



DAVIDSON

COUNTY SCHOOLS



Your future. Our focus.



PARENT-STUDENT
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

The Davidson County Schools athletic programs are governed by policies established by the Davidson County Schools Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA).

This athletic handbook contains rules, regulations, and other information necessary for athletic directors and coaches to run their programs effectively and efficiently. Knowledge of and adherence to these rules and regulations are vital to ensure that the interscholastic athletic program is conducted in accordance with existing state and local policies.

This handbook is also designed to inform the student-athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) of the rules, regulations, and policies pertaining to interscholastic athletics. We believe that success in athletics is established and maintained, at minimum, through adherence to the principles outlined in this handbook. Please understand that this handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included and, of course, each coach has the opportunity to add reasonable expectations that are more stringent than those outlined in this document.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is considered extra-curricular and is voluntary. The athlete must earn the privilege of participation through dedication, desire and discipline. Because participation is voluntary, certain basic requirements are necessary in order to make the athletic program a wholesome, successful, and meaningful experience.

Davidson County Schools promotes attitudes and practices that keep winning in perspective. Any activities that would compromise the efforts of good sportsmanship and ethical athletic practices are unacceptable. Student-athletes will adhere to the Davidson County School Code of Conduct and consequences for violations. Because of the athletes' high visibility and their place as leaders of the school, the athletic department may also discipline athletes for violations of the Code of Conduct. Individual school athletic programs are responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations in this handbook.

The goals of interscholastic athletics are to provide opportunities for student-athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline, acceptable personal and social behavior, and character. Interscholastic athletics are designed to develop well-rounded citizens who will positively contribute to our community and society.

Parents and athletes must sign on the back of the Student Athletic Participation Form, acknowledging they have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations included in this handbook before a student is allowed to participate on a school sponsored athletic team.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide our participants with the best possible administration, supervision and instruction available.
- To provide our participants with quality facilities and equipment that is both safe and student-friendly.
- To provide our participants with safe, quality transportation to and from all competitions and activities.

ATHLETIC INFORMATION

DRESS

Athletes are expected to dress in an appropriate manner whenever they represent Davidson County Schools in accordance with expectations outlined in any dress code policy while at practices and for all games. Coaches may stipulate game day dress code.

EXPENSES

Should student-athletes or guardian(s) choose to make purchases related to athletic participation (e.g. camps, trips, clothing, equipment for personal use or any other purpose related to participation), the expenses will be the sole responsibility of that athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). Davidson County Schools and/or the coaching staff will in no way to any degree, cover or reimburse expenses at any time.

INSURANCE

By its nature, participation in interscholastic athletics includes risk of injury. Although serious injuries are not common in supervised interscholastic athletic programs, it is impossible to eliminate all risks. Participants have the responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. Student-athletes must obey all safety rules and warnings, report physical problems to their coaches, follow a proper conditioning program, and inspect their own equipment daily. It is strongly recommended that all students be enrolled in a comprehensive accident and health insurance program. This is a requirement for participation in the varsity football program; parents must either provide proof of existing coverage (for football participation) or elect to enroll in the football insurance program (information is available at the school and on the DCS website).

Students participating in any athletic activity other than football may elect to participate in the voluntary insurance program (information is available at the school and on the DCS website). This is an excellent opportunity to “cover” your child’s participation in athletic activities at a reasonable cost.

OBLIGATIONS

Student-athletes are required to replace lost uniforms or damaged equipment either by payment or restitution. Student-athletes are responsible for clearing all obligations with their coaches before participating or practicing with another sport. If an athlete fails to take care of his/her financial responsibilities to the athletic department, he/she will be ruled ineligible.

PARTICIPATION PACKET

In order to be medically eligible for participation in practice or in contests, a student-athlete must have a completed North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Preparticipation Physical Examination (PPE) Form on file with the school. The PPE form includes the History Form, the Physical Examination Form and the Medical Eligibility Form.

The Concussion Statement will be distributed to each athlete along with other forms necessary for participation. Any student-athlete with a suspected concussion is not permitted to return to participation (practice or play) until the student-athlete receives written release from a duly licensed physician and completion of the concussion protocol.

ATHLETES MUST SEE A DOCTOR WITHIN 30 DAYS OF INJURY AND FILING A CLAIM AFTER INJURY IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY.

TEAM SCHEDULES

Schedules will be available on your school's website, school calendar, and maxpreps.com.

SELECTION

Students are encouraged to participate in as many sports as they can. Once a student-athlete begins the in-season training period of a sport, he/she should complete the season with that team. If a student-athlete quits a team, he/she will be withheld from participation in another sport until the season is over, including playoffs. Each coach has his/her own process for selecting the team. Coaches will explain their process to candidates before the season/practice begins. Skill development sessions and open facilities (open to all, required for none) are allowed, but shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport, during exams, or during the last 5 (five) days of the first semester and the last 10 days of the second semester. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all athletically eligible students.

Insurance is strongly recommended for all those involved in skill development and off-season sessions, including camps. (Insurance information is available at the school and on the DCS website.)

TRANSPORTATION

As per Davidson County Schools policy, the school will provide transportation to and from athletic contests. All student-athletes must travel with the team to athletic events held away from the home school. A transportation waiver must be signed and approved by the head coach if a parent/legal guardian wants to transport a student-athlete home from an away game. **This form may be obtained from the coach or the Athletic Director.** Student-athletes will be allowed to travel home with a parent/legal guardian with prior written permission.

WEATHER

When the temperature is forecasted to reach 90 degrees or higher, all practices and activities must be finished by 10:45am and may not be initiated prior to 6:00pm.

NCHSAA AND DAVIDSON COUNTY SCHOOLS ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS

- Student-athletes must not have more than 8 (eight) absences during a semester.
- High School: Student-athletes must have passed a minimum academic load during the previous semester, and meet local promotion standards. Students in a “block schedule” must pass three of four courses per semester and meet local promotion standards; students in the “traditional schedule” must pass at least five courses and meet local promotion standards.
- Middle School: Student-athletes must have passed Math and ELA, along with social studies or science in the previous semester; student-athletes must also have met promotion standards (not have been administratively promoted) at the end of the previous academic school year.
- Student-athletes must not practice, play or attend any meeting of the team or group on a day they are absent from school.
- Student-athletes must not have exceeded eight consecutive semesters of attendance or have participated more than four seasons in any sport since first entering grade 9.
- Student-athletes must not have graduated from high school.
- Student-athletes must be less than 19 years of age on or before August 31 of the current school year.
- Student-athletes must live with parents or legal custodians within the school administrative unit.
- Student-athletes must not falsify any official eligibility information such as residency/address. Penalty for such acts will result in loss of eligibility for 365 days.
- Student-athletes must have received a medical examination by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant within the previous 365 days; if the student-athlete misses five or more days of practice due to illness or injury, he/she must receive a medical release before practicing or playing. Any student-athlete with a suspected concussion is not permitted to return to participation-practice or play-until the student-athlete receives written release from a duly licensed physician.
- Student-athletes must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult.
- Student-athletes may only accept prizes, merchandise, money or anything that can be exchanged for money as a result of athletic participation in accordance with NCHSAA rules and regulations.
- Student-athletes must not have signed a professional contract, have played on a junior college team or be regularly enrolled in college.
- Student-athletes must not participate in unsanctioned all-star or bowl games.
- Student-athletes may participate with coaching staff in skill development sessions outside of the sport’s season. Skills development may not be held during certain prescribed “dead periods” of the year.
- Student-athletes must not practice or play during the instructional day unless the Superintendent grants permission.

- Student-athletes must not play, practice or assemble as a team with the coach on Sundays.
- Student-athletes must not dress for a contest or practice if not eligible to participate.
- Student-athletes must not play more than three games in one sport per week (exception baseball, softball, wrestling and volleyball) and no more than one contest per day (exception baseball, softball and volleyball).
- Student-athletes must not practice during a teacher workday, unless it is before the workday begins or after the workday ends.
- There can be no games on the day before an exam. Practices on days prior to an exam must end by 6:00 pm.

Before practicing with any team, the following must be complete:

- Student-athletes must meet all NCHSAA requirements.
- Student-athletes must have completed the NCHSAA (PPE) Preparticipation Physical Evaluation Form. (Includes the History Form, Physical Examination Form and the Medical Eligibility Form.)
- Student-athletes must have completed the NCHSAA Gfeller-Waller Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Custodian Concussion Statement Form.
- Student-athletes must have completed the Davidson County Schools Student Athletic Participation Form.

CONDUCT

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege, not a right. The Davidson County Schools Board of Education expects all students who represent their school through participation in extracurricular activities to be good representatives of their school community. Students should dress, act, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on their school. Each student-athlete is expected to display good citizenship at all times. Taunting is expressly prohibited. Taunting includes actions or comments, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Any student-athlete who fails to conduct himself/herself appropriately may have the privilege of participation limited or revoked. Student-athletes who have been suspended out-of-school (OSS) will not be allowed to practice or play for the duration of the suspension.

Misconduct will not be tolerated. Misconduct includes inappropriate behavior while you are involved in any way with an athletic department program, including practice , game time, travel time and out of school behavior.

Specific punishments cannot be listed since varying circumstances such as the severity of the infraction and the student-athlete’s reaction to consequences provides too many variables. Coaches, athletic directors, or school administrators will adhere to the student handbook and will address individual instances. However, student-athletes and parents should note that appropriate responses by coaches, the athletic director, or school administrators could range from a verbal reprimand to suspension or dismissal from the team.

HAZING, BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION

Hazing is defined as follows: “to annoy any student by playing abusive or ridiculous tricks on him/her; to frighten, scold, beat, harass him/her; or to subject him/her to personal indignity;”

Deliberate intimidation, bullying, or harassment in any form is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, physical abuse, written or oral messages or visual images that deliberately intimidate, harass, or embarrass another individual. Such messages or images may include direct conversation, telephone messages, text messages, instant messages or images may include direct conversation, telephone messages, text messages, instant messages, internet postings, emails, photographic images, posters, signs, and other means of disseminating hurtful, embarrassing, vicious, or scurrilous remarks or content.

NCHSAA EJECTION POLICY

The policy applies to all persons involved in an athletic contest, including student-athletes, coaches, managers and game administrators. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

1. Fighting, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
 - a. An attempt to strike an opponent with fists, hands, arms, legs or feet
 - b. An attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made
 - c. An attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate
 - d. Leaving the bench area to participate in a fight (contact or no contact)
2. Biting observed by an official
3. Taunting, baiting, or spitting toward an opponent
4. Profanity directed towards an official, opponent, or fans
5. Obscene gestures, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate
6. Disrespectfully addressing an official or physically contacting an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for the remainder of career.

Ejection Penalty - A membership entity shall impose at least the following penalties on a student, coach, or school official who is ejected from an interscholastic athletic contest:

1. For the first offense, the person shall be reprimanded and suspended from participating in the next game at the level of play (varsity or junior varsity);
2. For the second offense, the person shall be placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at the level of play (varsity or junior varsity);
3. For the third offense, the person shall be suspended for one calendar year (365 days from the date of the third ejection).

When an ejection occurs, a student-athlete must complete the NFHS Sportsmanship Course before they will be allowed to return to participation.

DAVIDSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD POLICY SECTION 6.11: RULE 6

G. SUSPENSION FROM ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

This section shall apply to student behavior that involves Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages and Stimulant Drugs (Including Drug Paraphernalia) and Other Prohibited Substances and shall be applicable to student behavior that occurs both on and off campus.

Participation in athletics and extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Students who participate in athletics and/or extracurricular activities choose to do so, and as a result, those students are expected to make many proper choices as they represent themselves, their families, their school, and their community at all times, not just on the field of competition. A student's eligibility to participate in athletics and extra-curricular activities is dependent upon compliance with all applicable Board policies, rules and regulations. Students, by virtue of their voluntary decision to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities, have a higher responsibility to refrain from drug and alcohol use. Any student who violates this policy on Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages and Stimulant Drugs (Including Drug Paraphernalia) and Other Prohibited Substances and is subsequently suspended as prescribed by the Davidson County Board of Education will forfeit all rights to participate in the athletic program or extra-curricular activities program as set forth herein. Additionally, if while off school grounds, and/or while not under the supervision of school personnel a student is arrested, receives a criminal citation, or other similar type charge, including but not limited to alleged to be delinquent, that would constitute a violation of this policy if committed while on school grounds, that student shall be disqualified from athletic and extracurricular activities participation for the time set forth herein.

First Offense: The student will forfeit all rights to participate in the athletic or extra-curricular activities program for 45 days of participation (including practice days). If the violation occurs with less than 45 days of participation prior to the conclusion of the school year, any days of suspension remaining at the end of the school year shall be served at the beginning of the next school year. Students who participate in athletics or extra-curricular activities can apply practice dates when school is not in session towards their suspension period (as part of their dates). Students suspended from athletics/extra-curricular activities are prohibited from involvement in any team/club practices or games during the suspension period.

Second Offense: In the event this violation is the second violation during the school calendar year, the student will be disqualified from participating in the athletic or extra-curricular activities program for 90 days of participation (including practice days). If the violation occurs with less than 90 days of participation prior to the conclusion of the school year, any days of suspension remaining at the end of the school year shall be served at the beginning of the next school year.

Students who participate in athletics or extra-curricular activities can apply practice dates when school is not in session towards their suspension period (as part of their dates). Students suspended from athletics/extra-curricular activities are prohibited from involvement in any team/club practices or games during the suspension period.

Third Offense: In the event this violation is the third violation during the school calendar year, the student will be disqualified from participating in the athletic or extra-curricular activities

program 180 days of participation (including practice days). If the violation occurs with less than 180 days of participation prior to the conclusion of the school year, any day of suspension remaining at the end of the school year shall be served at the beginning of the next school year. Students who participate in athletics or extra-curricular activities which begin practice or competition prior to the beginning of the school year shall serve their days of suspension or any remaining days of suspension from the previous school year at the beginning of the athletic or extra-curricular activities practice period.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

“Alleged to be delinquent” as used in this policy shall mean the approval of filing of a juvenile petition by a juvenile court counselor alleging delinquency under the North Carolina Juvenile Code.

Days of participation are defined as days on which the athletic team/squad or other such extra-curricular activity is actually conducted, including practices and games that may occur on the weekends. If a scheduled activity is canceled for reasons such as inclement weather, said day shall not count towards the days of suspension. Additionally, off or out of season skill development, workouts, camps etc. shall not count towards the days of disqualification, even though said student shall be prohibited from participating in said activities while under a period of disqualification.

As a condition of reinstatement, any student who violates this policy as a result of the use of narcotics, stimulant drugs, or other similar prohibited substances (excluding alcohol) must produce the results of a negative drug test to be conducted at the expense of the student/parent prior to reinstatement to the athletic program or extracurricular activity.

At the time of the offense, if the student is not currently participating in an athletic or extra-curricular activity program subject to this policy, the disqualification will begin on the start date for the next athletic or extra-curricular activity season with which the recognized student is affiliated. A student cannot attempt to evade the intent of this rule by joining a new athletic program or extra-curricular activity specifically to allow their disqualification days to run their course. Any determination that a student is attempting to evade the intent of this rule shall be made by the principal, athletic director, or faculty supervisor. If the student has not completed his or her disqualification period at the end of the season or school year, the remaining days will be completed at the beginning of the next affiliated athletic or extra-curricular activity season.

Any student whose athletic eligibility is suspended for more than 30 days of participation pursuant to this policy may request a review of that decision by the Athletic Review Committee as set forth in Board Policy, 6.18. The request for review must be in writing and must be submitted to the principal within three (3) school days of when the student/parent received notification of the disqualification. Failure to request a review within three (3) school days shall waive the opportunity for a review of the disqualification.

A student's request for review or appeal of a student's disqualification or suspension from extra-curricular activities shall be governed according to the rules, policies, and/or bylaws associated with that particular extra-curricular activity or organization.

The initial determination that conduct in violation of this rule has occurred is to be made collectively by the athletic coach, faculty supervisor of the extra-curricular activity, and principal of the student's school. For violations of school policy that occur on school grounds or at a school sponsored event the successful prosecution of an offense by law enforcement is not necessary and in the event the criminal charges or allegation of delinquency are completely dismissed without leave of court, or the student is found not guilty, said student will remain disqualified from participation as set forth in this policy. For violations of this policy that occur off school grounds or not at a school sponsored event, in the event the criminal charges or allegations of delinquency are completely dismissed without leave of court, or the student is found not guilty, said student shall be reinstated immediately. Additionally, said offense that may otherwise result in a disqualification as set forth in this policy must have occurred within 365 days of being brought to the attention of the athletic coach, faculty supervisor of the extra-curricular activity or the principal.

This policy establishes the minimum standard of disqualification for off campus violations of this policy. Individual schools, extra-curricular organizations, and athletic departments may develop more stringent consequences for off campus behavior that violates this policy through its student athletic handbook or other rules, policies, and/or bylaws associated with extra-curricular activity participation. These standards of expected behavior and consequences shall be in writing and provided to all students prior to the beginning of the academic school year.

This policy shall not prohibit or otherwise preclude individual schools, athletic departments, or coaches or faculty supervisors of extra-curricular activities from developing their own similar type rules and guidelines concerning eligibility for participation, continued participation, including discipline or disqualification from participation. These standards of expected behavior and consequences shall be in writing and provided to all students prior to the beginning of the athletic season or extra-curricular activity.

Transferring from one Davidson County school to another does not relieve the student from the consequences for a violation of this Rule. Should a student choose to transfer outside of the Davidson County Schools, the designated school administrator or the school athletic director will contact the new school to inform them of the violation and the resulting penalty. The Davidson County Schools may also honor the activity consequences from other private or public school systems.

This policy shall apply year round, 365 days a year, including but not limited to between semesters and during the summer break in the school calendar.

TOBACCO/VAPES

Possession of or use of tobacco products, lighters, matches, pipes or any other related items including e-cigarettes, vapes, and all lighted or smokeless tobacco products violate Davidson County Schools Code of Conduct. Student-athletes shall not possess, smoke, dip, chew, or otherwise use any tobacco products at any time while on or off school premises or at any school-sponsored athletic event or activity. Davidson County Schools Code of Conduct consequences will be followed for all student-athletes who violate this rule.

PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

As parents, when your child is involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your student-athlete. This begins with clear communications from the coach of the sport.

COMMUNICATION

EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION FROM COACHES

1. Coach's philosophy
2. Coach's expectations and goals for your child, as well as for the team/season
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, equipment needed, strength and conditioning programs
5. Procedure if your child is injured during participation
6. Team rules, guidelines, and consequences for infractions
7. Criteria required to "letter" in the sport
8. Team selection process

EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION FROM PARENTS & ATHLETES

1. Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach
2. Parent's contact number, both home and emergency
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance
4. Notification of special medical conditions
5. Notification of illness or injury as soon as possible

Participation in interscholastic athletics will be some of the most rewarding moments of a student-athlete's life. There will also be challenging times. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding and resolution.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Ways to help your child improve
2. Concerns about your child's behavior
3. Concerns about your child's academic performance
4. Safety of your child

Some parents struggle when their child isn't playing as much as they would like. Coaches are professionals and make decisions they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. Refer to the list above for things that can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. The five items listed below are not topics to be discussed with the coach.

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Offensive/defensive philosophies

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and player or coach and parent. These conferences are encouraged, as it is important that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. For this understanding to occur, parents must enter the conference with and maintain an open mind.

PROCEDURE FOR CONFERENCING WITH A COACH

1. Do not confront a coach immediately before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive resolutions.
2. Contact the coach to schedule an appointment.
3. If your attempt to contact the coach isn't successful, contact the school athletic director to schedule the conference.
4. If your attempt to contact the athletic director isn't successful, contact the principal to schedule the conference.

What can you do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

1. Contact the school athletic director.
2. Call the school principal to discuss the situation.
3. Contact the Central Office only after going through the school athletic director and school principal first.

TIPS FOR PARENTS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

1. Ensure that your child understands win or lose, you love him or her.
2. Assist your child in setting realistic goals.
3. Emphasize "improved" performance, not winning.
4. Emphasize academics first, athletics second.
5. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
6. Control your emotions at games and events.
7. Do not go onto playing fields, courts, etc. before, during or after the game unless asked to do so concerning an injury to your child.
8. Be a cheerleader for your child and other children on the team.
9. Respect your child's coaches. Communicate with them in a positive way. Encourage others to do the same.
10. Respect the officials at your child's game. Officials are human and do make mistakes. An official has never lost or won a game.
11. Never approach an official after a game. Emotions are usually pretty high at that time.
12. Be a positive role model for your child. Children do pay attention to your actions.

Davidson County Schools Spectator Code of Conduct

- Spectators are an important part of the contest and help create an environment that fosters healthy competition.
- Spectators shall at all times conform to acceptable standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.
- All spectators' comments and behaviors shall reflect respect for opposing participants, coaches, and game referees/umpires/officials.
- Spectators shall follow all directives from school administrators, event staff, and law enforcement.
- Any spectator interfering with play in any way will be subject to immediate ejection from the site of the contest.
- Spectators will be subject to ejection from the site of the contest for behaviors that are disruptive, unruly or abusive. This type of behavior includes, but is not limited to, foul language and any verbal or physical harassment of other spectators, especially fans of the opposing team.
- Spectators who witness, or who are harassed by, intimidating behavior and/or comments by other spectators are urged to report these occurrences immediately to school administration, event staff or law enforcement.
- Physical retaliation, regardless of the actions or comments of other spectators, will not be permitted and will be subject to immediate ejection from the site of the contest as well as a possible ban from attendance at future DCS events.
- A spectator's behavior reflects on the team that he/she supports. Let others see that you are a fan of a first-class program.
- Enjoy and have a passion for the game, but remember...IT'S ONLY A GAME!

When We Show Respect, Everyone Wins!