



# **Student Athlete/Parent Handbook**

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# ROCK HILL SCHOOLS ATHLETICS

## Message to Parents and Students

This handbook is to be used by parents and students to ensure that students will enjoy a safe, successful and memorable experience as a student athlete. It is an extension of the Rock Hill School District, the S.C. High School League and establishes team rules and regulations. We believe coaching leadership is to be of the highest quality and provides student athletes examples of exemplary behavior, character, courage and integrity.

Thank you for supporting your student athlete as they participate in athletics in the Rock Hill School District.

## Vision Statement

The vision of the Rock Hill Schools Athletic Department is to provide a comprehensive, inclusive, and engaging athletic program that promotes the physical, emotional, and social development of our student-athletes. We are committed to fostering a culture of excellence, integrity, and sportsmanship while emphasizing the importance of academic success, personal growth, and community involvement. Through our education-based model, we aim to develop well-rounded individuals who are prepared for success both on and off the field.

## Mission Statement

To empower student-athletes to excel both academically and athletically, fostering growth, integrity, and community involvement.

## Beliefs

- **Holistic Development:** We believe in nurturing the physical, emotional, and social growth of our student-athletes.
- **Academic Excellence:** We prioritize academic success alongside athletic achievements.
- **Integrity and Sportsmanship:** We uphold the values of honesty, respect, and fair play.
- **Community Engagement:** We believe in the importance of community involvement and support.
- **Lifelong Learning:** We encourage a passion for continuous personal and professional development.
- **Teamwork and Leadership:** We promote the development of strong leadership skills and teamwork.
- **Health and Wellness:** We prioritize the overall health and well-being of our student-athletes.

## Objectives

- **Academic Support:** Provide resources and support to help student-athletes succeed in their studies.
- **Athletic Excellence:** Develop competitive athletic programs that strive for success.
- **Character Building:** Foster an environment that promotes integrity, responsibility, and sportsmanship.
- **Community Connections:** Engage with the community through service and outreach programs.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Offer programs and opportunities that develop leadership skills.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Ensure all student-athletes feel valued and included in our programs

## Participation on an Athletic Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team is a privilege, not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership on a team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. **Unlike intramural or recreational teams**, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to present the best possible team to represent the school, the coach will use players best suited for the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

## Dismissal or Quitting a Team

A player who is dismissed or who quits one athletic team may not participate in workouts with any other school team until the subsequent team's season has been completed, unless approved by the Athletic Director and the Head Coach.

## Sportsmanship

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules and the sport and for all others – players, coaches, officials, and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

This means:

1. There should be no inappropriate or vulgar language or gestures to/from our fans.
2. Taunting or trash talking of our opponents, or their cheerleaders will not be tolerated.
3. Spectators may not enter onto the field or court during a contest.
4. Fans should be positive and supportive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponents.
5. We should not interfere with our opponents' cheerleaders when leading their cheers.

Acceptable Behavior:

- Applause during the introduction of players, coaches, and officials.
- Acceptance of calls/rulings made by the officials.
- Cheerleaders leading fans in positive school cheers.

- Handshakes between participants and coaches at the end of all contests, regardless of the outcome.
- Treat competition as a game, not a war.
- Everyone must show concern for any injured players on all teams.
- Encourage only good sportsmanship conduct.

### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

1. Game(s) suspension (depending on the nature of the ejection) may result in the following:
  - a minimum of one game for swim, competitive cheer, football, lacrosse
  - a minimum of two games for volleyball, cross country, golf, wrestling, track & field
  - a minimum of three games for basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, tennis

Ejections during post season play for all sports may result in a minimum one game suspension.

2. Any attempt to verbally abuse, make obscene gestures to threaten or strike an official or member of the opposing coaching staff, shall be considered a serious violation making the athlete ineligible for a minimum of the next two contests to the maximum of one year.
3. Any athlete who leaves the bench area to become involved in an altercation, either physical or verbal, will be disqualified from that game and will be subject to a minimum of a next game suspension depending on his or her involvement.
4. An athlete who is ejected for the second time in the same sport will have his or her athletic eligibility removed for a minimum of two weeks. An athlete who has been ejected from three contests during a school year (all sports) shall become ineligible for the remainder of the school year.

### **Athletic Travel Policy**

All athletes must travel to and from athletic contests in transportation provided by the school's athletic department with the exception that an athlete may leave with a parent or guardian. All forms must be filled out prior to the event and approved by the Athletic Director/Head Coach. Sign-out Sheet must be signed after the game by the parent/legal guardian.

### **Officials**

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans. *"How much are you paying the officials?"* The home school does not get the officials. The South Carolina High School League and/or the booking office schedules officials and neither team has control of which officials are assigned. Officials agree and follow a code of ethics. They do not care or have a vested interest in which team wins. It is also important to understand that they are a very important part of any sporting event and that the contest cannot be played without them. So, while you may not agree with every call they make or their style of officiating, please do not harass or insult them. It is also important to note that they have complete control of the contest and have the authority to eject unruly spectators and

or/coaches. Additionally, the same official may draw our team's contest several times over the course of a season. Coaches, administrators, and schools work very hard to establish good rapport with officials and one unruly fan can easily damage this relationship.

### **Eligibility Requirements by the SC High School League**

- A. Birth Certificate: Each student must submit a certified state or local birth certificate on your Big Teams account.
- B. Physical: A yearly physical is required. Prior to participation, a student must turn in a South Carolina High School League Physical Form filled out by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. This form can be picked up in the Athletic Department or printed on the athletic website. The physical covers all sports during the school year provided the examination occurred on or after April 1st of the previous year.
- C. Parent Permission: The reverse side of the physical exam form is a parent's permission form required by the South Carolina High School League. This form must be completed and signed by the parent and athlete.
- D. Academic Eligibility: To participate in interscholastic activities, students in grades nine through twelve must achieve an overall passing average and either:
  - 1. Pass at least four academic courses, including each unit the student takes that is required for graduation.  
The required courses are as followed:
    - English/Language Arts 4 Units.
    - U.S. History and Constitution 1 Unit.
    - Economics (1/2 Unit), Government (1/2 Unit) 1 Unit.
    - Other Social Studies 1 Unit.
    - Mathematics 4 Units.
    - Science 3 Units.
    - Physical Education or ROTC 1 Unit.
    - Computer Science (Including Keyboarding) 1 Unit.
    - Foreign Language/CATE 1 Unit.

**OR,**

- 2. Pass a total of five academic courses.

Students must satisfy these conditions in the semester preceding participation in the interscholastic activity, if the interscholastic activity occurs completely within one semester or in the semester preceding the first semester of participation in an interscholastic activity if the interscholastic activity occurs over two consecutive semesters and is under the jurisdiction of the South Carolina High School League.

Middle school students, including first semester 9<sup>th</sup> graders, are eligible to participate on the high school teams during the first semester if they were promoted academically (not by social promotion). Students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades must be doing satisfactory work at the end of the first semester in order to be eligible for the second semester.

#### E. Age Limitations:

##### *High School*

A student who becomes 19 years of age prior to July 1 of the school year will not be allowed to participate in athletic programs.

##### *Middle School*

Should a student become 15 years of age prior to July 1 of the upcoming school year, he/she shall be too old for a 7th and 8th grade team, he/she may be considered as enrolled in the 9th grade for eligibility purposes.

#### **NCAA Eligibility Requirements**

Most college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization that has established recruiting and financial aid. The NCAA has three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Institutions are members of one or another of these according to the size and scope of the athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships.

Athletes planning to take an official visit to any Division I or Division II institution must be certified by the NCAA-Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse was established as a separate organization by the NCAA member institutions to ensure consistent interpretations of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements for all prospective student athletes at all member institutions. Parents or students may find this information at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

#### **Medical Attention for Athletes**

Unfortunately, injuries do occur during athletic competition. Certified Athletic Trainers and team Physicians have the best expertise in this area. Physicians and Certified Athletic Trainers are educated to handle injuries. Because of this, it is the policy of all sports programs in Rock Hill School District that a Physician or Certified Athletic Trainer cannot be overruled by a coach of a particular sport or the parent or guardian of an injured athlete when it comes to participation.

If the Physician or Certified Athletic Trainer deem an athlete not to participate because of an injury or any medical problem associated with participation, then that athlete must not participate until cleared by a Physician or Certified Athletic Trainer.

Parents are encouraged to be proactive in the health and well-being of their child by making sure that they contact the school's Certified Athletic Trainer or Physician if they have any questions concerning the health of their child. Coaches and Certified Athletic Trainers should always be notified by parents regarding any health-related issues such as and not limited to new medications, allergies, any new diagnosis of the student-athlete. Parents are encouraged to seek the advice of their school's Certified Athletic Trainer for any non-life-threatening athletic injuries of their child.

#### **Insurance**

Rock Hill School District provides a secondary insurance policy for its student-athletes. This policy is a supplemental policy to primary family insurance coverage.

Claim forms are filed out by the athletic trainer and must be signed by the athletic director. School officials are NOT to file any claims for a student-athlete or his/her parents, this is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian

## **Responsibilities of the Athlete**

### Citizenship

The privilege to represent any school in Rock Hill School District on an athletic team should be based on good citizenship, as well as scholastic achievement. In a specific athletic endeavor, the student athlete must be capable of representing Rock Hill School District in the fullest meaning of the term "Good Citizenship" by his or her manners, appearance, dress, conduct and sportsmanship. Only those students who can assume these responsibilities and of being official representatives of our schools will be permitted to be members of any athletic squad.

### Conduct

The conduct of a student athlete is closely observed in all areas of life. It is important that your behavior be above reproach in all the following areas:

#### **A. In the Classroom**

In the academic setting, a good athlete becomes a good student. As a student athlete, you must plan your schedule so that you give sufficient time and energy to your studies. In addition to maintaining good grades, an athlete should give respectful attention to classroom activities and always show respect for other students and faculty.

#### **B. On the Campus**

The way we act and look on campus is of great importance. Athletes should be leaders in every aspect of the educational process. Remember, respect is not given - it is earned.

#### **C. On the Field**

All school rules are carried over to the field of competition. Sportsmanship is of the utmost importance to everyone representing our programs.

## **Student Disciplinary Actions on Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities**

An extracurricular activity often entails activities of public interest, visibility, and focus of attention. Students who take part in such activities, in effect, serve as special ambassadors of the school they represent. Consequently, the behavior of those students who choose to participate in these activities draws such public interest and attention that it is unique in its capacity to elevate or diminish the School District's standing in the public mind. Strong public education programs cannot exist without strong public support. Therefore, all students participating in extracurricular activities who are charged by law enforcement authorities with criminal conduct 1 or who engage in other acts of "gross misbehavior", e.g. (A) possession or use of controlled substances at school or at school-sponsored activities, (B) acts of disrespect to a teacher or other school authority, (C) acts of cruelty or violence either physical or emotional, (D) use of profane or vulgar language shall, at the discretion of the principal, be subject to suspension and/or possible exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities.



\*The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that random drug testing for students who participate in extracurricular activities is constitutional as long as certain procedural steps are followed. Before taking disciplinary action, pursuant to this rule, the principal shall meet and confer with the student's teacher and extracurricular sponsor(s). The principal's decision shall be final unless reversed or modified on appeal to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee, in which event the decision of the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall be final. If a student is found to be in violation of the above rule the following consequences shall be applied:

1st Offense: The student shall be suspended from all extracurricular activities for not less than five (5) Consecutive school days. If the offense involves use or possession of a controlled substance, the student is referred to the Keystone program and must complete the program. If, at any point, the student fails to follow all rules and regulations for attendance and participation in the program, he/she will immediately become ineligible to participate in any activity until the program is fully completed. The student's eligibility to resume participation is contingent upon his/her agreement to participate in a random controlled substance testing program for a period of not less than six school months.

2nd Offense: The student shall be suspended from all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year. If, however, the second offense occurs with less than nine (9) weeks remaining in the school year, the principal may, if he/she chooses, extend the suspension period to include the first nine (9) weeks grading period of the ensuing school year.

Felony Criminal Charges: Charges of felony criminal offenses brought by law enforcement shall result in immediate ineligibility from all extracurricular activities for a calendar year from the date of the charge. If a student is found not guilty of such charges, he/she shall be eligible, following review by the principal, for immediate reinstatement. If a charge brought forth by law enforcement is of high and serious nature, but may not be classified as a felony, the charge may be determined, by review of the principal, to be treated just as a felony for purposes of this rule. Any violation of this rule under a court ordered penalty or performance obligation (i.e. pre-trial intervention) of some kind would render the student ineligible, as the rule should apply, until the court order has been fully satisfied.

Additional Clarification: If a student is suspended, placed at an alternative program such as the Renaissance Academy or Raven Academy (virtual or face-to-face), excluded from the regular school setting, or expelled from the school district, the student is not eligible to be on any school district property other than the location specified to obtain educational services as outlined in placement documentation. The student is not eligible to attend events on any district properties; therefore, the student is not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities including athletics during the suspension, alternative placement, exclusion, or expulsion period.

Notice of Decision and Right to Appeal: Notice of a decision by the principal to suspend or exclude shall be given to the student's parent/guardian in writing. In those instances where the principal's decision is to suspend the student from participation in activities for more than five (5) consecutive school days, the notice shall conclude with a final sentence that stands alone and in bold print that reads as follows:

This decision may be appealed to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee within five (5) days of this decision by submitting the following request in writing addressed to:

Superintendent  
Rock Hill Schools  
P.O. Box 10072  
Rock Hill, SC 29731

Please schedule at the earliest available time a hearing to review the decision of \_\_\_\_\_, Principal of \_\_\_\_\_ School, to (suspend) (exclude) my son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, from participating in activities.

Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the responsibility or authority of school officials to initiate standard disciplinary processes or to take other disciplinary actions as may be deemed appropriate.

\*Any student formally charged by law enforcement with criminal conduct about which school officials neither know nor are able, through their own investigative efforts, to determine the facts will be required to cease participating in extracurricular activities pending resolution of the criminal charge.

Upon resolution of the charges, the matter will be reexamined, and a decision will be made regarding any further exclusion from extracurricular activities.

### **Attendance at Practice**

Athletes who miss school or who get sick at school should notify their coach when they are to miss practice or a game. Even if the absence is excused, the athlete may at times be held out of a contest due to the lack of practice time. Students who miss practice without just cause will be handled appropriately by their coach. Students who are constantly late to practice will be warned by their coach and could be dismissed from a team if the problem is not corrected.

### **Equipment**

School issued equipment is the responsibility of the student to whom it was issued. The student is expected to keep it in good condition. Loss or damage may result in a financial obligation by the student.

### **Disciplinary Measures**

Misbehavior by an athlete will not be tolerated. He or she must conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies good citizenship and self-control. If an athlete must be disciplined at school, his or her membership on a squad may be in jeopardy. If such discipline requires a suspension from school, the athlete will be suspended from both practice and games that occur during the suspension period. More than one suspension may warrant the removal of the athlete from the squad.

### **Communication with Coaches**

It is important that parents can meet with and communicate with the coach; however, there are a few rules that must be adhered to:

1. Parents should never approach a coach to discuss a playing issue about their son or daughter, coaching strategy or play calling during or immediately after an athletic event.
2. Parents who are unhappy about playing time should first allow their son or daughter to discuss this matter with the coach first before contacting the coach. If a resolution to this problem has not been met after the player/coach meeting, then the parent may contact the coach. The parent should always talk to the coach before contacting the Athletics Director or Principal. Parents should always schedule an appointment with the coach to discuss such matters. (The student athlete must attend all meetings)
3. Parents who are concerned about any health or safety issue regarding their student/athlete are always asked to please call the coach or the school administration.
4. Final resolution of conflicts in school athletics will lie with the Principal and Athletic Director.

### **Participation Fees**

A \$60 athletic fee will be charged for participation in athletics, annually. This fee just be paid prior to participation. It is permissible for a fee schedule (payment plan) to be set-up with the Athletic Director.

## Student Athlete/Parent Contract

Signing this page indicates that I have read and understand the Rock Hill School District Athletic Handbook.

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School

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Print Student Athlete Name

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Student Athlete Signature

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Parent Signature

