



Western Line School District

Athletic Handbook

2026-2027

O'Bannon • Riverside

*"When we accept the unacceptable,
we compromise our values.
Let's lead with integrity and accountability."*



Board of Directors

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Gregory Welch, Board Member; Norma McDavid, Board Member

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Western Line School District Athletics Handbook

Introduction

This Athletics Handbook has been prepared to present clear guidelines to cover specific aspects of the athletic program. The School Board, school and district administration believe that it will be helpful to staff members directly and indirectly involved in athletics, parents, and students who are affected by or interested in learning about the athletic program in Western Line School District.

It is important to understand that this handbook is supplemental to, but not intended to supersede or substitute for the policies and procedures of the Western Line School District adopted by the School Board governing operations of the school district. Every staff member and all students are subject to these policies, together with the policies stated in the student and employee handbook formally adopted by the School Board each year.

In addition, the athletics program of the district must conform to all rules and regulations established by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). www.misshssa.com ; www.mdek12.org

All staff members are responsible for seeing that programs under their supervision and/or with which they are associated as members of the athletic department are in compliance with Western Line School District, the Mississippi High School Activities Association and the Mississippi Department of Education policies and procedures. This handbook outlines, in detail, vital areas of the athletic programs, which staff members must be concerned.

Code of Ethics

Western Line School District offers students an opportunity to become positively involved in school sponsored athletics. The philosophy of the program promotes good sportsmanship and good character, facilitates an atmosphere of respect for everyone, builds on the importance of camaraderie and teamwork, and allows all participants to develop an appreciation of the game. For these reasons, student athletes are urged to assist with our efforts to provide positive learning experiences for all students who participate in or attend athletic events.

As a coach / student athlete, I understand that it is my responsibility to:

1. Place academic achievement as the highest priority.
2. Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials and coaches.
3. Respect the integrity and judgement of game officials.
4. Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship and proper conduct on and off the playing field.
5. Maintain a high level of safety awareness.
6. Refrain from the use of profanity
7. Adhere to the established rules and standards of the game to be played.
8. Respect all equipment and use it safely and appropriately.
9. Win with character, lose with dignity.

Any display of unsportsmanlike conduct could result in being suspended and/or removed from the team. This is not a desired action. It is the expectation that all competitors uphold the highest standards of behavior.

Athletic Policies

It is the responsibility of the athletic coordinator and the head coach of each sport to see that the participants meet the requirements of the MHSAA. Failure to abide by MHSAA rules may result in a coach being sanctioned, fined, and possibly terminated from his/her position.

Alcohol and Drug Policy: The athletic department will adhere and strictly enforce School Board

Policy JCDAC (Drugs and Alcohol – Possession or Reasonable Suspicion)

Alcohol and Drug Screening: The Athletic department will adhere and strictly enforce School Board Policy JCDAB (Student Drug Testing Program Extracurricular Activities)

Consent Form- Students participants in extracurricular activities shall be provided with a copy of this policy and an ‘extracurricular activities student drug testing program consent form’. The consent form shall provide a urine sample to be tested for illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

The consent form must be read, signed, and dated by the student, parent or custodial guardian and coach/sponsor before a participant student shall be eligible to practice in any extracurricular activity.

CONSEQUENCES FOR POSITIVE RESULT

First Positive: Any student athlete, who tests positive for the first time will be required to satisfy the following criteria:

- The student athlete will be denied participation from competitions beginning with the first scheduled competition following the offense and concluding after 20% of the season’s competitions have taken place. (Example: 2 of 10 football games or 4 or 20 basketball games)
- The student athlete must attend a drug counseling or education program at the student athlete’s expense. The counselor, student athlete, and his or her parents/guardians will determine the length and manner of counseling. Proof of counseling through an approved or certified program must be provided to the WLSA Athletic Coordinator.
- The student athlete may continue to participate in his/her extra-curricular activities only after the student athlete’s parent/guardian signs a Continuance of Participation Waiver that releases the WLSA of any responsibility in case the student athlete should have any adverse reaction(s) related to the positive test indicating illegal drug or alcohol use.
- The student athlete will be required to submit to periodic or unannounced re-tests up to nine months after the first positive test.

Any student athlete's refusal to meet any of these criteria will result in his/her immediate removal from all extracurricular activities.

Second Positive: Any student athlete who tests positive for a second time be immediately removed from all extracurricular activities.

Any student athlete's refusal to meet these criteria will result in his or her immediate removal from all extracurricular activities.

No positive test results as described under this policy will be used as grounds to discipline, suspend, or expel a student athlete, except for the guidelines provided in this policy. Any student athlete who intentionally evades a random test will be suspended from practice and competition until a test is taken and may be subject to discipline for the evasion. The student must provide a negative test before being allowed to try-out for or participate in an activity under this policy.

Athletic Equipment

Western Line School District strives to provide high quality, up-to-date, safe equipment for each sport. The athletic coordinator and head coach of each sport shall keep abreast of the latest trends in athletic equipment. Safety is the number one priority when selecting and purchasing athletic equipment. When purchasing athletic equipment, the coach and athletic coordinator must follow the guidelines of the purchasing department. If a coach checks out any athletic equipment, he/she must see that it is returned promptly and in the same condition it was checked out (to the greatest extent possible). A fine will be issued for any athlete for the misuse or loss of athletic equipment, and the fine must be paid before the current grading period ends. In addition, at the end of sport season, each head coach must provide an inventory to the athletic coordinator.

Awards: Funding for Athletic / Activity Awards

High School - Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, Track, Cross Country, Fast Pitch Softball, Cheerleading, Powerlifting, Tennis, Golf, Archery, eSports, Soccer, Band and Choir

- 6 Trophies/Plaques not exceeding \$25.00 each (no ties), 1 MVP Trophy not exceeding \$35.00 (not ties)
 - Individuals making "All Conference 1st Team" ONLY will be recognized with a plaque.
 - Certificates can be presented to any other "All Conference Team" winners.
 - Any individual receiving "All Conference MVP" may receive an MVP trophy/plaque not exceeding \$35.00.
 - All student athletes will be recognized with a medallion for each sport in which they participate.

Junior High - Football, Basketball, Cheerleading and Choir

- Three (3) trophies/plaques per sport not exceeding \$15.00 each (no ties), 1 MVP trophy not exceeding \$25.00 (no ties)
- All student athletes will be recognized with a medallion for each sport in which they participate.

JV sports will be allowed 3 trophies/plaques per sport.

If coaches purchase individual awards for students, they shall not be presented at the athletic banquet recognition program.

Bus Rules

Student athletes will abide by the following rules while traveling to and from athletic contests:

- Always enter and exit the bus through the front entrance only.
- Place all trash in a trash bag; do not throw on the floor.
- Do not climb or sit on top of seats.
- No jam boxes!!! Only personal stereos with earphones will be allowed. Earphones are to be taken off before exiting the bus.
- No horseplay!
- Gather all equipment and personal items before exiting the bus.

Coaching Clinics for High School Coaches

Western Line School's coaching staff shall stay abreast of the latest techniques and mechanics being used to teach their respective sports. Western Line Schools will reimburse each coach for the cost of attending one coaching clinic per year when appropriate steps are followed in the approval process.

Commercial Driver's License

All Western Line Coaches are encouraged to obtain a commercial driver's license and be responsible for transporting your teams to away games.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, humiliating, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs) which has the effect of:

- a. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student;
- b. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
- c. Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts:
 - a. Directed at another student or students
 - b. Occurs in a school setting
 - c. That is severe, persistent or pervasive
 - d. That has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - e. Substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - i. Creating a threatening environment; or, ii. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Western Line School District has a zero tolerance for any form of cyber bullying. Student Athletes involved in the practice of this behavior will face disciplinary actions or suspension from the athletic team.

Discipline Procedures

All student athletes are expected to deport themselves as responsible young men and women. This applies to the classroom as well as the athletic fields and social events. If an athlete shows a lack of self-discipline, has a poor attitude, or is not fulfilling his/her commitment to the athletic program, he/she may be suspended from that sport.

If any student athlete boycotts the team or coach for any reason, that athlete could be suspended from participation in that sport and any other sport for the remainder of the school year. A student athlete must comply with all written and oral directions given by the coaches of his/her sport.

1. Disciplinary action for **minor offenses** such as inappropriate classroom behavior, tardiness to class, missed practices and/or meetings without proper excuses, disrespect, inappropriate dress, etc.

Disciplinary action at the coach's discretion including but not limited to verbal correcting, sitting out of a game, and conference with parents.

2. Disciplinary action for **major offenses** such as defacing or destroying school property, fighting, stealing, committing forgery, defying a coach or school authority, causing a disruption in school or on a school bus, leaving school grounds without permission, abusive language, threatening another student or coach, using alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs, exhibiting a poor attitude, lack of self-discipline, boycotting the team for any reason, etc.

Disciplinary action consists of a parental conference, sitting out a game or games, suspension from the program for a specific period of time, permanent dismissal from

the program, and/or any other action deemed appropriate by the coaches and athletic coordinator. If a player is permanently dismissed from the program, the coach will notify the player's parent or guardian of such dismissal.

Any student athlete placed in OSS for a day or multiple days, will not be allowed to participate in practices or games on the days of the OSS, regardless of the reason. When a student is placed in ISS, it will be at the discretion of the coach as to their ability to practice or play on that day. Athletics and Activities are a privilege, not a right. Athletes are expected to be on their best behavior at all times.

Ejections of Athletes/Coaches and/or Penalties

The Western Line School District follows all MHSAA rules relative to ejection of an athlete or coach. If an athlete or coach is penalized, he/she must comply with the penalty. The Western Line School District encourages all coaches to conduct themselves in such a manner that neither a fine, penalty, nor ejection from a game will be warranted. However, should a financial penalty be imposed on a coach it is his/her responsibility to pay the penalty. The Western Line School District is not responsible for payment of a coach's fine.

Evaluations

All coaches must answer to their building principal for their teaching evaluations. All high school and junior high head coaches will be evaluated at the end of their season by the athletic coordinator. He/she will sit down with each to discuss their season and complete an evaluation form on the head coach. The head coach will be responsible for evaluating his/her assistant coaches. The head coach should bring these evaluations to his/her end-of-the-year meeting with the athletic coordinator. Final copies of all evaluations should be submitted to the building level principal. The head coach should also bring his/her inventory list to the meeting. Final copies of the evaluation shall be submitted to the building level principal. The head coach should also bring a list of letter winners, indicating how many years they have lettered.

Lettering Policy

Determination of Lettering will be completed by coaches in May of each school year. Letterman jackets will be ordered in the Early Fall Semester for any student who lettered during the previous school year. The student activity fund will pay ½ of the cost of a student's Letterman Jacket. The student and/or parents will be responsible for paying the other half. A standard letterman jacket will include the jacket with School Letter and sport patch(es) that the student earned during that school year. Anything extra must be purchased by the student/parent. Any extra sport patch(es) earned in upcoming years can be purchased by the school for the student.

In order to letter in a sport, the student must complete the following:

- Must be in good athletic and academic standing and complete the season.
- Show marked improvement during the season and from the previous season.
- Be of good character, a good teammate, and a team player.
- Attend all practices, games, meets or matches unless excused by the coach based on communication from a parent or doctor.
- Contribute to the team's success.
- Regular member of the Varsity team.
- Juniors or Seniors who have served as a Team Manager or Statistician for at least 2 consecutive years.
- Injured players may receive a letter, if in the opinion of the head coach, he/she would have participated in the required amount of playing time, if they had not been injured, and also served the team in some capacity while injured.

Multiple Sports Participation

Western Line Schools acknowledges that there are sports whose seasons overlap, and some athletes may have conflicts in scheduling. Sports, in-season, take precedent over tryouts in other sports. In the case of an athlete who wishes to participate in multiple sports and scheduling conflicts arise, it is hoped that the two coaches can arrive at a solution. If no agreement can be reached, then a “playoff game” would take first priority, followed by a “district game” and next a “non-district game” last. Athletes are encouraged to participate in as many sports as they wish, and they should be able to do so without pressure from any coach to limit participation to one sport.

A student athlete who quits one sport to participate in a second sport will not be allowed to play the second sport until the season of the sport he/she quit is over. (Ex. A Student athlete quits basketball to play baseball – the athlete will not be allowed to practice, play or compete in baseball until the basketball season is over.)

Physical Examination Waiver

All athletes are required to complete an “Athletic Clearance Form” that includes insurance information and the Random Drug Testing consent/release. A physical examination must be conducted prior to participating in tryouts, a practice or a game. **Western Line Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student athlete to participate without these forms on file. These documents can be filled out on Dragonfly. All documents and requirements on Dragonfly (<https://www.dragonflymax.com>) must be met prior to participation as well.**

Purchases

Coaches will be allowed to submit a wish list to the athletic coordinator each year. However the athletic department will not be able to purchase everything on the list, so the head coach and athletic coordinator will have to prioritize the list. The head coach will need to get two quotes. Once the quotes have been received the head coach and athletic coordinator will make the decision on what items will be purchased. The athletic department will work with the business office to get a purchase order for those items. Purchasing will follow Western Line procedures and must be approved by the athletic coordinator for the school. **Failure to follow proper procedures will result in a reprimand and possibly the coach being responsible for the value of the items.** Vendors must be willing to accept Western Line School District purchase orders.

School Attendance on Game Day (Practice)

In order to be counted present, a student athlete must be in attendance for at least half of the class periods (4). In order to participate in any extracurricular activity (including daily practices), a student must attend school a minimum of four (4) periods on the day of the activity. A student athlete who is absent with permission for a school-related activity will be considered to have attended school the required minimum of four periods on the day of the activity. These same guidelines apply to coaches. **Coaches must be present in order to participate in activities associated with an extracurricular activity – practice, games, banquets, etc. It is the coach's responsibility to check school attendance for his/her players on athletic and/or extracurricular days.**

Student Athlete Eligibility

All coaches must be knowledgeable of and comply with MHSAA rules governing eligibility of student athletes, which require that a contestant must:

- a. Have enrolled no later than the 15th day of any semester of participation, carry the required number of subjects for graduation by their local district, and deport himself/herself satisfactorily;
- b. Not have become nineteen (19) years of age prior to August 1 (\$1,000 fine to the coach for this infraction);
- c. Not be a graduate of a four-year high school;
- d. Not have enrolled in college or junior college or participated in athletics beyond the high school level;
- e. Be a student whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are (1) bona fide residents of the district or (2) are instructional personnel or licensed employees of the district;
- f. Have a certified copy of his/her birth certificate on file with the school
- g. See MHSAA handbook for recognized exceptions

Eligibility for student athletics is now checked twice a year – at the end of the school year for fall eligibility and at the end of the fall semester for spring eligibility. In order to be eligible, a student athlete must have a 2.0 (70) GPA and be on track to graduate.

It is the coach's responsibility to check all of your student athletes for eligibility. If you have any questions, you need to consult the athletic coordinator before allowing the student athlete to compete.

New students to the District must complete a transfer student form that must be signed off by their previous school and the MHSAA before they are able to compete.

Tryouts

The MHSAA requires that a sport that begins in the fall must have its tryouts in the spring semester. A sport that begins in the spring must have its tryouts in the fall semester. The date(s) of your tryout must be approved by MHSAA. Coaches need to submit your tryout date(s) to the athletic coordinator well in advance and should not conduct tryouts until you date(s) have been approved by the MHSAA.

Weight Room

A well-organized weight program is essential to a competitive athletic program. Western Line coaches are encouraged to allow student athletes to use the weight room when supervised.

Athletes are prohibited from working out in the weight room without the supervision of the football coach and/or another coach.

Game/Event Admission

Admission to games and events are as follows:

All High School Events

Student/Adult	\$7.00
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Jr High Football/Basketball

Student/Adult	\$5.00
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ATHLETIC FORMS

Physical Form: A generic physical form is in the athletic office, or it can be downloaded from the Internet at www.westernline.org. From here, you can link on to the athletic page. All athletes must have a physical **prior to tryouts**. Doctors can use their own physical forms as long as they designate the athlete can participate in the sport or all sports he/she is trying out for.

Western Line Schools will discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student athlete to participate without a physical form on file.

Athletic/Extracurricular/Co-Curricular Activity Participation Clearance:

This form covers three (3) things and is available online:

- (1) The Parent/Guardian waiver allowing the student athlete to participate
- (2) The Random Drug Testing permission
- (3) The insurance information for the athlete.

This form must be turned in **prior to tryouts**. **Western Line Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student athlete to participate without this form on file.**

Concussion Form: This is a new form from the MHSAA this fall (2013) and must be signed by each athlete each year. This form must be turned in **prior to tryouts**. Western Line Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student athlete to participate without a concussion form on file.

Emergency Medical Authorization: This form must be filled out for all athletes and **must be kept with the coach at all times**. If an athlete has a medical emergency, this form gives all the necessary information for medical personnel treating the athlete.

MEALS/SACK LUNCHES

Any coach requesting sack lunches from the cafeteria must submit in writing/e-mail the dates to the athletic office **at least 2 weeks prior to the request**. The cafeteria must have sufficient time to order the necessary supplies to make these meals. Arrangements must be made with the cafeteria to pick up the lunches on time. Most of the time the cafeteria workers are gone by the end of the day, so please keep this in mind when needing to pick meals up. The cafeteria workers have always gone “above and beyond” to help the teams out with making the sack lunches, so please take care of picking them up. Once you start picking them up, please make sure that your athletes do not waste the food. If they are not eating the meals, cancel the orders. These sack lunches will be for teams that will be traveling or unable to go home after school.

If you are requesting money for meals, **this request also needs to be done 30 days in advance in order to get a check processed**. The head coach will be responsible for returning any receipts and any change to the business office.

EVALUATION FORMS FOR HEAD COACHES

The evaluation forms for all head coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic coordinator’s office. The athletic coordinator will inform all head coaches of these expectations and review the head coach’s progress at an end-of-the year meeting at the conclusion of their sport. Both the athletic coordinator and head coach will sign the forms and file them in the head coach’s file. The head coach will be given a copy of the forms for his/her file.

EVALUATION FORMS FOR ASSISTANT COACHES

The evaluation forms for all assistant coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic coordinator’s office. All head coaches, High School and Junior High School,

should complete an evaluation form on all of your assistant coaches at the conclusion of your season. Both the head coach and the assistant coach will sign the forms and the head coach should bring them with him/her to his end-of-the-year meeting with the athletic coordinator. The assistant coach(es) will be given a copy of the forms for his/her file.

Outline of Sports / Activities offered at O'Bannon High School

Fall

Cross-Country

Football

Volleyball

Winter

Basketball – Men / Women

E-Sports

Spring

Archery

Baseball

Softball – Fast Pitch

Track – Men/Women

Flag Football - Women

All Year:

Band – Jr. High / High School

Auxiliary/Dance - High School

Cheer – Jr. High / High School

Choir – Jr. High / High School

Outline of Sports / Activities offered at Riverside High School

Fall

Football

Volleyball

Winter

Basketball – Men/Women

E-Sports

Soccer – Men/Women

Spring

Archery

Baseball

Softball

Track – Men/Women

All Year:

Band – Jr. High and High School

Cheer – Jr. High / High School

Choir – Jr. High / High School