

# Fernie Secondary School

## Student Handbook

### 2025-2026

#### **Administrators' Welcome**

Fernie Secondary School is located on the traditional homelands of the Ktunaxa people – a place where our staff, students, and community members learn, work, and play.

The success of our school is based on the success of each individual who attends FSS. Our success is measured by your achievement in and your enjoyment of high school. We are all here to support you in your journey, and we will do everything in our power to help you achieve your goals while you are a student at Fernie Secondary School. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the Fernie Secondary Staff for support. We hope you have another outstanding year as a Fernie Falcon!

This handbook provides a brief, concise, and understandable overview of some of the most important opportunities and expectations that anchor our school program. We hope that it will assist you in making your school days successful. It is the responsibility of each student and parent to read, understand, and abide by this handbook.

In this document you will find:

- A. Guidelines for Students**
- B. Academic Programming**
- C. Student Information**
- D. Extracurricular Activities**
- E. Counselling**
- F. Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**

Jason Sommerfeld  
Principal

Rachel Romero  
Vice Principal

## School Environment

Fernie Secondary School recognizes the paramount importance of maintaining a school environment that is free of violence, intimidation, harassment, and possession and use of illegal substances. Students are required to be respectful of the heritage and uniqueness of all students, staff, and guests. Comments, displays, or actions that discriminate, harass, or express hatred based on religion, beliefs, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender orientation, race, ancestry, place of origin, physical abilities, or mental abilities are not tolerated at FSS and throughout School District 5.

### Visitors Welcome!

We welcome and encourage parent and guest involvement at FSS. To ensure student safety and minimize disruptions to the learning environment, visitors must enter through the main 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue entrance door and **sign in at the office.**

## A. Guidelines for Students

### School Policies and Procedures

Learning is the primary function of Fernie Secondary School. Our programs, policies, procedures, and rules are designed to facilitate the performance of the school's primary function. They are also intended to promote an environment conducive to effective and efficient learning and the need for mutual respect and cooperation among all segments of the school community.

### Student Code of Conduct

Appropriate student conduct is essential for the orderly and effective operation of the school; this code of conduct is in place to help provide an orderly and safe environment at school. Students are accountable for their actions to administration, teachers, support staff, and themselves while on school premises, going to and returning from school, and during school-approved events and functions whenever and wherever they are held. The School Board requires that teachers and administrative officers use appropriate progressive disciplinary action when students fail to abide by the rules of the school.

### Cell Phone Use

When entering class, students must have their cell phones and electronic devices on silent and put in the "cell phone hotel" in the classroom. Cell phones and other electronic devices may only be used during class time:

- In accordance with the teacher's permission and direction, and
- For instructional purposes, as defined by the teacher
- As part of a student's IEP (Individual Education Plan)
- To assist with recognized and approved medical needs

**Instructional purposes are purposes that clarify what students should learn or be able to do by the end of a lesson.**

These items shall not be accessed during class time for personal use. Please use cell phones and other electronic devices in a respectful and responsible manner. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a progressive model of consequences being:

1. Cell phone turned into the office for the remainder of the day and parents/guardians notified.
2. Cell phone turned into the office for the remainder of the day and the next school day and parents/guardians notified.
3. Cell phone turned into the office each day for one month and parents/guardians notified.

## **Dress Code**

Our school is committed to promoting a positive, safe learning environment. The image of an FSS community member is one whose manner of dress reflects a responsible, positive attitude towards school and respect for all. We recognize that clothing is an avenue for personal expression. However, we encourage our students to maintain a respectful appearance. Clothing with logos, language, or pictures with vulgarity, profanity, alcohol, drugs, sex, violence, or hatred does not align with the FSS dress code. Clothing must also conform to established health and safety requirements for intended activities. Students with inappropriate, unsafe, or inadequate clothing will be asked to reconcile the issue.

## **Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco/Vaping**

Any student attending classes or school functions under the influence of, in the possession of, and/or attempting to buy alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia will be suspended. Smoking, vaping, nicotine pouches, and other types of nicotine/tobacco use are not permitted in school buildings or on the school grounds. Smoking in an unauthorized area will result in referrals to administration. Vaporizers are automatically treated under the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco policy.

## **Fire Extinguishers/Alarms/Exits**

Any student who tampers with such safety equipment will be automatically suspended. The RCMP will be notified.

## **Gymnasium**

Students are only allowed to wear non-marking gym shoes on the gymnasium floor. Students are only allowed in the gymnasium when a supervisor is assigned to them. Breaking these rules will result in loss of gym privileges. NO food or drink is to be taken into the gym other than closed-lid drinking receptacles during class time. Students and guests are encouraged to be respectful when entering the gym with food or drink during sporting events.

## **Hallway Behaviour**

Students are to be courteous and keep noise levels to a minimum in the hallways during class time and between classes. Students must refrain from using profane or abusive language and/or gestures and must treat their fellow students and school staff respectfully.

## **Classroom Behaviour**

Students are expected to behave respectfully in all classes and follow the classroom guidelines set by each teacher. They are to cooperate in following instructions by the teacher and participating in the lessons presented in a manner that will not disrupt the learning environment.

## **Protocol for Parent/Guardian Concerns**

If you have a question or concern about your child's progress, please consult the classroom teacher first. Teachers can be contacted by calling the office or by emailing them directly. Staff emails follow this format:

[firstname.lastname@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:firstname.lastname@sd5.bc.ca)



## Fernie Secondary School Code of Conduct



**Goal:** To manage problem behaviour consistently and to engage students with restorative practice.

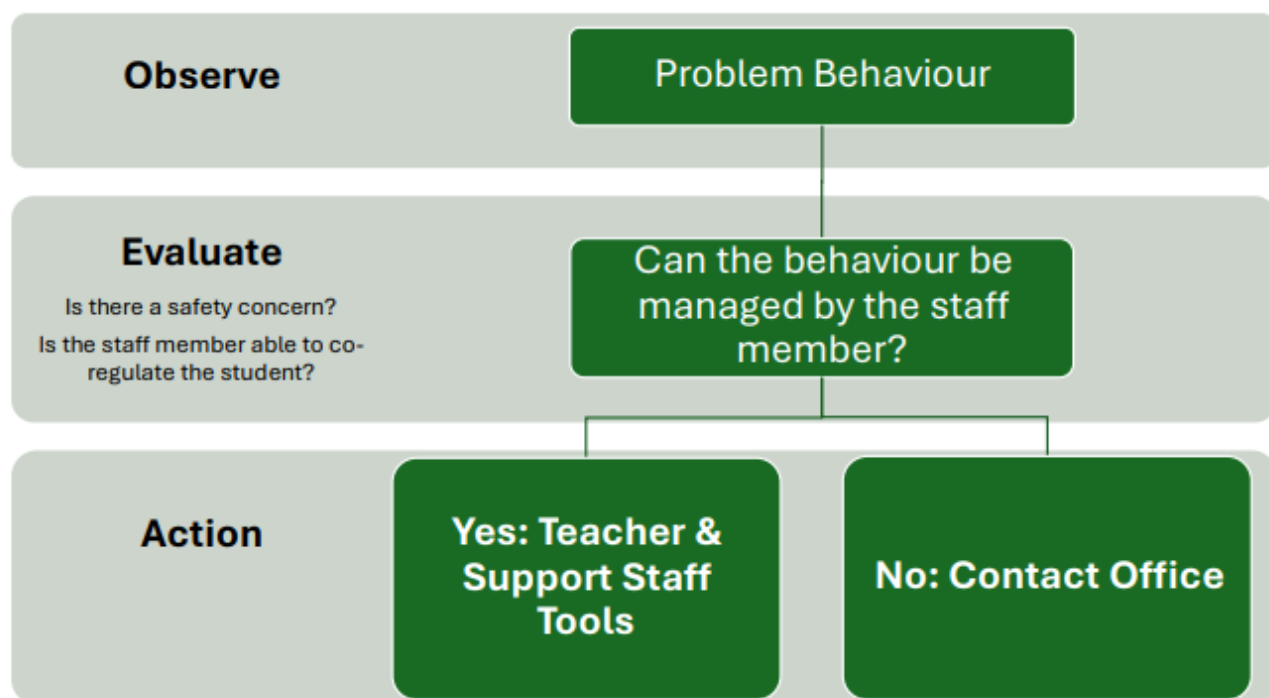
Unacceptable Conduct:	Possible Consequences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruptive behaviour that interrupts the learning of others.</li><li>• Attendance concerns: leaving class without permission, skipping, hiding in unsupervised spaces.</li><li>• Academic dishonesty.</li><li>• Violation of the cell phone policy.</li><li>• Technology misuse.</li><li>• Theft.</li><li>• Direct and intentional offensive language and/or swearing.</li><li>• Behaviour that has the potential to harm others or self: running in crowded areas, tripping, pushing, horseplay.</li><li>• Possession, trafficking and/or use of alcohol, tobacco and non-medicinal drugs.</li><li>• Possession and/or distribution of pornography.</li><li>• Vandalism or willful damage to school and/or property.</li><li>• Comments, displays or actions that discriminate, harass or express hatred based on: religion, beliefs, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender orientation, race, ancestry, place of origin, physical ability, mental ability.</li><li>• Intention to harm others: bullying, instigating a fight, being a willing combatant in a fight, assaulting others.</li><li>• Dangerous behaviour (real or implied): threats, inappropriate use of emergency response systems, arson, possession of weapons.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conversation with staff.</li><li>• Communication with parent or guardian.</li><li>• Alternate workspace or removal from class.</li><li>• Detention.</li><li>• Restorative practice or other forms of problem solving.</li><li>• Removal of privilege to participate in extra-curricular activities or school field trips.</li><li>• In-school suspension.</li><li>• Out-of-school suspension.</li><li>• Indefinite suspension – return to school is pending a meeting with the director responsible for indefinite suspension procedures. The student's educational options for the remainder of the school year will be determined during the suspension meeting. RCMP or other outside agencies may be involved.</li></ul>

*Revised December 2024*

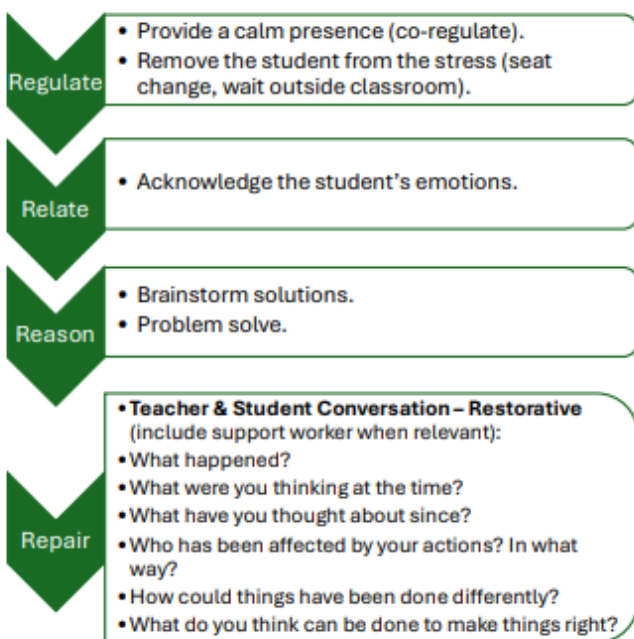
# Fernie Secondary School

## Behaviour Management Flow Chart

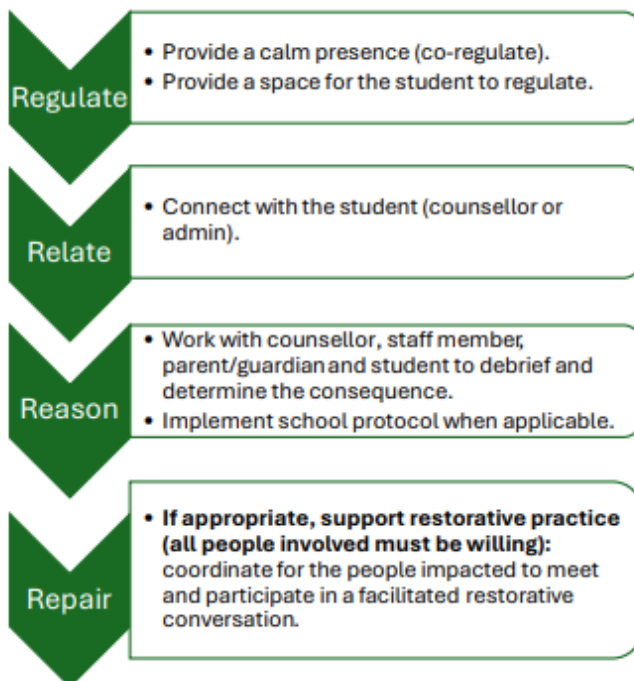
**Goal:** To manage problem behaviour consistently and to engage students with restorative practice.



### Teacher & Support Staff Tools



### Administrator Tools



## **B. Academic Programming**

Fernie Secondary School is structured to meet the needs of students in the intermediate program (Grades 7, 8 & 9) and the Graduation Program (Grades 10, 11 & 12). Students receive timetables based on their selection of compulsory and elective courses. As Fernie Secondary is a “small” secondary school, it may be impossible to offer some courses and/or some combinations of courses. The first choices of students will be honoured whenever possible. However, the school does reserve the right to make substitutions in the proposed selection of courses and to withdraw a course if deemed necessary. Students in the Intermediate Program should strive to attain proficiency in the core subject areas of English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education in preparation for the Graduation Program. Students can also choose electives in their areas of interest.

### **Student Spares**

Spares must be taken in consultation between the school administration or school counsellor and the student’s parent/guardian. When students are not in scheduled classes, they should be either in an assigned teacher’s classroom working or off the school property.

### **Course Changes**

The school program for September is arranged to conform to student requests for courses. Within the school’s limited capacity of adjustment, an effort will be made to accommodate necessary changes. These changes should take place in the first week of the semester. Any changes taking place require the approval of the school administration and parent/guardian when necessary.

### **Graduation Ceremonies**

There are several ceremonies and activities connected with graduation. The Commencement Ceremony recognizes Grade 12 students who have completed the requirements for graduation. FSS directs this specific graduation activity. Only students who have met FSS graduation requirements will be allowed to participate in the FSS Commencement Ceremony. The school administration will make the final decision for eligibility. KDS students are also invited to participate in graduation ceremonies.

### **Scholarships and Awards**

There are a number of scholarships and other awards available to FSS students. The school counsellor is responsible for scholarships and awards.

**The 4-Point Proficiency Scale will be used to communicate student progress for Grades 7-9.**

<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Extending</b>
The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.

## Graduation Requirements

Potential graduates are required to meet the requirements as outlined in the **Graduation Memo** to participate in the Fernie Secondary Commencement ceremonies.

<b>GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>MINIMUM CREDITS</b>
English Language Arts 10	4
English Language Arts 11(English/First Peoples)	4
English Language Arts 12	4
Social Studies 10	4
Social Studies 11 or 12	4
Mathematics 10	4
Mathematics 11 or 12	4
Science 10	4
Science 11 or 12	4
Career Life Education	4
Career Life Connection & Capstone	4
Physical and Health Education 10	4
Arts Education and/or Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 10, 11, or 12	4
Elective Credits	28
<b>Total Credits Grades 10, 11, 12</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL FRENCH IMMERSION REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Français langue 10	4
Études de cinéma et littérature 11	4
Français langue 12	4
Sciences humaines et sociales 10	4
Justice sociale 12 (11 <sup>e</sup> années)	4
Carrière 12 (Capstone)	4

**French Immersion students need to complete both GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS and ADDITIONAL FRENCH IMMERSION REQUIREMENTS.**

**A minimum of 16 credits from the ministry or board authority authorized or post-secondary courses are required at the Grade 12 level.**

This includes the 4 credits for an English course, but does not include the 4 credits for Career Life Education & Capstone. Grade 10 students are required to complete a Numeracy and Literacy Assessment. Grade 12 students are required to complete a Literacy Assessment. Students are required to take an Indigenous or First Peoples course in one of their Grade 10, 11 or 12 years. French Immersion students are required to complete a French Literacy Assessment in Grade 12.

## C. STUDENT INFORMATION

### **Attendance Policy and Procedures**

It is the responsibility of each student to attend school regularly and on time. Regular attendance and punctuality are important in all parts of our lives. Students who practice these behaviours show respect to themselves and others and experience the rewards of good work habits and improved learning.

### **Absences**

- SD #5 has an electronic system for parents to report an absence. This program is **School Messenger**. You can download the app to report absences, lates, and departures.
- A note, phone call, email, or message on School Messenger from a parent or guardian is required for each absence or departure.
- Parents are asked to call ahead of time for planned absences. You can also log an absence in advance using the School Messenger app or email [fss.mailing@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:fss.mailing@sd5.bc.ca).
- Students are responsible for any work missed during an absence.

### **Lates**

- Students who are late for school **are asked to go directly to their class**. Chronic lateness will be referred to administration for follow-up.

### **Sign Out Procedures**

1. Parents must authorize students to leave school. This can be done via a phone call, email, signed note, or School Messenger.
2. If no authorization to leave the school is given, permission will need to be verified through a phone call before the student is allowed to leave the school.

**NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL WITHOUT WRITTEN OR VERBAL VERIFICATION**

- Students must sign out in the **SIGN OUT BOOK** provided at the office if they have **permission** to leave the school.

### **Computer and Internet Use**

Use of the Internet provides great educational benefits to students. However, some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, pornographic, or offensive to some people. Access to the Internet is given as a privilege to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. To be granted the privilege to use the Internet at this school, students and parents must read, accept, and sign the rules for acceptable online behaviour.

### **Fire Drills, Lockdown Procedures and Earthquake Drill**

For the safety of our students at Fernie Secondary School, we have 6 fire drills, 2 lock-down procedure practices, and 1 earthquake drill throughout the year.

### **Lunch Hour**

Students are expected to be polite and obey lunch hour supervisors. Disruptive students will be dealt with through the discipline cycle and may lose their lunch hour privileges.



## Locker

- Use of a locker at Fernie Secondary School is a privilege. The school provides lockers for student use and convenience. The school is responsible for and controls the lockers. All books and belongings are to be kept in a neat and orderly fashion. **DO NOT STORE VALUABLES IN YOUR LOCKERS. DO NOT SHARE YOUR LOCKER COMBINATION.**
- Student lockers will be assigned by the office. Students are not to move or share their lockers. Combination locks supplied by the office must be used.
- **Students are required to keep lockers locked – the privilege to use a locker will be withdrawn if these expectations are not followed.**
- Student acceptance of a locker is an acknowledgement of the privilege retained by school administration to examine the contents of a locker whenever determined appropriate.

## Skateboards & Bicycles

For everyone's safety, skateboarding and bike riding are not allowed where they may cause harm to pedestrians.

## Student/Guest/Staff Parking

Parking is a privilege. Students are only permitted to park in the designated area. Students must drive with care, or they will lose their parking privileges. The student parking lot is to be clear of all students during classes and class rotations.

## D. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Council/Leadership

- The student council is the students' representative body in the school. It is one way for the students to effect change for their own benefit. The council deals with many student concerns, including school rules and regulations and extra-curriculars. It also emphasizes involvement in clubs, sports, and social events.
- Leadership activities in the school and in the community will be run through this program.
- The student council can make a significant contribution to school spirit by promoting special days and activities.

### 2. Sports, Clubs and Organizations

- Take the opportunity to become involved! Listen to announcements concerning the organization of clubs. If there is an activity you would like to see sponsored, bring it to the attention of the Administration.
- All students who are members of extra-curricular sports are required to pay Sports Fees. The fees paid by athletes for each team they participate in vary based on their level of competition: bantam, junior, or senior. No students will be prevented from participating due to financial need.

## E. STUDENT SERVICES

### Counselling Services

- Fernie Secondary School provides a counsellor who has designated blocks to assist students. Individual counselling is available for any student wishing for these services. Youth Care Workers and Indigenous Education Support Workers are also available. The counselling department is available for current, post-secondary program information, career information, travel, and study opportunities and has access to referral services in your community. Please come to our main office to make an appointment.

#### **F. PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)**

All parents and guardians of Fernie Secondary students are invited to participate in the monthly meeting of the school Parent Advisory Council. Board policy states that the purpose of a PAC is:

- To enhance communication among the parents, the community, the students, and the staff.
- To provide a formal means of consultation with parents, students, and community by the administration and staff.
- To promote cooperation between the home and school in providing for the education of children.
- To become involved in school-related activities that are seen as important for the school.

Membership in the PAC is open to all parents and legal guardians of students and to the staff of Fernie Secondary School.