



HIGHLAND SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY

1600 N. Morris Street Gastonia, NC 28052 phone-704.810.8816 fax-704.866.6105 www.highlandtech.us

2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook

Highland School of Technology (HST) is a GREAT school! Our success is no accident; it is a direct result of a commitment to excellence from our entire school community. Your contribution to our success is key as we prepare for another amazing year! The information in this handbook is designed to acquaint you with our school, and is your guide to a successful year at HST. Show **YOUR** “Ram Pride” as we make 2024-2025 the greatest of your school years!

Our Mission

The mission of Highland School of Technology is to prepare all students to be successful in post-secondary education, the community and the workplace by providing each student with a rigorous and relevant academic, character and technological education.

RAM Pride

HST is where you will spend much of your day. Each student is a valuable member of our team, and carries responsibility to contribute to our team’s success. Just as you should take pride in your academic, athletic, musical, artistic, and other successes, you should take pride in your school as well! Let’s take care of our *home away from home*! We expect that trash makes it to trash containers, that walls remain free of damage or graffiti, that restrooms are clean and well supplied, and that our school grounds are kept neat and litter-free. You, as an individual, can make a difference by doing your part in respecting our school facilities. As we are frequently judged by our surroundings, a good question to ask yourself is, “How did I help HST today?” Let’s keep our school looking great all year long!

Administrative & Support Services

Susan Redmond – Principal	
Jenny Carper– Assistant Principal	
Mathieu Chapman & Ashleigh Arceo – School Counselors	Heather Forbes, Coordinator – Business, Legal & Information Sciences
Terri Cochrane, Coordinator – Health Sciences	Darryl Thompson, Coordinator – Manufacturing/Engineering Technology & Graphics
Cheryl Word – Athletic Director	Officer Mike Elliott – School Resource Officer
Summer Kelly – Library Media Coordinator	Shree Wise – School Nurse
Linda McKnight – Student Success Coordinator and Testing Coordinator	Aman Seltun– Social Worker
Tabatha Spake – Technology Support Specialist	Julie Carpenter – Cafeteria Manager
Christy Kiser – PowerSchool/Data Manager	Kelly Pilkington, Billy Mauney, & Troy McBeth- Custodians
Lori Hamm – Financial Secretary	Lydia Bolick – Receptionist

KEYS TO HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS

We have found the following to be a few Keys to Success:

- 1) Commit Yourself to Excellence- Everything we do is designed to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Highland students are like-minded in their passion for excellence in all things.
- 2) Set Short-term and Long-term Goals- set realistic long-term goals and work backwards from those to set smaller short-term goals to act as stepping stones. Then, make a plan to achieve these goals. Break your work down into manageable chunks and find a way to hold yourself accountable.
- 3) Partner with Your Teachers- Teachers and students working together is a powerful part of success. Communicate with your teachers at all times. They are here to help you achieve and want to know how they can help you accomplish your goals.
- 4) Master Time Management- In order to optimize your performance across multiple aspects of your life, you'll need to develop strong time management skills. This means making and sticking to study schedules, developing systems of organization that work well for you, and learning the art of multitasking.
- 5) Find Your Passions- High school isn't just a time to prove your intellect and capability of tackling college level work. You should also think of it as a unique opportunity to figure out what makes you tick. Students who can identify their passions and pursue them are more engaged and motivated to succeed.
- 6) Build and Use a Support Network- You might think that juggling all this by yourself is the marker of true strength and independence, but successful students are those who know how to use the resources available. Build strong relationships with teachers and peers.

Taken in part from College Vine: <https://blog.collegevine.com/successful-high-school-students-do-these-10-things>

ACADEMICS

Academics are the core of our school. It is our business. As such, we are serious about our work. Students and Teachers join together in like-minded pursuit of a great education for all. The following provides information regarding many aspects of student learning.

CURRICULUM OFFERINGS

HST offers all students rigorous and relevant core academic curricula in mathematics, English, sciences, social studies, foreign language, fine arts and related elective classes. Advanced Placement courses are offered to qualifying students commencing with the student's junior year. In addition, HST features specialized technical curricula in the following pathways: Allied Health Science, Business & Legal Studies, Computer Engineering, Dental Science, Graphics, Manufacturing & Engineering and Medical Science. Work-related topics such as ethics and character education are infused into the curriculum. The HST curriculum also offers students opportunities for experiential learning in student internships, career mentoring, youth apprenticeships and service learning.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

HST has three academy coordinators and two school counselors. They are available to all students, teachers, and parents. They help with career and academic planning, student mentoring, student internships, and other school-related activities. The school counselors also provide personal counseling services related to individual student needs, materials on career pathways, specific occupations, college, and university selection, scholarship and financial aid are available in the counseling offices. Please visit the counseling webpage located on the school's website and/or their Counselor Canvas page.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND INFORMATION

Report Cards and Interim Reports- Report cards are sent home with students at the end of each nine-week grading period. Interim reports are sent home with students at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period. Interim reports are a good indicator of a student's progress during a grading period. Parents and students should use these to evaluate academic progress in each class.

Gaston County High Schools grade on a percentage basis as follows:

A= 90-100 B= 80-89 C= 70-79 D= 60-69 F= Below 60

Graduation Information- Graduation criteria for HST require students to earn the same number of credit units as for other North Carolina high schools: i.e., 28 credit units. In addition to this all Highland **students** must take 4 Math classes. You can refer to the GCS High School Curriculum Guide publication for specific information on grading, courses, college athletic eligibility, dual enrollment, College Now (CCP) program, courses of study, NC Scholars program, honor graduates, etc.

Promotion and Graduation requirements

To be a sophomore.....6 course credits

To be a junior.....13 course credits

To be a senior.....20 course credits

To graduate.....28 course credits

The graduation ceremony for the class of 2025 takes place Friday, May 23, 2025. Graduates are expected to attend the graduation practice scheduled for Thursday, May 22, 2024.

Class Rank- Class rank and grade point averages are calculated on the basis grades from any/all classes in which credit has been granted. (Pass/fail courses will not be calculated as there are no grades issued.) Class ranks are established at the end of each semester. Class ranks are recalculated at the end of your senior year for a final determination.

Junior Marshals- Junior Marshals will be determined on the basis of cumulative class rank at the end of your junior year, or as otherwise directed by Gaston County Schools. The top juniors with the highest GPAs will be selected to serve as Junior Marshals.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian- Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be chosen from the senior class on the basis of cumulative weighted class rank. Valedictorian will be the senior having the highest class rank, and salutatorian will be the senior with the second highest class rank. You must be enrolled the entire senior year to qualify for these honors.

CAREER & TECHNOLOGY PATHWAY CHANGES

Pathway changes are only possible if an opening in another pathway becomes available. Pathway choices from the student's program application will be reviewed, and the student will be contacted if a change is possible. Contact a counselor if there are any further questions.

HIGH SCHOOL TESTING REQUIREMENTS 2024-2025

As required by federal, state and local policy and practices, students are required to participate in all assessment/testing systems. This includes at least the PSAT, PreACT, ACT, NC WorkKeys, End-of-Course tests, NC finals, teacher-made final exams and district assessments.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER SERVICES

A collection of books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs and other media are available for students in the Library. In addition, supplies, equipment, and space are provided for students to prepare projects and presentations. There is a minimal charge for photocopies, computer printouts, index cards, term paper covers, poster paper, construction paper and transparency film. Students are welcome to use the Library when their class is scheduled and also before and after school. The library will open at 8:00 am each school day and will close at 3:45 pm.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is essential to high student achievement, and the learning process. With this in mind, all students are expected to be in attendance each day school is in session. In order to be recorded present for daily attendance, a student must be present at least one-half of the school day (12:00 PM). For the purpose of class attendance, a student will be marked absent if they miss **15 minutes or more** of the class period. In the event an absence occurs, students are required to present written documentation from a parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence and the date of absence.. Absence notes must be presented within three (3) school days after you return to school and be turned into the front office or emailed to our Data Manager, Christy Kiser at cnkiser@gaston.k12.nc.us.

ARRIVING TO SCHOOL LATE

When students arrive at school late, they should go directly to the main office with their excuse for being late. Students are required to bring a written note from a parent or guardian. Students should get an admittance slip from the front office staff and report to the class they are scheduled for at that time. Give the admittance slip to the teacher.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

In order to maximize learning, you need to attend all your classes. Get in the habit of arriving to each class on time and remaining in class for the entire class period. In the event a student is late to class without prior approval, the student will be subject to consequences ranging from verbal warnings to out of school suspension. The more tardies you accumulate, the more severe the consequence.

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

If a student must leave school early, he/she must bring a written note from a parent/guardian to the main office **upon arrival at school**. The note should state why he/she needs to leave early, give the approx. time he/she will be leaving, and have a telephone number to call for verification. Upon parent/guardian arrival, he/she must sign the student out in the front office. If a student drives to school, he/she signs out in the front office after the office has validated the notice with a family member. **In an effort to not interrupt a class session, please make every attempt to schedule early dismissals at the end of the class period.**

EXAM EXEMPTION POLICY

In order to encourage excellent attendance and academic performance, a student may be exempt from a teacher-made exam if the following criteria are met: (1) "A" average at the end of the semester, have four or fewer absences, for the semester in the course. (2) "B" average at the end of the semester, have three or fewer absences, for the semester in the course. The reasons for the absences (excused or unexcused) are not considered in determining exam exemption. The total number of absences (regardless of the reason) and the academic average (for the semester) are the qualifying factors for exam exemption in each class. Assigned days in out-of-school suspension (OSS) are considered absences under Board policy and the exam exemption procedure. If a student misses more than 15 minutes of a class period, they are coded as absent for that period. **For exam exemption purposes only**, every three (3) tardies (coming to class late **or** leaving class early) will count as one (1) absence. School-related activities are not considered absences as indicated in Part C of GCS Board Policy 3480; this **includes two days per school year for students to visit colleges** (coded as 1G in PowerSchool), with **prior approval** from the principal.

ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP WORK

Maximizing student academic performance is our priority. As such it is essential that you make up missing assignments following an absence from class. You are required to make up missed work from excused and unexcused absences. Make-up work is YOUR responsibility! Upon your return from an absence, you should communicate with your teacher regarding missing assignments. You have three (3) school days to arrange for make-up work with each of your teachers. Work missed must be completed as directed by each teacher within the agreed-upon time frame.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Successful students are involved students. They seek out additional opportunities to complete their education. Just as our students are committed to academic excellence, they also commit themselves to the well-roundedness of participating in extracurricular activities.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND PRIVILEGES

HST offers a range of student activities during and beyond the school day. From athletics and fine arts, academic and career academies, and Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) to the typical high school experiences such as prom, HST students enjoy a broad range of activities. All students are encouraged to fully participate in these activities. To enjoy the opportunity students must remain in good standing regarding school attendance, student behavior and academic performance. Failure to remain in good standing will jeopardize your ability to participate in school activities. Good standing includes at least the following:

1. Maintain a 2.0 grade point average
2. Maintain 94% attendance
3. Maintain good behavior (no OSS nor repeated code of conduct violations)

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

The approved criteria for continued enrollment at Highland are:

- Maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- Maintain 94% attendance (medical exceptions, see high school policy).
- Maintain satisfactory progress in academic areas.
- Maintain good standing with behavior.
- Receive semi-annual review from staff to determine eligibility for the following semester.

ATHLETICS

Grades: Students must maintain passing grades in all classes in order to continue in “good standing” with the team. Interim reports and report cards will be monitored by coaches. Failure to maintain passing grades will result in making the student ineligible for contests until the student returns to good standing.

Attendance: Students must be counted present for the school day in order to practice or participate in a game.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the above listed requirements the following have specific additional requirements:

National Technical Honor Society (NTHS)- The National Technical Honor Society is an academic honor that recognizes and empowers students and teachers in Career & Technical Education. All Highland students are eligible for this honor their senior year. To remain eligible, students must have no disciplinary actions ISS/OSS, 3.0 unweighted GPA, 3.5 unweighted CTE courses GPA, and 10 or fewer absences during the junior year.

Prom- Students must pass all of their classes from the fall semester AND be passing all current classes for the grading period. Any student who misses fourteen or more days of school will not be permitted to attend Highland School of Technology’s prom. Students must be counted present for the school day in order to attend prom.

Homecoming- Students must be passing all current classes for the grading period in order to participate in homecoming. Students must be counted present for the school day in order to participate in homecoming.

Field Trips- Students must be passing all current classes for the grading period in order to participate in the field trip.

For each of the above school activities students cannot be in violation of the GCS attendance policy for the semester of the activity

For each of the above school activities students cannot have any out-of-school suspensions for any part of the school year

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

At Highland school operations are designed to support the school’s mission of maximizing student learning while serving students, staff, and our community effectively.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Regular Day: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	RAM Time Day : Tuesday, Thursday
1 st period.....8:30 - 10:05	1 st period.....8:30 - 9:55
2 nd period.....10:10 - 11:40	RAM Time.....10:00 - 10:30
3 rd period.....11:45 - 1:42	2 nd period.....10:35 - 11:55
1 st lunch.....11:45 - 12:10	3 rd period.....12:00- 1:50
2 nd lunch.....12:15 - 12:40	1 st lunch.....12:00 - 12:25
3 rd lunch.....12:45 - 1:10	2 nd lunch.....12:30 - 12:55
Break.....1:42 - 1:50	3 rd lunch.....1:00 - 1:25
4 th period.....1:50 - 3:20	4 th period.....1:55 - 3:20

ARRIVING & DEPARTING SCHOOL

HST doors open for students beginning at 7:45 am. Please do not drop students off before 7:45 am as there is no supervision. Please report to the designated areas upon arriving on campus. Between 7:45-8:20 students may report to Medford Commons or the cafeteria. If you would like breakfast, report to the cafeteria upon arrival. Students are not allowed outside of these designated areas without prior approval. At dismissal, all car riders must be picked up by 3:45 pm (near the flagpole) if not staying for any extracurricular activity.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When school must be canceled due to severe weather or emergency situations, announcements will be made on the local radio and TV stations (including Channel 21). Please do not call the school.

SCHOOL FEES/MEAL PRICES/INSURANCE

SCHOOL FEES:		MEAL PRICES:	
Parking Permits	\$25.00	Breakfast	\$1.40
Add. Parking Permits	\$5.00	Lunch	\$3.00
Senior Painted Parking	\$50.00	Lockers	\$8.00

MEDICATIONS

The Gaston County Board of Education has an established policy regarding the administration of medication to students while at school. HST will follow the procedures outlined in school board policy. An *Authorization of Medication for Students in School* form must be filled out by the parent/doctor. All forms and medication should be delivered to the secretary at the front desk upon the immediate arrival to school. Administration of medication will be the responsibility of the school nurse and/or front office staff.

POSTERS/BANNERS

No posters or decorations will be displayed on the walls or in the windows of the hallways without prior permission from an administrator.

SCHOOL SALES

No items may be sold on the HST campus unless they are part of an authorized school sale or club/athletic project, or approved by an administrator.

TRANSFERRING OR WITHDRAWING

A student who needs to transfer to another school at the end of a semester should obtain and complete a withdrawal form from the data manager's office, as well as receive approval from HST administration and Gaston County Schools. Once a student transfers or withdrawals from HST, they cannot obtain re-admittance to the school.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

In high schools students have three ways to arrive and depart from school: school bus, student driver, and car-rider. In all cases, please drive slowly, allow pedestrians the right-of-way, and keep student safety as the top priority.

Car Riders

Before school students are dropped in the front of the school. Use the main entrance off of North Morris Street.

After school students are picked up in the front of the school. Use the back entrance off of Doffin Street.

Student Drivers

See the extended information contained in this handbook

Bus Riders

Only bus students are dropped off and picked up in the back of the school in the athletic parking lot.

DRIVER'S LICENSE LEGISLATION

Before enrolling in driver's education, students must have a 93% attendance rate in their prior semester. A student must also pass 3 out of 4 courses each semester in order to receive and maintain a Driving Eligibility Certificate. Students who do not meet the criteria will be reported to the DMV and will have their permit or license revoked. **If pursuing driver's education, students will need to obtain a copy of their transcript from our data manager. Transcripts must then be taken to our local North Carolina Driving School.** Student transcripts are available from our data manager on school days from 8:00 am – 3:30 pm. You may register for any class by contacting the North Carolina Driving School at 704-922-1960. Our local North Carolina Driving School is located at 1012 B Philadelphia Church Rd., Dallas, NC.

STUDENT PARKING

Student parking is a privilege, and all students' motor vehicles on campus may be subject to search by school officials as outlined in the Gaston County Board of Education Policy Manual. HST students with a valid NC driver's license must purchase a parking permit for \$25.00 from the front office. Replacement or extra parking decals can be purchased for \$5.00. New: For \$50 only seniors will have the privilege of painting their parking spot. See flyer for guidelines. The following are the HST student parking regulations:

1. Students are not permitted to go to their cars during the school day unless prior approval has been received from Mrs. Redmond, Mrs. Carper or the School Resource Officer.
2. Senior designated spaces are located in the lower parking lot, near the auditorium. The top 10 students in the senior class (Junior Marshalls) will be allowed to park in the front of the school.
3. Junior/Sophomore designated spaces are located in the upper student parking lot beside the softball field.
4. Parking decals must be displayed on the front interior driver's side windshield at all times.
5. Students may not sit in cars or "hang around" in the parking lot at any time. Students must come directly into the building in the morning and leave immediately at dismissal.
6. Leaving campus once you arrive, via bus or car, is prohibited.
7. Students are to refrain from reckless driving and/or speeding in excess of **5 M.P.H.** while on school grounds.
8. Students must follow the directions of any school personnel directing traffic.
9. Always lock your vehicle and place valuables out of sight.
10. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines are subject to losing their driving/parking privileges.

STUDENT SAFETY

Safety for all is the top priority at HST. School personnel follow a variety of procedures to enhance the safety of our school. These procedures include regular fire, tornado, & lock-down drills, metal detecting, & being actively aware of the environment. All visitors must report to the Main Office to receive a visitor's badge upon entering campus. Additionally, weapons and illegal or dangerous substances or objects are NOT allowed on school grounds at any time (this includes mace/pepper spray). If you have to question whether something is appropriate to have on campus or not, it's probably best to exercise caution and good judgment... don't bring it to school. All persons & property are subject to random search and seizure allowable by law and Board of Education policy.

VISITORS AND METAL DETECTION

All visitors must sign in and out of the school office to acquire a visitor's identification badge. All persons entering the campus are subject to being screened by a screening device and/or searched.

GENERAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

HST is a great school with high expectations for all aspects of our school. Students are expected to align their behavior to these expectations. While the Gaston County Code of Conduct outlines many behavioral expectations and consequences, the following are specific to expectations at Highland. In addition to the expectations and consequences outlined in those documents, students in violation of school rules may forfeit their opportunity to attend Highland School of Technology.

LUNCH EXPECTATIONS

Appropriate behavior in the cafeteria is expected at all times. **All food and drink must be consumed in the cafeteria.** Please push your chairs under the table, dispose of all trash in the proper containers and clean around your area. **Students are not to leave campus during the lunch period.** Students should go to their lockers between 2nd and 3rd periods to exchange books and get lunch items. They will not be allowed to go to their lockers during the lunch period as it is disruptive to the surrounding classes. HST maintains a closed lunch policy. No outside food is allowed.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILL REGULATIONS

State law requires regular drills regarding fire and tornado safety. HST expects full student cooperation in all related drills. Use of the intercom and bell systems are the primary means of signaling the need for the drills. In addition to this, all HST staff are trained in our safety systems. **Above all, follow the instructions of the staff member in charge. Students cannot have airpods or headphones on during any drills.**

LOCKER PROCEDURES

All students will be assigned individual lockers at the beginning of the school year. There will be a \$8.00 *leasing fee* associated with locker assignments. **You** are responsible for the locker assigned to **you**. Use the locker for the storage of books and equipment. Students will not use any other lock other than the one assigned to them. It is **your** responsibility to see that your lock is kept secure at all times. If your lock is found unlocked you may be disciplined for not following this safety expectation. **STUDENTS CANNOT SHARE LOCKERS OR GIVE THEIR LOCKER COMBINATION TO OTHERS.** The school is not responsible for loss or theft of items from lockers. The school reserves the right to search lockers on suspicion of a threat to the health and safety of students, drug or weapon possession, or other violation of criminal law or Gaston County School policy.

SCHOOL BOOK BAG PROCEDURES

Students are permitted to bring book bags to school, but they must be stored in the students' lockers during the school day. Book bags must be of a clear material to comply with school security procedures. Book bags are subject to random inspection by school officials. Please note that string bags may be used to carry gym clothing but no other items. String bags are allowed only if the student is enrolled in a physical education course for the semester, and can only be carried to and from the gym class. Otherwise, string bags must be stored in the students' lockers. Highland does not allow bags for school events, including athletics.

BRINGING VALUABLES TO SCHOOL

Students are asked to bring only necessary money and valuables to school. Valuables (jewelry, electronics, and sports equipment, etc.) **must** be secured in lockers or designated areas at all times. The school is not responsible for students' personal items.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

Consistent with Gaston County School's policy, HST allows students to possess cell phones and other electronics (including laptops, air pods, headphones, electronic games, etc.) on campus. **However, these items are to remain in the specified areas for each classroom (designated by each teacher).** If a cell phone or other electronic device disrupts the learning process or you are using the phone anytime during the regular school day, the cell phone will be taken, placed in the main office, and **returned to a parent**. Repeat violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, including suspension from school.

DRESS CODE

Students must wear appropriate clothing for school. Undershirts, tank tops, "spaghetti" straps, sleeveless T-shirts & crop tops are not acceptable school clothing. Clothing must not create a distraction/disturbance in the educational setting (i.e. clothing with offensive and/or inappropriate language/images, clothing that exposes undergarments, or sheer clothing). Pants should be worn around the waist and have no holes/rips above mid-thigh. Plunging necklines are not permissible. Other items that are not acceptable school wear include: sunglasses, hats/head-coverings, hanging chains, spiked jewelry, pajamas, bedroom slippers, etc. Leggings and similar skin-tight clothing made of stretchy material may be worn only under shorts, skirts, dresses, and/or shirts that meet length requirements. This is not an "all-inclusive" list, and students will be dealt with on a case by case basis in accordance with GCS Student Dress Code Guidelines. Please note that certain apparel is acceptable in PE class for student comfort, but not acceptable anywhere else outside of the gym. *Clothing will be provided for students needing appropriate attire. Repeated dress code violations will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

INTEGRITY AND CIVILITY

Everyone is expected to demonstrate integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control. These character traits are critical for establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting environment in which learning can take place.

This expectation is directly related to the school's objectives:

- for students to learn
- for students to be responsible for their behaviors
- for students to accept the *consequences* of their behavior
- for students to respect cultural diversity and ideological differences

The following behaviors are **strictly** prohibited: cheating, plagiarizing (including misuse of Artificial Intelligence software), violating copyright laws, cursing or using vulgar, abusive or demeaning language toward another person, and playing abusive or dangerous tricks or otherwise subjecting a student or an employee to personal indignity. You will be subject to disciplinary action/criminal charges for these behaviors.

HIGHLAND ALMA MATER

There shines upon this nation A school mighty fair Its loyal sons and daughters Carry its banner everywhere. Highland, Highland, the pride of them all, Oh Highland, Highland, We will ever heed thy call.	When sun and stars shine brighter, On this fair earth so true, Their rays will point with glee To Highland's lovely gold and blue. Highland, Highland, The pride of them all, Oh Highland, Highland, We will ever heed thy call.
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HIGHLAND RAMS

Ramsey Lee: Larger Ram located in the back of the school, in the senior picnic area

Aries Morris: Smaller Ram located in the front of the school, near the front entrance