7:30 a.m.
Student Pick-Up	By 3:00 p.m., unless participating in an approved after-school activity
Main Office	218-283-2571
Attendance Line	Call 218-283-2571; select FHS, then the FHS attendance line and leave the student name, caller name/relationship, and reason for absence
Principal	Melissa Tate mtate@isd361.org ext. 1232
Superintendent	Beth Shermoen
Student Support Specialist	Chelsea Ness
FHS Counselor	Thane Grewatz
Athletic Director	Timm Ringhoffer
School Nurse / Health Office	Brittany Spry Contact the FHS office
District Website / Board Policies	www.isd361.org

Annual calendar

Because dates can change and the school operates on a trimester schedule, families should use the current district calendar and school communications for conference dates, grading dates, breaks, graduation, and other annual events.

I. General Information

Arrival, Dismissal, and Building Access

Students may arrive after 7:30 a.m. The regular school day is 8:00 a.m.-2:54 p.m. Students should be picked up by 3:00 p.m. unless they are participating in an approved after-school activity or are otherwise under staff supervision. Students are expected to follow posted building access and supervision expectations before, during, and after the school day.

Complaints and Concerns

Students, parents/guardians, employees, and other community members may report concerns or complaints orally or in writing. When appropriate, concerns should begin at the building level so staff can respond promptly. The appropriate administrator will respond regarding the district's handling of the concern. Matters that cannot be resolved at the building level may be referred to the superintendent or handled under the applicable district policy.

Eighteen-Year-Old Students

All enrolled students, regardless of age, are governed by school rules, district policies, and this handbook while participating in school or school-sponsored activities.

Employment Background Checks

The school district seeks criminal history background checks for applicants who receive offers of district employment and for individuals offered athletic coaching or other extracurricular academic coaching positions, whether paid or unpaid. The district may also require background checks for other volunteers, independent contractors, or student employees as allowed by law and district policy.

Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge. Students may be responsible for personal school supplies and may be charged allowable fees or deposits for optional activities, materials retained by the student, lost or damaged items, equipment, field trips, extracurricular participation, or other items permitted by law and district policy. A required fee or deposit may be waived when a student or family is unable to pay. Contact the principal or school office with questions.

Fundraising

Student group, organization, and school-related fundraising must be approved in advance by the building principal or designee. Nonapproved fundraising and nonschool solicitations during the school day are prohibited.

Deliveries and Messages to Students

To reduce classroom disruption, gifts, flowers, balloons, restaurant or delivery-app food, and similar items will not be delivered to students during the school day. Forgotten school items may be brought to the FHS office for student pickup. Students will be notified as soon as practical without interrupting instruction.

Visitors and Volunteers

All visitors and volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival and follow school check-in and identification procedures. Parents and guardians are encouraged to volunteer; volunteers working directly with individual students may be required to complete a background check. Visitors must follow all safety, confidentiality, and staff-direction requirements while on school property.

School Closing and E-Learning

The superintendent determines when severe weather, emergency conditions, or other circumstances require a delayed start, early dismissal, building closure, or school cancellation. Notifications are provided through Infinite Campus messaging and local communication channels. When an E-Learning Day is used, students are expected to check school email and learning platforms, follow teacher directions, and complete assigned work. Attendance and participation requirements apply.

Pledge of Allegiance

Falls High School will follow Minnesota law and district policy regarding recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. A student or other person who does not wish to participate for a personal reason may choose not to do so. Everyone must respect another person's decision to participate or not participate. The school also provides instruction regarding proper etiquette, display, and respect for the flag.

Nondiscrimination and Equal Educational Opportunity

International Falls School District is committed to inclusive education and equal educational opportunity. The district does not discriminate in its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression, age, or any other status protected by law.

Questions or complaints involving discrimination, Title IX, disability access, or other civil-rights concerns may be directed to the district office. The superintendent serves as the district human rights officer. The district publishes current Title IX and ADA/Section 504 coordinator contact information through district policies and official district communications.

Student Records and Privacy

Student records are classified as public, private, or confidential under state and federal law. Parents/guardians and eligible students - generally students age 18 or older or enrolled in postsecondary education - have rights to inspect, review, and seek amendment of education records and to control disclosures except where law permits disclosure without consent. The district's Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records policy explains directory information, access rights, disclosure rules, complaint rights, and annual notice requirements. Copies are available from the district office and through current Board policies.

Student Surveys and Protected Information

The district may use surveys to gather student opinions and information. Parents/guardians and eligible students have rights under federal and state law regarding surveys that request protected information, the collection or use of student information for marketing, and certain nonemergency physical examinations or screenings. The district will provide required notices and opportunities for consent or opt-out when applicable. Complete procedures are available through the district's current student survey policy.

Notice of Violent Behavior by Students

The district will provide notice to teachers and other appropriate staff before a student with a documented history of violent behavior is placed in their classroom, as required by district policy. Before notice is given, the student's parent/guardian will be informed. Parents/guardians retain rights to review and challenge education records, including data documenting the history of violent behavior.

Student Publications and Nonschool Materials

FHS supports student expression consistent with law and district policy. School-sponsored media is supervised by the student media adviser and principal. Student journalists have speech and press rights subject to lawful

limitations, including restrictions on defamatory, unlawful, harassing, threatening, obscene, privacy-invasive, or materially disruptive content. Nonschool-sponsored materials may be distributed on school premises only in accordance with district time, place, and manner procedures.

Searches, Lockers, Desks, and Vehicles

School lockers and desks are district property. School officials may inspect their interiors at any time without notice, student consent, or a search warrant. Personal possessions inside a locker, a student's personal belongings, or a student's person may be searched when school officials have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules, and any search will be reasonable in scope.

School officials may conduct routine patrols and exterior inspections of vehicles on district property without notice. The interior of a student vehicle may be searched when officials have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. A student who refuses to open a locked vehicle or compartment under the student's control may lose parking privileges and may be subject to discipline.

Parking and Canine Detection Services

Student parking is a privilege and is limited to designated areas. Unauthorized vehicles may be subject to towing or loss of parking privileges. The district may use trained detection canines for random, unannounced inspections of campus buildings, parking areas, grounds, and school events in accordance with district procedures. Detection of prohibited items may result in school discipline and, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement.

Video and Audio Recording by the District

School buses, school buildings, and school grounds may be equipped with video cameras. Recordings may be used when addressing safety, conduct, or discipline. Video surveillance in locker rooms or bathrooms is used only in extraordinary circumstances with heightened controls and superintendent approval as permitted by law.

II. Academics

Academic Expectations: Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are prohibited. Students are expected to submit their own work and accurately acknowledge sources. Academic consequences may include no credit, redoing work, grade reduction, parent/guardian contact, and disciplinary action consistent with the circumstances and district policy. Repeated or serious academic dishonesty may result in additional consequences.

Grading and Academic Recognition

Grades are reported at midterm and at the end of each trimester. Families may monitor schedules, attendance, grades, assignments, behavior records, report cards, and transcripts through Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

Letter Grade	GPA Value
A	4.00
A-	3.70
B+	3.30
B	3.00
B-	2.70
C+	2.30
C	2.00
C-	1.70
D+	1.30
D	1.00
D-	0.60
F	0.00

Falls High School does not award valedictorian or salutatorian honors. Current academic recognition includes:

- Graduating with Honors: cumulative GPA of 3.80 or higher through the senior year.
- Academic Excellence Award: eligible students in grades 9-12 may apply under criteria communicated annually by FHS.
- Principal's List: 4.00 GPA for the trimester.
- A Honor Roll: 3.700-3.999 GPA for the trimester.
- B Honor Roll: 3.000-3.699 GPA for the trimester.

Graduation Requirements

Students must satisfy all graduation requirements established by Minnesota law and the International Falls School Board. FHS local requirements may exceed state minimum requirements. Students and families should use the current course-registration materials and counselor guidance when planning a four-year program.

Subject Area	FHS Credits	Notes
Language Arts	4.0	Meets required English language arts standards.
Mathematics	3.0	Includes Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and required state standards.

Subject Area	FHS Credits	Notes
Science	3.0	Includes biology and chemistry or physics; courses must satisfy applicable state science standards.
Social Studies	4.0	FHS local requirement; includes U.S. history, geography, government/citizenship, world history, economics, and applicable standards.
Arts	1.0	Visual and/or performing arts.
Technology/FACS	1.0	Local FHS requirement.
Physical Education	1.0	Local FHS credit requirement and state standards.
Health	0.5	Local FHS credit requirement and state standards.
Personal Finance	0.5	Required for students beginning grade 9 in 2024-25 or later; may be incorporated within an approved course as allowed by FHS.
Electives	6.5	Selected to complete FHS graduation requirements and student goals.

State minimum vs. FHS requirement

Minnesota minimum course requirements and FHS local graduation requirements are not identical. Where FHS requires more credit than the state minimum, the FHS requirement applies to an FHS diploma. Students should confirm their individual graduation plan with the school counselor.

Statewide Assessments and Parent/Guardian Refusal

Students participate in statewide assessments as required by Minnesota law. A parent/guardian may refuse participation for a student by completing the current Minnesota Department of Education refusal form and returning it to the school. The current form is available from the FHS office and through the Minnesota Department of Education. Students and families should discuss the academic implications of opting out with the school counselor or principal.

Parent Right to Know

Upon request, the district will provide parents/guardians with information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers, including applicable state licensing or qualification status and whether the student receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications. The district also provides parents with information about their child's performance on state academic assessments and any other notices required by federal law for schools receiving applicable federal funds.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

FHS follows Minnesota PSEO requirements. Students interested in PSEO should meet with the FHS counselor and their parent/guardian to review eligibility, graduation planning, course rigor, transportation, deadlines, and student responsibilities. FHS requires students pursuing PSEO to complete the school's planning and responsibility process. State timelines and college deadlines may change; students should begin planning early and contact the guidance office for current requirements.

Concurrent Enrollment / College in the Schools

Falls High School offers Concurrent Enrollment (CE) and College in the Schools (CIS) courses in which eligible students may earn both high school and college credit. Through the partnership with Lake Superior College, eligible students may work toward an Associate of Arts degree or complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum while attending FHS. Interested students should schedule a planning meeting with the FHS counselor.

Falls Virtual Academy

Students enrolled at FHS may be approved to take district-provided online courses through Falls Virtual Academy while remaining enrolled in the in-person high school program. Online coursework may be used for credit recovery, to complete a missing graduation requirement, or, in approved circumstances, for initial credit when the course supports a student's educational plan. Approval is based on educational need, graduation planning, course availability, schedule conflicts, transfer-credit needs, individualized circumstances, and the student's readiness for online learning.

Online courses require regular engagement, timely completion of work, and communication with the assigned instructor. Enrollment changes must follow FHS schedule-change procedures. Students interested in online learning should contact the FHS counselor.

Alternative Learning Opportunities

The district provides alternative learning options for students who may be at risk of not succeeding in a traditional program. Supports may include tutoring, modified curriculum and instruction, electronic learning, special education services, homebound instruction, or enrollment in an alternative learning center when eligibility criteria are met. Contact the counselor or principal for current options.

Schedule Changes and Dropping Courses

Students are expected to keep the classes selected during registration. Schedule changes are considered when there is a graduation need, an error or conflict, course sequencing issue, or another educationally significant reason. Preference for a different teacher, easier workload, or being with friends is not a basis for a change. Students seeking a change should contact the counselor promptly; the normal drop/add window is the first five school days of a course or trimester. After that window, withdrawal may result in an F unless an approved exception applies. Parent/guardian approval is required for dropping a course.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is a structured academic program that combines school instruction with supervised learning in a community workplace. Students may explore careers, demonstrate course learning objectives, and earn academic credit under the supervision of a licensed work-based learning coordinator. Students in grades 10-12 should contact the FHS counselor for eligibility, placement, and scheduling information.

Homework, Promotion, and Retention

Teachers assign homework based on course goals and instructional needs. Students are expected to complete assignments thoroughly and on time. Students who demonstrate acceptable proficiency are promoted to the next grade level. Retention may be considered when school staff and parents/guardians determine it is in the student's best educational interest. The district provides supports to help students make progress toward graduation.

III. Student Expectations & Discipline

Advisory

Advisory is a required part of the FHS school day and is designed to support academic success, student connection, communication, intervention, and college and career readiness. Students are expected to report to their assigned Advisory on time each scheduled day.

Attendance is taken during Advisory. Absences and tardies during Advisory are subject to the same attendance expectations as other scheduled class periods.

Students must report to their assigned Advisory before going to another location unless they have received prior authorization. After attendance is taken, students may be released to another teacher or approved location for academic assistance, intervention, make-up work, testing, counseling, or another school-related purpose. Students must follow FHS pass and check-in/check-out procedures so staff know their location.

Advisory is not an open or unsupervised period. Students are expected to participate in assigned Advisory activities and use available academic support time productively.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to academic success, school connection, and future readiness. Students are expected to attend every assigned class and study hall on every school day unless excused. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school of absences and working with the school when attendance concerns arise. Students are responsible for requesting and completing missed work.

Reporting an Absence

Parents/guardians should call 218-283-2571, select FHS, then select the FHS attendance line. Leave the student's name, the caller's name and relationship to the student, and the reason for the absence. Absences are considered unexcused until verified. Verification should be provided within three school days.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused absences may include illness, serious family illness, death or funeral, medical/dental/orthodontic or counseling appointments, court appearances, approved religious instruction, emergencies, school-sponsored activities, suspension, family emergencies, military duty, or other reasons recognized by district policy or law. The school may request documentation when appropriate.

Examples of unexcused absences include truancy, failure to follow reporting procedures, work not connected to an approved school program, vacations or personal trips not approved under school procedures, missing the bus, sleeping in, leaving school without permission, or other absences not recognized as excused under district policy. Repeated unexcused absences may result in family meetings, attendance plans, county referral, or other action required by law and district policy.

Leaving School, Late Arrival, and Extended Absence

Students leaving during the school day must have parent/guardian authorization documented by the office and must sign out unless they are participating in an approved open study hall or authorized open-lunch privilege. Students arriving late must check in and provide parent/guardian verification. Students who become ill during the school day should report to the health office rather than arranging their own dismissal. For planned absences of three or more consecutive days, families should contact the school in advance and complete any required prearranged-absence process.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their assigned area when class begins. A student arriving within 15 minutes of the start of the school day is marked tardy; after 15 minutes the student may be marked absent for first period.

During the remainder of the day, arriving after the bell is a tardy. Repeated tardiness may result in detention or other attendance interventions and may be counted toward unexcused absence/truancy thresholds in accordance with district policy.

Attendance and Extracurricular Activities

Students must attend the full school day to participate in an athletic practice, contest, performance, or extracurricular activity that day. The principal or Athletic Director may approve exceptions for documented medical appointments, school-sponsored activities, family emergencies, or other approved circumstances. Students absent without an approved excuse or who leave school without permission are not eligible to participate that day.

Attendance policy

This handbook intentionally summarizes attendance procedures rather than reproducing lengthy statutory language. District attendance policy and current Minnesota law govern truancy definitions, notices, referrals, and legal requirements.

Personal Electronic Communication Devices

Falls High School uses grade-level device expectations to reduce instructional distractions while allowing age-appropriate access during designated noninstructional times. The expectations below apply to cell phones, earbuds/headphones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic communication devices unless an approved medical, IEP, Section 504, or individualized learning-plan accommodation provides otherwise.

Grades 7-8: Bell-to-Bell Device-Free

Students in grades 7-8 may not use cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices from the beginning of the school day through the dismissal bell. This bell-to-bell expectation includes class time, passing time, study periods, and lunch. Devices must be turned off or silenced and stored out of sight or in the classroom provided storage area for the entire school day unless a staff member authorizes use for a specific educational purpose or an approved accommodation applies.

Grades 9-12: Limited Noninstructional Use

Students in grades 9-12 may use cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices before school, after school, during passing time between classes, and during lunch. During instructional time, devices must be turned off or silenced and stored out of sight or in the classroom provided approved storage area unless a teacher or administrator authorizes use for an educational purpose or an approved accommodation applies.

Rules for All Students

- Cell phones and other recording devices may not be used in locker rooms or restrooms.
- Photographs or recordings may not be made without explicit staff permission and any consent required for the situation.
- Devices may not be used for bullying, harassment, academic dishonesty, unlawful conduct, or sharing sexually explicit material.
- Approved medical, IEP, Section 504, or individualized learning-plan accommodations will be honored.
- The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal devices.

Response to Violations

Staff will generally begin with redirection and a reminder of the applicable grade-level expectation. A device used in violation of the policy may be temporarily collected. Repeated violations may result in parent/guardian contact, documentation, referral to administration, a requirement that a parent/guardian pick up the device, loss

of device privileges, or other consequences based on the frequency and circumstances of the violation. Refusal to comply with a reasonable staff direction may be treated as insubordination.

Student Dress Code

Students should have as much choice as possible in how they dress for comfort and self-expression. Restrictions are limited to supporting health, safety, participation, and a respectful learning environment. Dress-code enforcement will be applied without reinforcing or increasing marginalization based on protected status, household income, body type, or maturity.

At all times, genitals, buttocks, and nipples must be fully covered with opaque fabric. Students must wear a shirt, a bottom garment, and shoes. Courses or activities may require additional clothing or safety equipment when necessary for participation.

Students may wear religious headwear; hats, bandanas, hoods, and other headwear when the face and ears remain visible; fitted pants and leggings; pajamas; ripped jeans that do not expose underwear or buttocks; tank tops and spaghetti straps; halter or strapless tops; athletic attire; midriff-baring shirts; and visible waistbands or straps of undergarments worn under other clothing, provided the basic coverage rule is met.

Students may not wear clothing or accessories that display violent content; depict or promote illegal drugs or alcohol; contain hate speech, pornography, or materially disruptive profanity; create a hostile or intimidating environment based on a protected class; expose undergarments beyond waistbands/straps; constitute swimwear outside an approved activity; or could reasonably be used as a weapon or create a safety hazard.

Bullying, Harassment, Violence, and Hazing

Bullying

Bullying in any form is prohibited on school property, at school-related functions or activities, on school transportation, and through misuse of technology when school jurisdiction applies. FHS will respond under District Policy 514 and related law. Students should report bullying to a trusted adult, teacher, counselor, Student Support Specialist, or administrator.

Harassment and Violence

The district prohibits harassment and violence based on protected characteristics and strives to maintain a learning and working environment free from discrimination, intimidation, harassment, and violence. Reports should be made promptly to school administration or another trusted staff member and will be handled under applicable district policy and law.

Hazing

Hazing is prohibited. Hazing includes committing an act against a student, or coercing a student to commit an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm for initiation, affiliation, membership, status, or another group-related purpose. The prohibition applies to teams, clubs, classes, grade levels, informal groups, and school events whether or not the group is officially recognized by the school.

Drug-Free School and Tobacco/Vaping

Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, toxic substances, cannabis products prohibited by law or school policy, or associated paraphernalia is prohibited at school, on district property, on school transportation, and at school-sponsored activities. Prescription medication must be handled in accordance with the district's medication procedures.

Tobacco, nicotine products, tobacco-related devices, vaping devices, electronic delivery devices, and activated e-cigarette or similar devices are prohibited on school property, in district vehicles, and at school-sponsored events. Students who violate these expectations are subject to school discipline and may be referred to

cessation or support resources. See current District Policy 419 for the complete tobacco-free environment requirements and lawful exceptions.

Weapons, Dangerous Objects, and Vandalism

Weapons, look-alike weapons, ammunition, explosives, incendiary devices, and dangerous objects are prohibited except where specifically authorized by law and district policy. Vandalism, theft, arson, false fire alarms, and intentional damage to school or personal property are prohibited. Serious conduct may result in removal from school, law-enforcement referral, restitution, suspension, expulsion, or other action required by law and district policy.

Discipline Philosophy and Restorative Practices

FHS is committed to a safe and effective learning environment. Discipline is intended to protect the school community, reinforce expectations, build skills, repair harm, and prevent recurrence. The school prioritizes nonexclusionary responses and restorative practices when appropriate so students remain connected to instruction and relationships. Removal from class or exclusionary discipline may be used when behavior significantly disrupts learning, creates a safety risk, or when other responses are not appropriate or have not been effective.

Consequences are individualized. Factors may include severity, frequency, student age and developmental level, impact on others, prior interventions, safety needs, disability-related considerations, and applicable law and district policy. The examples below are a guide rather than a fixed sequence. All discipline is subject to administrative discretion.

Level	Examples	Possible Responses
Level 1 - Minor / Classroom	Brief disruption, off-task behavior, minor disrespect, dress-code issue, public display of affection, minor device violation, leaving class without permission, first academic-integrity concern.	Redirection; student conference; restorative conversation; parent/guardian contact; temporary confiscation; loss of privilege; reteaching; behavior plan; assignment consequence where appropriate.
Level 2 - Repeated / Significant	Repeated Level 1 behavior, bullying, gross disruption or insubordination, threats, vandalism, fireworks, gambling, significant technology misuse, repeated inappropriate language or physical contact.	Administrative conference; parent/guardian meeting; detention; restorative process; social-emotional skill building; removal from activity; temporary removal from class; in-school suspension; restitution or other supports.
Level 3 - Serious / Safety	Assault, fighting, weapons or look-alikes, ammunition, arson, explosive threats, major vandalism, theft/robbery, serious harassment, hate speech, hazing, sexual violence, drug/alcohol/vape possession or distribution, major threats.	Immediate safety response; parent/guardian conference; in-school or out-of-school suspension; activity removal; referral to law enforcement or outside services; alternative placement; expulsion/exclusion proceedings when authorized by law; restorative process when safe and appropriate.

Detention, In-School Suspension, and Removal from Class

Students assigned detention or in-school suspension must follow school rules, bring schoolwork, comply with staff directions, and refrain from sleeping or using unauthorized electronic devices. Students may be assigned restorative, social-emotional learning, or skill-building activities. When removal from class is necessary, the school will work to address the underlying concern, communicate with families as appropriate, and return the student to instruction as soon as reasonably possible.

School Transportation Conduct

Riding school transportation is a privilege. Students must follow the driver's directions, remain seated facing forward while the vehicle is moving, use appropriate language, keep aisles and exits clear, respect others and property, and avoid fighting, harassment, horseplay, throwing objects, substances, weapons, or unsafe

behavior. Students waiting at a bus stop must stay out of the roadway, respect property, and follow safe crossing directions from the driver.

Misconduct may result in family contact, assigned seating, school discipline, temporary or long-term loss of transportation privileges, restitution, or law-enforcement referral. Serious incidents may result in immediate suspension from transportation. The district may use bus video recordings as evidence when addressing misconduct.

IV. Health & Safety

Health Services and First Aid

FHS health services support students so they can participate in school in optimal health. Students who become ill or injured during the school day should report to the health office. School staff will provide reasonable first aid and emergency assistance and will contact parents/guardians when needed. For a serious medical emergency, 911 may be called. Families should keep emergency contact and health information current in Infinite Campus.

Communicable Diseases

Students with contagious illnesses should remain home while contagious. Parents/guardians who suspect a communicable disease should contact the school nurse or principal so the school can respond appropriately. Students with communicable diseases will be supported in their normal school setting when their health permits and attendance does not create a significant risk of transmission, consistent with law and district policy.

Immunizations

Students must provide proof of immunization or appropriate exemption documentation as a condition of enrollment and continued attendance, as required by Minnesota law. Medical and conscientiously held belief exemptions must be documented in the manner required by law. The school may exclude a student who does not provide required records until documentation is complete. Contact the school nurse or FHS office for current immunization schedules and forms.

Medications at School

Students who need prescription medication during the school day must follow district medication procedures. A parent/guardian authorization form is required annually and when medication orders change. Prescription medication must generally be provided in the original pharmacy-labeled container and kept with designated school personnel. Approved exceptions may apply for asthma inhalers, emergency medications, or medications addressed in an IEP, Section 504 plan, individual health plan, or written agreement. Marijuana is not permitted on school property even if prescribed.

Seizure Action Plans

When a parent/guardian notifies the district that a student has a diagnosed seizure disorder and has seizure rescue medication or other medication prescribed to treat seizure symptoms, the district will create an individualized seizure action plan and provide required training and supports in accordance with Minnesota law.

Mental Health Supports and Crisis Response

FHS provides school-based mental health support through school staff, including the School Social Worker. Supports may include brief counseling, social-emotional skill building, consultation with teachers and families, individual or group support, and referrals to community providers. School-based services do not replace long-term psychotherapy or clinical treatment when those services are needed.

When a student may be at risk of harming self or others, trained school personnel may initiate a risk or threat assessment and contact the parent/guardian as soon as practical. Emergency services may be contacted when necessary to protect safety.

Crisis resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, 24 hours a day. Koochiching County Mobile Mental Health Crisis Response Services: 1-844-772-4724.

Asbestos Management Plan

The district maintains an asbestos management plan as required by federal law. The plan identifies asbestos-containing building materials, inspection and response actions, and ongoing management requirements. Families and employees may review the plan through the district office during normal business hours and may request information about the district's asbestos management activities.

Lead in School Drinking Water

The district conducts lead testing and remediation in accordance with Minnesota requirements. Parents/guardians may review current lead testing results and information describing remediation efforts through the district's official website or district office. The district updates this information at least annually and provides required annual notices about testing and remediation.

Pesticide Application Notice

The district may apply pesticides on school property when needed. When state law requires notice for the types of pesticides being used, the district provides the required annual notice. An estimated application schedule is available for review or copying through the school or district office. A parent/guardian may request advance notice of qualifying pesticide applications and may request information about the pesticides used and applicable health information.

Emergency Drills and Safety

FHS conducts required emergency drills and uses district crisis procedures for fire, severe weather, evacuation, lockdown, and other emergencies. Students must treat alarms and drills seriously, follow staff directions promptly, and never tamper with emergency or safety equipment. Parents/guardians will receive notice of scheduled active-shooter drills as required by law and may follow the process provided by the district for student participation.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

School employees are mandated reporters. When staff have reason to believe a child may have been abused or neglected, they must make reports to the appropriate child-protection or law-enforcement agency as required by Minnesota law. School staff may not promise confidentiality when a safety concern triggers mandatory reporting obligations.

V. Student Life, Activities & FHS Opportunities

School Activities and MSHSL Participation

FHS provides opportunities for students to pursue interests that support physical, mental, social, and emotional growth. Academic instruction remains the school's first priority. Students who participate in school-sponsored activities are expected to represent FHS and the community responsibly. Student conduct and discipline rules apply to practices, competitions, performances, trips, and other school-sponsored activities.

International Falls School District is a member of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Students participating in MSHSL activities must follow current MSHSL rules and school eligibility requirements. Coaches and advisers review applicable expectations with students and families. Contact the Athletic Director for current eligibility rules, fees, refunds, transportation procedures, and activity-specific requirements.

Activities information moves with the season

Year-specific fees, refund schedules, detailed eligibility procedures, appeals, and sport/activity-specific rules change more often than the core student handbook. FHS publishes those details separately through the Activities Office, current registration materials, and school communications.

Open Study Hall

Open Study Hall is a privilege available to eligible juniors and seniors. Approved students may leave school or report to designated areas during an open hour, subject to the conditions of the authorization form. The privilege may be suspended or revoked for unsafe behavior, academic concerns, loss of credit progress, discipline, or failure to follow sign-out and supervision requirements. Students must complete the current application process through the FHS office and Student Support Specialist before the privilege begins.

Students with approved open hours - including eligible juniors and seniors, PSEO students, and students completing approved online coursework - must follow the Open Hours & Student Location Procedures in Appendix A. PSEO students who enter or return to the building during the school day must sign in at the main office.

Lunch and Closed Campus

FHS operates a closed campus for students except for approved junior and senior privileges. Students may eat in designated cafeteria and student areas. Juniors and seniors may use the student lounge and may leave campus for lunch only when the current FHS permission requirements have been satisfied. Students who leave without authorization may be treated as unexcused or truant and may lose privileges. Students leaving with a parent/guardian must follow office sign-out and return procedures.

Cafeteria and School Meals

Each student is entitled to one school breakfast and one school lunch at no charge each school day under Minnesota's current school-meals program. Families are still encouraged to complete the Application for Educational Benefits because the information may affect school funding and eligibility for reduced activity fees or other benefits.

Breakfast is generally served from 7:30-7:55 a.m.; lunch times vary by schedule. Students must use their own food-service account credentials, maintain account privacy, keep eating areas clean, dispose of waste properly, treat cafeteria staff respectfully, and follow designated eating-area rules. A la carte items are not part of the free breakfast/lunch benefit and require sufficient funds in the student meal account.

District meal procedures prohibit denying a reimbursable school meal to an eligible student because of meal-account debt and prohibit stigmatizing or shaming students regarding unpaid meal balances, consistent with Minnesota law and the district's School Meals Policy. Contact the district food-service office for current account procedures and policy details.

Prom and Special Events

Prom eligibility, guest requirements, age limits, academic/community standing expectations, chemical-violation restrictions, and event procedures are published annually by FHS. Prom is a school privilege and participants must follow school conduct expectations and applicable MSHSL rules. At least one member of a prom couple must be an eligible FHS student. Students and families should use the current prom information packet for final requirements rather than relying on prior-year rules.

Graduation Ceremony

Participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege. Students who have completed graduation requirements may participate unless participation is denied for an appropriate reason, including serious discipline. Graduation exercises are under the direction of the building principal. Current ceremony dates, rehearsal details, attire expectations, and guest information are communicated annually.

Required Notices & Policy References

This handbook includes concise student-facing notices in the sections where families are most likely to need them. Complete district policies contain the full requirements and should be consulted when a question involves rights, procedures, timelines, or legal standards. The following index helps families locate major notices in this handbook.

Notice / Topic	Where to Find It
Student Records and Privacy	I. General Information
Student Surveys and Protected Information	I. General Information
Pledge of Allegiance	I. General Information
Nondiscrimination / Title IX / ADA	I. General Information
Employment Background Checks	I. General Information
Searches / Lockers / Vehicles	I. General Information
Parent Right to Know	II. Academics
Statewide Assessment Refusal	II. Academics
Attendance	III. Student Expectations & Discipline
Bullying / Harassment / Hazing	III. Student Expectations & Discipline
Cell Phones / Personal Electronic Devices	III. Student Expectations & Discipline
Tobacco / Vaping	III. Student Expectations & Discipline
Asbestos / Lead / Pesticides / Seizure Plans	IV. Health & Safety
School Meals	V. Student Life, Activities & FHS Opportunities

Board policies are available through the International Falls School District website and district office. Families may request a paper copy of a policy from the district.

Handbook Acknowledgement

Families are encouraged to review this handbook together. The school may request electronic or written acknowledgement that a student and parent/guardian received the handbook and the notices contained in it. Acknowledgement of receipt does not waive any student or parent/guardian rights provided by law or district policy.

MSBA Copyright Notice

Portions of required-notice content in this handbook are adapted from the MSBA 2026-27 Model Student Handbook, © Minnesota School Boards Association 2025. All rights reserved. MSBA model materials are used as a starting point for district handbook development and do not replace locally adopted policy or legal review.

Bronco POWER

BRONCO POWER



P - Proud

Take pride in your learning, your choices, your school, and your community.

O - Optimistic

Approach challenges with persistence, curiosity, and a belief that growth is possible.

W - Welcoming

Help create a school where people feel seen, included, and safe to participate.

E - Engaged

Be present, prepared, involved, and responsible for your learning.

R - Respectful

Treat people, property, ideas, and shared spaces with care.

Appendix A: Open Hours & Student Location Procedures

These procedures apply to juniors and seniors with approved open hours, PSEO students who are on campus outside a scheduled FHS class, and students completing approved online coursework during an unscheduled period.

Situation	Student Expectation
PSEO arrival/return	Sign in at the main office before reporting to a scheduled class, meeting, or approved open area.
Approved areas	Library, cafeteria, Student Lounge, and Game Room when open and available.
Online coursework	Complete approved online coursework in an approved open area unless another location is specifically approved by staff.
Classrooms	Only with the teacher's permission for a specific academic purpose such as tutoring, make-up work, testing, or a teacher meeting.
Hallways/parking lot	Open hours are not roaming time. Do not hang out in hallways, unsupervised areas, or the parking lot.
Scheduled obligations	Report on time to all scheduled classes, Advisory periods, testing, interventions, meetings, and other school obligations.

Additional Expectations

- Students remaining on campus must stay in an approved area and follow the supervision and behavior expectations for that space.
- Students may move between approved areas as needed but should not congregate in unsupervised parts of the building.
- Only students with an approved privilege or authorization may leave campus. All applicable sign-out and sign-in procedures must be followed.
- Open-hour privileges may be restricted or revoked for repeated attendance, location, behavior, or supervision concerns, or when a student no longer meets the conditions of the privilege.

Open hours provide flexibility, but students remain responsible for being in an approved location and for arriving on time to every school obligation.

Statewide Assessments:

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. When all students participate in statewide assessments, schools and educators have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools continuously improve the education they provide and identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K-12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education, and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are annual assessments in reading, mathematics, and science that provide a snapshot of student learning aligned to the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments gives families a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students may use MCA results for:

- Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) enrollment eligibility in grade 10.
- Course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from EL services.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes, and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the following page. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will not have the opportunity to exit from EL services.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Certain statewide assessment calculations include all eligible students, including those who do not participate. Non-participation impacts accountability results, which may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Explore the
[Statewide
Testing page](#)
for more
information.

(education.mn.gov > Students
and Families > Programs and
Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota Statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by October 1 each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. **This form must be submitted to your student's school or district office prior to testing.**

First Name: Middle Initial: Last Name:

Date of Birth: Current Grade in School: Student ID Number (if known):

School: District:

Parent/Guardian Name (print):

Parent/Guardian Signature: Date:

Reason for Refusal:

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) your student will not participate in this school year:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Reading MCA/Alternate MCA | ☐ Science MCA/Alternate MCA |
| ☐ Mathematics MCA/MTAS | ☐ WIDA ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS |

Contact your school or district for more information on participation decisions for local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20 to 20 school year.)

Updated March 2026



THE BRONCO WAY

CELL PHONE & ELECTRONIC DEVICE PROCEDURES

GRADES 7-8



ISD 361 • INTERNATIONAL FALLS BRONCOS

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MUSIC, TELEPHONES, CELL PHONES, HEADPHONES, IPODS, E-READERS, ETC.



GENERAL GUIDELINES



- **Cell Phone Use:** Students may NOT use cell phones during the academic day – first bell to last bell.



- **Device Storage:** It is strongly suggested that all electronic devices be kept off and in a locker during school hours.



CONFISCATION AND CONSEQUENCES

- **Unauthorized Use:** If any electronic device, including cell phones, is seen or heard during school hours, it may be confiscated by any staff member.



First Infraction: The device will be taken to the office and the student will pick it up at the end of the school day.



Second Infraction: A parent/guardian must pick up the device, and additional consequences may be assigned.



Third Infraction: A parent/guardian must pick up the device, and additional consequences may be assigned.



Fourth Infraction: A cell phone plan will be created. The phone may be held by administration during school days or may not be allowed on site. Parents/guardians will develop a plan with school administration.



SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS



- **Locker Rooms and Bathrooms:** Devices with photo-taking capabilities are NOT allowed in locker rooms or bathrooms at any time. Confiscation and search of such devices is standard procedure if found in these areas.



- **Lockdowns and Fire Drills:** Phone usage during lockdowns and fire drills is prohibited.



- **Unauthorized Recording:** Students who take pictures or videos of others without permission in any school setting, including the bus, will face disciplinary action.



- **Smartwatches, Devices, and Earbuds:** These items may be required to be placed in a designated classroom area as determined by the instructor and building administrator.



- **Headphones:** Earbuds are not allowed in classrooms, hallways or the cafeteria. Over-the-ear headphones are not permitted during the school day unless a teacher or administrator gives permission.



INVESTIGATIONS AND INSPECTIONS



- **Device Disabling:** Disabling a cell phone or computer to thwart an investigation of a disciplinary matter will result in disciplinary action.



- **Device Inspection:** The school reserves the right to inspect a student's electronic device, through proper legal channels, if there is reason to believe the student violated school policies or engaged in misconduct while using the device.



SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY



- **Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Devices:** The school is not responsible for, nor required to investigate, lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices brought onto school grounds or the bus.



ADDITIONAL RULES



- **Recording and Posting:** Students may not record, transmit, or post photos or videos of anyone on school grounds or the bus without express permission from an administrator and the individual(s) being recorded.



- **Phone Calls and Texts:** Students are not to use phones to call or text during the school day. An office telephone is available for student use. Students will not be called to the phone during the school day except for emergencies.



COMPLIANCE



- Following these guidelines helps maintain a focused and respectful learning environment. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action as described above.



BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE A BRONCO.

— FOCUSED • SAFE • KIND • ACCOUNTABLE • TOGETHER —

ISD 361 • INTERNATIONAL FALLS BRONCOS • BRONCO PRIDE



THE BRONCO WAY

CELL PHONE & ELECTRONIC DEVICE PROCEDURES

GRADES 9-12



ISD 361 • INTERNATIONAL FALLS BRONCOS

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MUSIC, TELEPHONES, CELL PHONES, HEADPHONES, IPODS, E-READERS, ETC.



GENERAL GUIDELINES



- **Cell Phone Use:** Students may NOT use cell phones during class.



- **Required Storage:** During class, students must place phones in the designated cell phone holder.



- **Device Storage:** It is strongly suggested that all electronic devices be kept off and in a locker during the school day.

Students may have phones between classes and during lunch.



CONFISCATION AND CONSEQUENCES

- **Unauthorized Use:** If an electronic device is seen or heard during school hours without staff approval (excluding lunch and passing time), it may be confiscated by any staff member.

1

First Infraction: The device is placed in the designated classroom area until the end of the class period. If used outside class, excluding lunch or passing time, it will be taken to the office and picked up by the student at the end of the day.

2

Second Infraction: The student brings the device to the office and picks it up at the end of the day. Additional consequences may apply.

3

Third Infraction: The student brings the device to the office; a parent/caregiver must pick it up. Additional consequences may apply.

4

Fourth Infraction: Parents/caregivers create a plan with school administration. Phones may be held by administration or not allowed on site.



SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS



- **Locker Rooms and Bathrooms:** Devices with photo-taking capabilities are NOT allowed in locker rooms or bathrooms at any time.



- **Safety Drills:** No phone use during lockdowns or fire drills.



- **Recording:** No taking pictures or videos of others without permission in any school setting.



- **Headphones:** Over-the-ear headphones are not permitted during the school day unless approved.



- **Designated Area:** Smartwatches, electronic devices, and earbuds may be required to be placed in a designated area.



EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES



- **Medical Monitoring:** Students monitoring a medical condition may have their phone at all times.



- **Essential Need:** Contact school administration if there is an essential need for an approved phone.



- **Approval:** In case of medical necessity or emergency, a health plan or prior approval is required.



INVESTIGATIONS AND INSPECTIONS



- **Device Disabling:** Disabling a cell phone or computer to thwart an investigation will result in disciplinary action.



- **Device Inspection:** The school reserves the right to inspect a student's device if there is reason to believe school policies have been violated.



SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY



- **Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Devices:** The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices and is not required to investigate such cases.



ADDITIONAL RULES



- **Recording and Posting:** No recording, transmitting, or posting photos or videos without express permission from an administrator and the individuals involved.



- **Phone Calls:** Students may not use phones to make calls during the school day; the office phone is available for emergencies only.



COMPLIANCE



- Following these guidelines helps maintain a focused and respectful learning environment. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.



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