

*Student/Parent
Athletic Handbook
2024-2025*



Student-Athletes and Academic Priorities

Student-athletes attend Escambia County Schools for a quality education. Nothing should interfere with this objective. Athletics are a part of education, requiring student-athletes to use discipline and demonstrate good work habits in organizing a study schedule which will help lead to academic success. A student's grades should not suffer because of athletics; however, academic difficulties can occur because of a student's inability to organize their workload adequately.

Participation in athletics requires a great deal of personal commitment from the student-athlete. Each student-athlete is expected to organize and discipline him/herself so that academic and athletic endeavors do not conflict. Coaches, sponsors, and administrators have the right to determine student participation in all activities based on academic, behavior, and attendance records. Students first have an obligation to perform in the classroom on a daily basis with acceptable academics, exemplary behavior, and consistent attendance. Participation (not eligibility) decisions for all extra-curricular activities will be made by evaluating each student, making the final decision with the student's academic, behavior, and attendance record in mind.

SPORTSMANSHIP

A policy statement from the National Federation of State High School Associations expresses the concept of sportsmanship as follows:

“The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, awareness is expected of the impact of an individual's influence on the behavior of others. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity.”

We have a duty to teach and equip our young people for the future. Sportsmanship must be taught, modeled, expected and reinforced in the

classroom and in all of our Escambia County Schools' competitive activities. Knowing that athletics has become an integral part of the total educational program in Alabama high schools, we must embrace the concepts of good sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship requires that everyone be treated with respect. This includes members of the opposing team, officials, coaches and spectators. The contest is exciting but winning at any cost is not the goal. Negative treatment of any participant is outside the spirit and interest of the contest.

All AHSAA sanctioned events are a reflection of our community and school. The conduct of the team is extended to parents and fans before, during, and after athletic events.

Expectations of all Escambia County Schools' staff, students, and stakeholders

Coaches:

1. Follow the rules of the contest at all times.
2. Avoid offensive language and gestures.
3. Accept the decisions of contest officials.
4. Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
5. Avoid public criticism of game officials.
6. Teach sportsmanship and reward/acknowledge players that display good sportsmanship.
7. Be a role model for our players and the community.
8. Accommodate the officials as per the AHSAA handbook guidelines.

Student/Athletes:

1. Show respect for opponents, coaches and game officials at all times.
2. Accept the decisions of contest officials.
3. Avoid offensive language and gestures.
4. Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
5. Follow the rules of the game.
6. Show respect for public property and equipment.

Parents/Spectators

1. Avoid criticism of game officials, players and sideline coaching which may sidetrack athletes from their performance.
2. Work cooperatively with contest officials and supervisors in keeping order.
3. Stay off playing areas while the athletic contest is in progress.
4. Show respect for opposing teams, cheerleaders and bands
5. Show respect for public property and equipment.
6. Avoid offensive language and gestures.
7. Adhere to rules and regulations set forth by the home school principal or administrator in charge of the athletic contest.

All AHSAA sanctioned events are a reflection of our community and school. The conduct of the team is extended to parents and fans before, during, and after athletic events.

***The principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent or acting administrator at all athletic events may determine that a spectator be removed from the contest and the premises at any point if necessary if it is determined that any of the above regulations regarding parents/spectators are not followed. If the spectator fails to comply with the request, local law enforcement or the school resource officer may be called to enforce the administrator's request.

***Assault of sports officials, coaches, or administrators (SB-16): This bill became law on March 31, 2002, and creates new crimes of harassing, menacing, and assaulting sports officials, coaches, and administrators. The punishments are harsher than normal for convictions of harassment, menacing, and assault. For example, a second-degree assault can carry a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, but under the new law, a second-degree assault of a sports official, coach, or administrator could result in a sentence of up to 20 years in prison.

AHSAA MEMBER

As a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association, AHSAA, we are required to follow all policies and procedures included in the “Eligibility Bylaws” handbook and Sports Book. Below is a link to these documents.

[AHSAA Publications Bylaws](#)

CONDUCT RULE/EJECTION PENALTIES

As per the AHSAA handbook...

Penalties for coaches and players ejected from one or more contests are as follows:

- First Ejection:

A \$300 fine (An athlete’s fine can be reduced to \$100 if the athlete being ejected takes the online STAR Behavioral Mode and payment is made within 10 days of the date of the ejection.)

Second Ejection:

A one-game suspension and a \$500 fine

- Third Ejection:

Minimum penalty of a suspension for the remainder of the season plus a \$750 fine

****All fines/contest suspensions will be reviewed by the school principal and are subject to be paid by the athlete or coach who is fined.**

Note: If any of the ejections or suspensions occurs during the last contest of the season, a monetary fine will be placed on the school. All fines are due within 30 days.

Leaving The Bench Ejection: If players come off the bench onto the court or field and are ejected under National Federation rules, they will also be suspended for 20 percent of the team’s total number of regular season contests. A tournament would count as one contest except in championship play where the suspension would be in effect contest by contest.

COMMUNICATION

For our athletic teams to be successful, all involved must work together to ensure proper communication. The following information is intended to help our Escambia County students/athletes to have a positive experience in our programs. Each coach will conduct a preseason parent meeting to discuss issues specific to his or her sport. The meeting dates and times should be documented. An official agenda and parent sign in should be submitted to the principal upon completion of the meeting. General guidelines for all sports are as follows:

Coach’s Communication to Parents Will Include:

1. Information on coach’s philosophy
2. Location and times of practices and games
3. Coach’s expectations for players and parents
4. Team requirements
5. Team fees
6. Request for parental support in helping the student/athletes succeed in the program

Parent's Communication to the Coach Will Include

1. Individual concerns expressed directly to the coach: This shall include the treatment of their child, areas that the student/athlete can improve and concerns of their child's behavior. It is not appropriate to discuss playing time, team strategy or other student/athletes.
2. Advance notification of any schedule conflict.

Procedure to Discuss a Concern with a Coach:

1. No parent has the right to enter a dugout/bench area/sideline to discuss issues with their child or coach during an athletic contest.
2. Make an appointment with the coach.
3. Please adhere to the 24 hour rule when attempting discussions with the coaching staff.
Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during or after a game/practice.
This can be an emotional time for both the parent and coach.

After meeting with the athletic director and coach, if the parent is still not satisfied with the result, then he/she should contact the principal.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY (AHSAA)

Eligibility Requirements

All AHSAA academic requirements for participation in middle school and high school athletics will be followed. Reference comprehensive Eligibility Bylaws at [AHSAA Publications_Bylaws](#)

Residency Requirements

All student athletes must meet the residency requirements of the Escambia County Board of Education as well as all requirements that the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) may impose. Students whose parents make a bona fide move completely out of one school district into another may transfer all of his/her rights and privileges to the member school that serves the area where his/her parents reside.

AHSAA guidelines determining a **bona fide move include:

1. Household furniture of the family must be moved.
2. All principal members of the family must reside in the new place of residence.
3. The original residence should be closed, rented or disposed of and not used by the family.
4. Nine months at the new residence will be required to make a bona fide move.

Before a student's name is sent for eligibility approval, the following items must be completed:

- Birth Certificate – Every student athlete must have on file a valid birth certificate in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. A passport is accepted for students from another country.
- Physical - In order for a student to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, he or she must have a current AHSAA Physical Form on file at the school. A physical is considered valid for 1 calendar year from the month the physical is taken.
The Physical MUST be performed by an M.D. or a D.O. (Not a Nurse Practitioner).
- Sportsmanship Requirement – In order for a student to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, he or she must complete the “STAR Sportsmanship Course”. Make sure each athlete prints a copy of the certificate as proof of completion.
- AHSAA Participation/Release Form – In order for the state to calculate the academic eligibility of each student-athlete, the parent and student-athlete must sign a participation/release form.
- Signed Concussion Form – As required by the State Legislature.
- Student in Good Standing Form – Transfer student enrolling in a new AHSAA member school.

INSURANCE

Student athletes are required to be covered under medical insurance provided by the family. Insurance verification form is in the form section. If the family does not have medical insurance, then they will need to purchase the Student Insurance Plan from K&K Insurance Group. Parents can enroll their child anytime by visiting this website <https://www.kandkinsurance.com/sites/K12Voluntary/Pages/Home.aspx> .

In case of an injury, click on this link to access an injury claims form.

Doctor Visits

Medical expenses are the responsibility of the athlete/family. Written verification from the doctor is required when a physician removes an athlete from practices or games. Written verification from the doctor is required to return to athletic competition.

CHANGING A SPORT/QUITTING A TEAM

If a student athlete is removed from or does not make a team, he/she may join another team or program in that sport season unless the student is removed for a major discipline issue. A student athlete cannot quit one sport to join another sport until that sport season is concluded (this includes playoffs). For example, one cannot quit football to participate in basketball until football season is completed. However, athletes will be allowed to transfer from one sport to another during a given season upon mutual agreement of both coaches and school principal.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

Social Media: Social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and other digital platforms and distribution mechanisms facilitate students communicating with other students. Participation in such media has both positive appeal and potentially negative consequences. It is important for the Escambia County Schools student athletes to be aware of these consequences and exercise appropriate caution if they choose to participate. Student athletes are not restricted from using any online social media site. However, users must understand that any content they make public via online social media should follow acceptable social behaviors as student athletes serve as role models and ambassadors for the schools. These guidelines are intended to provide a framework for student athletes to conduct themselves safely and responsibly in an online environment.

As a student-athlete in Escambia County Schools should:

1. Be aware that potential current and future employers, college admissions and recruiting offices often access information you place on social networking sites. You should think about any information you post on social media platforms potentially providing an image of you to a prospective employer or school. The information is considered public information. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image that you can be proud of years from now.

****Do not have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. Online social network sites are NOT a place where you can say and do whatever you want without any repercussions.**

2. Remember photos put on the social network site's server become their property. You may delete the photo from your profile, but it still stays on their server. Internet search engines like Google or Yahoo may still find that image long after you have deleted it from your profile. Think long and hard about what type of photo you want to represent you.

Things student athletes should avoid:

1. Threatening language or remarks directed at teammates or coaches; other Escambia County student athletes, teachers, coaches, athletics administrators or representatives of other schools.
2. Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence, bullying, hazing, sexual harassment, vandalism, stalking, underage drinking, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances or any other inappropriate behaviors that has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the school.
3. Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person or to the school.
4. Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation—regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional.
5. Statements, communications, or posts that cause a substantial disruption at

- school and/or could reasonably be expected to cause a substantial disruption.
6. Using social media for inappropriate posts while at school, during a school-related event, and/or to or from school or a school-related event.

****All student athletes are subject to the school code of conduct at all times in regard to social media posts and activity. Any posts or online activity that a student-athlete engages in (whether during or after school hours) that portrays a negative image for the school or Escambia County as determined by the head coach and school principal will result in discipline aligned with the Escambia County Schools Code of Conduct.**

STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Student athletes shall not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs such as marijuana, controlled drug substances (hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, or any other narcotic or controlled drug) or possess, use or transmit paraphernalia for use of such substances. (Use of an authorized drug as prescribed by a registered physician will not constitute a violation.)
2. Violation of school rules, the Student Code of Conduct, disruptive behavior, showing disrespect toward school staff, unsportsmanlike conduct, sexting and/or committing any act or offense that causes a substantial disruption to school and/or disparages Escambia County Schools and/or that has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the school will not be tolerated and such action(s) may lead to discipline, including but not limited to eligibility restrictions, probations, and/or suspension or removal from a team. Removal from the team is determined by the head coach and must be approved by the school principal. This is a local school decision.
3. A student who is uncooperative, i.e. violates the student code of conduct repeatedly, sleeps in class, disrupts, refuses to complete work, etc., will be considered a discipline problem which could result in suspension from athletic competition or dismissal from the team. Coaches may withhold participation for not meeting grade requirements as long as that information is shared with the athletes and parents before the season begins.
4. Team members are expected to be present at all practices, meetings and games. Doctor's appointments or other similar outside activities should be arranged to avoid conflicts with practices or games.
5. Coaches may determine student participation in athletic events based on practice attendance, skills, effort, team strategy, and understanding of rules.
6. Any serious breach of school policies, both on and/or off campus, could result in suspension of athletic participation and/or removal from the team. Removal from the team is determined by the head coach and must be approved by the school principal. This is a local school decision.
7. Students suspended from school and/or expelled will not be allowed to participate in athletic events while they are on suspension and/or expelled. If a student has to attend an after-school detention hall, the student will be required to attend the detention over any athletic activity.
8. Attendance in school is very important. If a student is absent for more than half of the school day, each coach should investigate the reasoning and determine if the student should participate in any athletic event that afternoon/evening.
9. Team uniforms are the property of the school and should only be worn during athletic contests. Uniforms should be returned to the coach immediately after the season has been completed. Lost uniforms are the responsibility of the athlete. If an athlete loses or damages a uniform (other than the normal wear and tear), he or she is responsible for reimbursing the school full replacement cost for the uniform.

10. Travel attire to away games for students is up to the head coach. Regardless of the specifications, Escambia County student athletes should project a favorable image of the team and the school.
11. Student athletes are expected to maintain high standards of behavior and sportsmanship. Use of profanity and displays of anger toward teammates, coaches, officials, opponents, and fans will not be tolerated. Any infringement could result in disciplinary action.
12. Hazing and bullying is intolerable in any form and will result in disciplinary action.
13. Coaches are not allowed to give private lessons or extra help and receive compensation in any form to student athletes trying out for teams they will be choosing.

ATHLETICS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Participation and Access. In accordance with Board policy and Federal laws individuals are prohibited from denying a person with a qualifying disability the opportunity to participate in or benefit from extracurricular activities, such as team sports and athletics, solely on the basis of his or her disability. A school or team, may however, deny participation in an athletic program if the school can show that the modification would represent a fundamental alteration to the athletic program. A modification is likely fundamental if it changes such an essential aspect of the activity or game that it would be unacceptable even if it affected all competitors equally.

Reasonable Accommodations. Schools should take steps to ensure that students with qualifying disabilities receive opportunities for participation in athletics equal to those of their nondisabled peers. School systems are expected to provide reasonable accommodations to a student with a disability in order to allow him or her to equally participate in an extracurricular activity. If a student cannot participate in an activity even with reasonable accommodations, a school may appropriately deny a student participation in the activity. Coaches should be aware of those students on his or her team that have a disability. If a student or parent requests a reasonable accommodation to be given to a student-athlete or a potential student-athlete, they should contact the athletic director and principal.

Student/Parent Handbook Participation Agreement Form

I have read and understand the requirements and expectations for student-athletes and parents/guardians regarding participation in athletics in Escambia County, Al Schools.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student-Athlete Printed Name

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

***Please remove and return this form only to the coach of the team for which you participate. Only one form per student needs to be signed each year. A student may not participate until form is returned to the coach.