



THATCHER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

COACH HANDBOOK

Academic School Year

2026 - 2027

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THATCHER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT COACHES HANDBOOK

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Purpose

This handbook provides guidelines, expectations, and procedures for all coaches and sponsors representing Thatcher Unified School District No. 4. As leaders of educationally based athletic programs, coaches play a vital role in the growth and development of student-athletes both on and off the field of play.

Athletics are an extension of the classroom and an integral part of the educational experience. Through participation in athletics, students learn valuable life skills such as teamwork, leadership, responsibility, perseverance, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and respect for others. Coaches are expected to support the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of every student-athlete while fostering a positive and inclusive team culture.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Coaches are entrusted with the education, development, supervision, and safety of student-athletes and are expected to model and promote the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, accountability, sportsmanship, and excellence.

All coaches are expected to enforce the standards outlined in this handbook, district policies, conference regulations, and Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) bylaws. The success of Thatcher Unified School District's athletic programs will be measured not only by competitive achievement, but also by the character, conduct, and personal growth of the students we serve.

Athletic Department Philosophy

The Thatcher Athletic Department believes that athletics are an extension of the educational program. Our programs are designed to:

1. Promote academic achievement and personal responsibility.
 2. Develop teamwork, leadership, and character.
 3. Encourage respect for opponents, officials, teammates, and the community.
 4. Foster school pride and community involvement.
 5. Provide opportunities for student growth through competition.
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Coach's Code of Ethics

All coaches shall:

1. Abide by all Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA), district, and school regulations.
 2. Exemplify professionalism and ethical behavior.
 3. Treat athletes, parents, officials, and opponents with respect.
 4. Promote good sportsmanship at all times.
 5. Refrain from public criticism of TUSD School District, schools, teachers, officials, opposing teams, players, coaches, administrators, or the AIA.
 6. Maintain a safe and positive environment for all participants.
 7. Support the educational mission of the district.
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Coaching Requirements

To be eligible to coach, a coach must complete these requirements.

1. Fingerprint Clearance Card
 2. NFHS Courses
 - a. Fundamentals of Coaching
 - b. Coaching
 - c. Heat Illnesses
 - d. Cardiac Arrest
 - e. Prevent Abuse in Students
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Coach Responsibilities

Each coach is responsible for:

3. Submitting team rosters to the Athletic Director prior to the first contest.
 4. Verifying athlete eligibility, including physicals, insurance, registration, and participation fees by using Final Forms.
 5. Attending required coaches meetings.
 6. Supervising athletes during practices, contests, travel, and locker room use.
 7. Ensuring compliance with all district and AIA rules.
 8. Communicating expectations clearly to athletes and parents before the season begins.
 9. Reporting injuries, incidents, and disciplinary concerns promptly.
 10. Maintaining appropriate records and documentation with Administration and in Final Forms.
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Student Supervision and Safety

Coaches must prioritize student safety at all times and have a supervision plan.

Coaches shall:

1. Be present and actively supervise all practices and contests.
2. Ensure facilities and equipment are safe for use.
3. Follow district concussion, heat illness, and emergency procedures.
4. Report all injuries to the Athletic Director and parents as soon as possible.
5. Incident Reports must be submitted in a timely manner.
6. Never leave students unsupervised during athletic activities.

Communication Expectations

Coaches are expected to maintain professional communication with athletes and parents.

Communication should:

1. Use district-approved platforms.
 2. Be respectful, timely, and appropriate.
 3. Focus on team expectations, schedules, and athlete development.
 4. Avoid discussing confidential student information in public settings.
 5. Avoid discussing other students with or in front of other students.
 6. Report any negative student or parent communication directly to administration.
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Eligibility and Participation Requirements

Coaches must ensure that all athletes meet eligibility requirements before participation.

Requirements include:

1. Current physical examination.
 2. Completed registration and required forms.
 3. Proof of insurance or enrollment in school insurance.
 4. Payment of applicable participation fees.
 5. Compliance with academic eligibility standards.
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Attendance Policies

Student-athletes must attend the entire school day on the day of a contest in order to participate that day.

For weekend contests, student-athletes must be in attendance on the final instructional day of the school week in order to participate.

Any exceptions must be approved by school administration prior to participation.

Excessive or unexcused absences from school, practices, or team activities may result in disciplinary action, suspension from competition, or dismissal from the team.

Transportation Policies

Athletes are expected to travel to and from contests using district-provided transportation.

Students participating in activity trips remain under school supervision for the duration of the trip.

Students may only be released to a parent or legal guardian who signs the student out with the coach following the event or through prior administrative approval.

Only school administration has the authority to approve the release of a student to an individual other than the parent or legal guardian.

Requests for alternate transportation arrangements must be submitted in advance and approved by administration.

Equipment and Uniform Management

Coaches are responsible for all equipment issued to their teams.

Coaches shall:

1. Maintain an inventory of uniforms and equipment.
 2. Issue equipment responsibly.
 3. Establish a uniform return date at the end of the season.
 4. Report missing or damaged equipment to the Athletic Director.
 5. Ensure all equipment is stored securely.
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Travel Procedures

For away contests and overnight trips:

1. Travel requests and paperwork must be submitted in advance.
 2. Head Coaches must travel with the team and supervise athletes throughout the trip.
 3. Meal and lodging arrangements must be coordinated through the Athletic Director.
 4. Receipts for all expenditures must be submitted to the district office within three days of returning.
 5. Adequate Supervision on transportation.
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Discipline and Conduct Expectations

Coaches are expected to enforce team rules fairly and consistently.

Disciplinary actions may include:

1. Verbal warning
2. Parent conference
3. Suspension from practice
4. Suspension from contests
5. Dismissal from the team

Serious violations involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, bullying, hazing, theft, fighting, or other misconduct will be referred to administration and may result in additional school and athletic consequences.

Fundraising Guidelines

All team fundraising activities must:

1. Receive prior approval from administration and the school board when required.
 2. Follow district financial procedures and fundraising guidelines.
 3. Be conducted in a manner that reflects positively on the school and community.
 4. Include accurate accounting and reporting of funds.
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Coaching Own Children

Coaches who have children participating in their program must make objective decisions regarding team selection, playing time, and discipline.

Consultation with assistant coaches and administration is encouraged to ensure fairness and maintain public confidence in the program.

Awards and Recognition

Coaches may recommend athletes for awards based on participation, achievement, leadership, sportsmanship, and team contribution.

All award recommendations must be submitted to the Athletic Director according to established timelines.

Varsity coaches must attend region and conference athlete selection meetings.

Appendices and Forms

Coaches are responsible for completing and submitting all required forms, including:

- Team roster
- Injury reports
- Travel requests
- Fundraising requests
- Equipment inventory sheets
- Award recommendations

EXHIBIT A

JICFA © HAZING

There shall be no hazing, solicitation to engage in hazing, or aiding and abetting another who is engaged in hazing of any person enrolled, accepted for or promoted to enrollment, or intending to enroll or be promoted to District schools within twelve (12) calendar months. For purposes of this policy a person as specified above shall be considered a "student" until graduation, transfer, promotion or withdrawal from the District school.

"Hazing" means an act in violation of section §[13-1215](#) or [13-1216](#).

"Organization" means an athletic team, association, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or similar group that is affiliated with an educational institution and whose membership consists primarily of students enrolled at that educational institution.

It is no defense to a violation of this policy if the victim consented or acquiesced to hazing. In accord with statute, violations of this policy do not include either of the following:

A. Customary athletic events, contests or competitions that are sponsored by an educational institution.

B. Any activity or conduct that furthers the goals of a legitimate educational curriculum, a legitimate extracurricular program, or a legitimate military training program.

All students, teachers and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy.

Students and others may report hazing to any professional staff member.

Professional staff members must report the incident to the school administrator or next higher administrative supervisor, in writing, with such details as may have been provided. A failure by a staff member to timely inform the school administrator or next higher administrative supervisor of a hazing allegation or their observation of an incident of hazing may subject the staff member to disciplinary action in accord with District policies. The staff member shall preserve the confidentiality of those involved, disclosing the incident only to the appropriate school administrator or next higher administrative supervisor or as otherwise required by law. Any instance of reported or observed hazing which includes possible child abuse or violations of statutes known to the staff member shall be treated in accord with statutory requirements and be reported to a law enforcement agency.

To assure that students and staff are aware of its content and intent, a notice of this policy and procedure shall be posted conspicuously in each school building and shall be made a part of the rights and responsibilities section of the student handbook. Forms for submitting complaints are to be available to students and staff in the school offices.

Disposition of all reports/complaints shall be reported to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will determine if the policies of the District have been appropriately implemented and will make such reports and/or referrals to the Board as may be necessary.

All violations of this policy shall be treated in accord with the appropriate procedures and penalties provided for in District policies related to the conduct and discipline of students, staff, and others.

Adopted: <-- z2AdoptionDate -->

LEGAL REF.: A.R.S.

[13-1215](#)

[13-1216](#)

[15-341](#)

[15-2301](#)

CROSS REF.: [GBEB](#) - Staff Conduct [JIC](#) - Student Conduct [JII](#) - Student Concerns, Complaints and Grievances [JK](#) - Student Discipline [JKD](#) - Student Suspension [JKE](#) - Student Expulsion [JICF](#) - Secret Societies/Gang Activities [KFA](#) - Public Conduct on School Property