

HIGHLAND

Independent School District

Athletic Handbook

For Parents of Athletes

Highland ISD Guidelines for Sports Concussion Management

The Guidelines for Concussion Protocol are ever changing, but the up to date information will be provided each year on the UIL Concussion Form that each player and parent must sign before they can participate.

Highland ISD Athletics Rules and Expectations

All rules will be applied fairly. If ever a question of fairness arises, please come and talk with the coach, and we will work out the problem. One thing that we want to remind everyone of is that athletics is a privilege, NOT a right. All students have the right to an education, but athletics is a choice with rules and expectations that go above and beyond the rules and expectations of the Highland ISD Student Handbook and the Highland ISD Student Code of Conduct. Many times these rules and expectations are tougher and higher than the normal school situation. A great deal of pride, dedication, self-esteem, teamwork, commitment, and discipline are learned through athletics that when applied will help each student/athlete use the knowledge learned from the classroom to be successful in their future. Coaches have the prerogative of making additional rules that apply specifically to their program if they can not be applied to all. Thank you for your support of the coaching staff, administration, school, and most of all our student athletes.

Responsibilities of an Athlete:

Coaches expect an athlete to adhere to the following general guidelines:

- ▶ The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual.
- ▶ An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
- ▶ Players must be receptive to coaching.
- ▶ Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms & equipment.
- ▶ As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules.
- ▶ Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but the entire team/program, the coaching staff, the school, the community, and their family as well.
- ▶ If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to the coaching staff. This should be done immediately following the injury!

These general guidelines are in addition to any rules that are put in place by the head coach of each sport and all rules set forth by the University Interscholastic League. All rules and penalties

described herein shall be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth in the Highland ISD Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, and Board Policy.

Expectations and Responsibilities of a Coach:

What Administration, School Staff, Parents, and Assistant Coaches can expect from our Head Coaches?

- To be accountable for all actions.
- To handle all situations with honor and integrity
- To run an organized program that will run efficiently.
- To create/maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to work.
- To listen to any and all suggestions.
- To appropriately delegate responsibility and authority.
- To work and provide leadership to win.
- To treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- To be loyal to the program.
- To always have a positive coaching style.
- To allow all individuals to work within their own personality.
- To never put his/her own needs above the needs of the team.

What can we expect from the Assistant Coaches?

- To be the very best teacher of the game you can be.
- To always be early to all team practices, staff meetings, and school functions.
- To be a positive role model.
- To sell and defend the program.
- To do everything possible to develop a “winning” team attitude.
- Work to better yourself as a coach. Maintain, sustain, and develop new innovative ways of coaching, teaching, and communicating.
- To be a professional in attitude, responses, work, and personal appearance.
- To be sincerely interested in the successes of our players both on and off the field.
- Never give up on a player. They can always change and likely will if given the chance.
- To always be positive and never doubt that we will be successful.
- To be loyal to the program.
- To be creative and have the ability to apply gained knowledge to game situations.
- To be on the same page as the coaching staff when taking the practice or game field.
- Never get complacent as the season goes on. Don’t let the little things slide when it comes to the discipline of our players. This is how bad habits are formed.
- To always have a plan. Be organized.
- Have a positive but demanding coaching style.

- Always be optimistic.

At *HIGHLAND*, a coach has the responsibility for the following:

- ▶ The selection of the squad.
- ▶ The determination of the style of play, including offensive and defensive philosophy.
- ▶ The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
- ▶ The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
- ▶ The decision of who plays in what position.
- ▶ The establishing of team rules, in concert with the general philosophy of the entire athletic program.
- ▶ The enforcement of rules in the context of the sport they coach. → The selection of team captains.
- ▶ Communication with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when they will start/end, and any changes that should arise.

Participation on an Athletic Team:

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team for *HIGHLAND ISD* is a PRIVILEGE, and not a RIGHT. Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to win or achieve team success, a coach will use players best-suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

It is the philosophy of the athletic program here at *HIGHLAND ISD* to make every effort to play everyone in every game on sub-varsity level games. This is a major challenge for coaches, both logistically and philosophically. Certain sports make substitutions easier than others, as do the score/flow of games. Players, coaches, and fans alike are focused on winning, and can very easily lose sight of the instructional nature and value of middle school/junior varsity contests. So although there are no "*guarantees*" on starting/playing time, our coaches are working toward rewarding ALL participants who have practiced regularly, worked hard, and met all obligations expected of them with playing time on game day.

It should again be emphasized that this is a difficult and challenging task in many situations. Hopefully through planning and patience, this philosophy will achieve better morale for the entire team and keep numbers high.

The Purpose of a JV Team:

JUNIOR VARSITY teams exist to provide those athletes unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop skills and gain knowledge/experience. While the athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not playing with the varsity team, participation on a JV team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity squad. The athletes best-suited for varsity competition will make that squad each year.

Striving to win is important in athletics; however, compiling a great record or winning a championship is not the primary objective of a JV team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV squad, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team.

At *HIGHLAND ISD*, we see, and want our athletes to see themselves as an integral part of each of our programs here - this includes both JV and junior high levels. The young men and women in these programs are the future of our varsity squads, and it is imperative that they have a positive and educational experience.

Practice Sessions and Games :

Practice sessions are normally "OPEN" to spectators, as are all games. Spectators providing positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance.

However, it is the prerogative of each individual coach to conduct "closed" practices. There is a very sound reason for this: these sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting

Practice Sessions:

- ▶ May last 2 hours on school days (coaches should notify in advance of longer sessions on non-school days, as well as shorter workouts when appropriate).
- ▶ May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities.
- ▶ Will NOT be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
- ▶ Will NOT be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
- ▶ May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods. Our coaches are encouraged to be

sensitive to family planning, particularly around holidays.

Communication

As lack of communication has become a growing issue, we want to provide a platform for athletes, parents, and coaches to communicate. The platform we will be using is the Remind App.

We highly recommend both athletes and parents join the appropriate “class”, as we verbally instruct athletes in person, we also relay the message on Remind so that parents are also aware.

If there is an issue that results from “lack of communication” from a coach, please schedule a conference with the appropriate coach, so we can resolve the issue with the student/athlete and the parent. We make every effort to get schedules and practice times established but inevitably changes can occur. We will do our best to communicate those changes in a timely manner.

Rules and Penalties:

1) Hair: No distinct two-layer cuts, drawings or designs. Athletes must keep hair neat and well-groomed. Male student's hair must not become long enough to touch the collar of a regular collared shirt, touch the eyebrows, or cover more than half of the ears. Hair must be a natural color - no abnormal hair coloring is allowed. If violation occurs, the athlete will not be allowed to represent the school in a competition.

2) Earrings: No earrings for male athletes and no athlete shall have piercings prohibited by the Highland ISD Student Handbook or Code of Conduct. If violation occurs, the athlete will not be allowed to represent the school in a competition.

3) No Facial Hair: If violation occurs, the athlete will not be allowed to represent the school in a competition.

4) Missed Workouts: If a violation occurs, the athlete will have Make-up Conditioning that will be determined by the Head Coach regardless of reasoning for missing. Again this is not punishment, it is make-up. If the coach is not contacted and made aware, the missed practice is automatically an unexcused absence. All unexcused absences will have a punishment, determined by the coach, in addition to Make-up Conditioning. After 5 missed practices in a sport season (ex: football, basketball, track, etc.), the Head Coach will determine if a missed practice is unexcused or excused. If there is an unexcused absence the coach will then determine what the athletes punishment will be in addition to Make-up Conditioning that was missed. If the problem becomes a habitual issue the Coach will determine whether or not the athlete will miss competition.

Injuries: If a player is injured, they are still expected to attend practice. If they do not show up to practice it is considered unexcused. They will also have to do Make-up Conditioning for every practice missed, determined by the coach, before they are allowed to compete. This is not punishment but will ensure the athlete is in shape and ready to compete.

No Athlete Will Compete in a Competition Until They Have Completed Make-up Conditioning!

5) Late to Workouts: If violation occurs: Punishment will be left to the discretion of the coach. An athlete could lose their spot if this becomes a habit. There again, it will not matter why one is late.

6) Missed Game: If violation occurs: Athlete is subject to a possible game suspension at the discretion of the coach.

7) Major Offenses: Drinking, drugs, smoking or any crime such as theft, destruction of public property, etc. will result in the following: (in addition to Student Code of Conduct violation)

First Offense: One week suspension from competition, 10 miles (2 miles per day X 5 days per week) in addition to regular workouts, and a sincere apology to the team.

Second Offense: Suspension from athletics for the remainder of the school year - Minimum of 6 months.

Third Offense: Suspension from athletics for a calendar year from the date of third infraction.

8) Music: Music may be listened to on the bus through headphones only. All music listened to must be free of foul language and graphic material. Unfit music will be addressed by the coach and headphones/speakers(locker room/gym/weight room) will be taken up.

9) Bus: Team bus will be kept clean. If it is not kept clean, the TEAM will be punished as a group & food, drinks, etc. will not be allowed on the bus on future trips.

10) Attire / Headwear: No lewd attire (caps, shirts, etc.) or oversized pants will be worn. Also, no shorts may be worn to any competition, team activity, etc. Student athletes will be asked to change into something else if worn. If they do not change, they will not be allowed to go with the team to the competition. Unless worn for religious purposes, athletes will not be allowed to wear anything on their heads but caps or hats at school or at competitions. Caps or hats will be worn with their bills facing forward, unless worn for religious purposes, athletes will remove headwear when entering into schools or businesses. Student athletes will be asked to remove illegal

headwear, if the athlete refuses to remove the object, they will not be allowed to be part of the team during competition.

11) No Visible Tattoos: Athletes who already have tattoos must cover the tattoo so that it is not visible to onlookers in both practices and competitions. If they refuse to do so, then they will not be allowed to participate in practice or competition.

12) Digital Devices: Student athletes are responsible for their personal digital devices and therefore will be held accountable for any information held on these devices (including laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc.) that is prohibited by the Highland ISD Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, Board Policy, or state/federal laws.

13) Classroom: We require athletes to put as much emphasis on academics as possible. Being lazy will not be tolerated. Any Zeros on class work will be reprimanded with some form of punishment determined by the Coach. Struggling to learn is one thing but to blatantly show zero effort is UNACCEPTABLE!

14) Off Season: Athletes that are not in their sport season are required to participate in off season workouts. This is not optional, it is their opportunity to get better.

Quitting A Sport

Athletes will be granted a 2 week grace period at the beginning of each season to determine if they want to continue to play a sport. After this Grace Period, any athlete that quits a sport during the season will be required to run 25 miles before they can join another sport.

Chain of Command

In order to support our coaching staff we will follow a strict chain of command policy for any grievances, complaints, or questions, the athlete or parent may have. If players/parents do not follow through the appropriate channels, the Coach may not be aware of the situation and therefore not given the opportunity to fix it.

For grievances, complaints, or questions that a player or parent has regarding and athletic event or participation, he or she will follow this procedure:

1st- The athlete should first make contact with the Coach that is directly involved in the situation. Parents should encourage their child to speak with the coach before ever getting involved. This is a growing opportunity for our athletes to find their voice and confidence.

2nd- The parent will contact the Head Coach, or coach directly involved, to either set up a conference or to speak. This should be done in writing via email. Both parent and coach should come to an agreement for a solution.

3rd- If the parent or coach is not happy with the solution, they should contact the Athletic Director and set up a conference time to meet face to face. This should also be written via email for documentation purposes.

4th- Lastly if an agreement can not be reached, the Principal will be contacted and a conference will be held with all the parties involved including Athletic Director. The agreed upon solution will be documented so that everyone involved is aware of how we plan on handling the situation.

If the Chain of Command Policy is not followed, the Superintendent, Principal, and Athletic Director WILL NOT discuss or entertain the situation until the proper coach has been contacted and made aware so that they may have the opportunity to resolve it. This does not apply to situations regarding discrimination, harrassment, retaliation, or criminal activity which shall be reported according to Board Policy.

After a game/competition do not attempt to conference with the coach about an issue. The coaches will not conference without being contacted and it must be 24 hours after a competition. Ex: Unhappy with how they handled the situation during a game. Again playing time is determined at the coach's discretion and they will not talk with you about it after a game.

2022-2023 Highland ISD Coaching Roster

Athletic Director- Ben Smith

bsmith@highland.esc14.net

Boys Basketball- Shea Baucom

sbaucom@highland.esc14.net

Girls Basketball- Kyle Johnson

kjohnson@highland.esc14.net

Athletic Relationships

Being a parent is often challenging. This effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This section, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility.

There are many relationships which are involved in being the parent of an athlete.

The Player-Coach Relationship:

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical one in athletics. A parent can have a profound effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect their playing time or whether they win a starting position.

As much as a parent or parents can negatively influence this relationship, the opposite is also true! Parents can help an athlete deal with events which transpire during the course of a practice, game, season, and career. Not every experience in the athletic world can be successful or positive ..BUT, most CAN be turned into a learning experience to make better citizens of our students. In this area, parents are invaluable, as they will see the athlete once he/she leaves the field, gym, locker room, etc. Rather than feed a negative experience or situation, help turn it into a "bump-in-the-road" , an obstacle to be overcome.

The Parent-Coach Relationship:

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. You want what is best for him/her, but an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

One of the responsibilities which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his/her players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately

after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

When you do speak with your child after a contest OR practice, don't dwell on his or her play; how many points they scored; if they started; what position so-and-so was playing; etc. . . . Instead, first ask how the team did or how practice went today? Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100%, and have a good experience? General dialogue which does not place so much emphasis on winning and losing, starring roles, starting vs substituting, etc. Please always remind your child you enjoy watching them compete regardless of the outcome.

Relationship with Officials:

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans, "How much are you paying the officials?" *The home team does not get the officials.* All officials are selected for particular games by the assignor of the particular sport, and neither team has control of which officials are present.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them. There is an ever-growing shortage of officials in almost every sport! This is due in part to criticism by fans and coaches alike.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls (WHO DOES?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

At any competition that Highland ISD participates in, if a fan is ejected you will be asked to leave the building for the remainder of the contest/tournament. If you are ejected for a second time during the season you will be banned from attending that sport for the remainder of the year. If there is collectively a third offense you will be banned from attending athletic events for one calendar year from the date of the last offense.

Summary of Relations

1. Support your child/athlete
2. Support your child's teammates
3. Support your child's coaches
4. Treat the opponent, their fans, and the officials with respect
5. Encourage other parents to be supportive.
6. Let the coaches do the coaching

Spectator-Cheerleader:

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Taking this responsibility into your own hands is not appropriate. Following the cheerleaders' directions, therefore, is absolutely necessary at all athletic contests.

The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to lead this aspect. Over the years here at *HIGHLAND*, we have developed a very "enthusiastic & involved" fan base. This has created a special feeling of excitement and belonging for both fans and players alike. We expect our fans to be supportive of our coaches, our players, and our community. Our fans should always be respectful to the visiting team and their spectators.

Sports Booster Club:

HIGHLAND ISD Sports Booster Club is, and has been for many years, one of the best you can find ANYWHERE! It exists to support all teams and the entire athletic program. Individual teams do not have booster or parent clubs which may result in competition for support and resources. Our booster club has three primary goals:

1. To raise funds to assist the athletic programs
2. To increase school and community spirit
3. To encourage good sportsmanship and athletic participation

Risks of Athletic Participation:

In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are always risks associated when anyone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, paralysis and even death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware of and understand this possibility. At *HIGHLAND ISD*, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes. *THESE RISKS UNDERLINE THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS, AND COACHES TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE - FROM PRE-SEASON MEETINGS THROUGH THE POST SEASON; AND EVEN OUT-OF-SEASON TRAINING!!!*

2022 – 2023 HIGHLAND ISD ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
Parent/Guardian & Student Athlete Agreement Form

Student(s) Name(s) – PLEASE PRINT

Please list the sport(s) you plan to play during the 2022 – 2023 school year.

By signing this Athletic Handbook Parent/Guardian & Student Athlete Agreement Form, we agree to abide by and support in a positive manner all policies stated in the 2022– 2023 Athletic Handbook set forth by Highland ISD.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Athlete Signature

Date
