

**ATHLETIC POLICIES FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE**  
**HOUSTON I.S.D.**

Mission

The Houston ISD Athletic Department, working cooperatively with its parents and community, will strive to provide a safe, student-athlete centered environment; an environment that will be responsive to the individual needs of each student-athlete and will promote a climate of openness and respect. The athletic department, community, and parents will work collaboratively to instill accountability, adaptability, competitiveness, maturity and readiness to prepare each student-athlete for future endeavors.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the Houston Independent School District competitive sports program is to maintain a broad-based program that will afford all students with athletic interests and abilities an opportunity for safe and healthful participation in the sports of their choice. This philosophy is based on the concept that there is a need for physical development and fitness for every student, as well as a variance of interest, abilities, and desires.

Objectives of the Houston I.S.D. Athletic Department

The purpose of the athletic program is to do more than provide competition between two individuals and/or two schools. It is to teach fair play, sportsmanship, the understanding and appreciation of teamwork, the teaching of discipline, and that to quit means failure and hard work means eventual success. We will attempt to accomplish this general objective as outlined below.

1. Involve as many students as possible in a safe and positive athletic environment.
2. Instill work ethic, accountability, sound morals, exemplary citizenship, and a high standard of sportsmanship in the student-athletes of the Houston Independent School District.
3. Encourage students to grow physically, mentally, morally, and socially.
4. Develop all programs in such a manner that the end result will be one of unity, harmony, and success. Mass participation is to be emphasized and encouraged below the high school varsity level. Students will be encouraged to participate in multi-sports at all levels of competition.
5. Instill in all athletes the desire to represent their school and community in a manner that will make school administrators, teachers, parents, and other citizens proud of them.

Participation in the athletic program and/or University Interscholastic League contests is not a right but a **PRIVILEGE**. No student is required to take part in the athletic programs. Therefore, it is imperative that all students taking part in the program understand the following athletic code and conform to the rules therein, and that the coaches of the sport or activities and the athletic director shall have every right to remove these privileges.

Athletic Council:

In order to maintain consistency in our programs throughout the district, we have formulated an Athletic Council. The Athletic Council shall consist of the Campus Coordinators; the head coach of the sport involved, a campus administrator, and an Athletic Director. If the Athletic Council convenes to determine infractions and an athlete's status, a parent of the athlete shall be contacted by the head coach.

Athletic Grooming Code

Participation in competitive athletics is completely voluntary on the part of all students. To participate in athletics in Houston Independent School District, there are certain standards which must be maintained, one of which is acceptable grooming. Specific standards are necessary for the following reasons:

**SAFETY:** It is almost impossible to get a safe fit in football helmets if the hair is exceptionally long.

**HEALTH and HYGIENE:** Facial cuts or lacerations are more susceptible to infection and first aid is more difficult to administer when facial hair is present.

**UNIFORMITY:** Athletes will travel to other towns, communities, schools, restaurants, etc., as representatives of the Houston Independent School District; therefore, they should be groomed in a manner that our community, school, and sponsors will be proud of.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE:** One of the rewards of being an athlete is learning self-discipline. There is no better way to acquire self-discipline than to make sacrifices. Giving up certain fads of dress and appearance is a very small sacrifice.

No athlete should be groomed or dressed in such a way as to draw special attention to himself / herself. This takes away from the team concept, which is basic to the philosophy and success of the program. Grooming should also be conducive to good health and to proper fitting equipment, and should not in any way, be a hindrance to his/her performance.

Therefore, the grooming policy for athletic participation is as follows:

*\* As stated in the Houston ISD Parent/Student Handbook, male and female hair should be neatly groomed at all times with no adornments.*

*\* As stated in the Houston ISD Parent/Student Handbook, facial hair shall be neatly groomed at all times and not be a disruption or distraction.*

*\* As stated in the Houston ISD Parent/Student Handbook high school students may have their ears pierced. No body piercing will be permitted.*

*\* Tattoos are to be covered up during the school day and should not be of the obscene and vulgar nature.*

*\* Gang related apparel (colors, caps, bandanas, etc.) will not be allowed. Pants must be worn at the waist at all times.*

*\*The athlete should be neatly dressed for competition. Each team member is to be dressed exactly the same while participating in an event. Every piece of equipment worn by the athlete should be identical to his team members with the exception of shoes. Game uniform shirrtails must be worn in at all times unless top is designed otherwise.*

### Quitting the Team

Think hard before you decide to go out for a sport. Athletics takes a lot of hard work, time, and dedication. Any participant who quits a sport after they have begun will not be allowed to participate in any other sport until the regular season has ended in the sport that he/she quit. The only exception to this will be by a consensus of the athletic council. Participants will not be allowed to participate again at all in the sport that they quit, unless they have consensus from all coaches involved. Any athlete who quits a team will revoke the right of any awards, letter jackets and all awards at post season.

### Athletic Periods

The athletic period during the school day is designed to enhance the mental and physical development of the athlete. If an athlete does not participate in a particular sport's off season program then they will not be allowed to play in the following year without approval from the Head Coach and Athletic Council.

### Equipment

The athletic budget provides sufficient money to field well-equipped teams in all sports. With proper care, it can be kept in use for longer periods of time, thus allowing some of the money designated for new equipment to be used in other areas of the athletic program.

Proper care of equipment relies basically on the use of common sense. This includes keeping equipment as clean as possible at all times and repairing equipment as soon as possible after damaging.

Poorly fitting and/or damaged equipment can be a hindrance to any athletic team and can often lead to unnecessary and costly injuries. Take a little more time at the beginning of the season in order to get a good fit. Inform your manager or coach if your equipment does not fit properly, and check your equipment daily for needed repairs.

Do not keep equipment checked out that you are not using.

Do not use someone else's equipment. If you do not have or cannot find yours, check with your coach. The athlete is financially responsible for all equipment that has been issued to him/her.

Football helmets will be inspected weekly by the coach and athlete.

### Practice Regulations

1. A coach must be notified if any athlete must miss a practice or game. Missing a game or practice without notification may result in suspension or removal from the team as determined by the Athletic Council. Additionally, approved missed practices may result in makeup conditioning for the athlete.
2. Obey all rules set up by the coach.
3. Profanity will not be tolerated.
4. Poor effort will not be tolerated.
5. It must be understood at the high school level, playing time is at the discretion of the coach.
6. At the middle school level, the coaches will make every effort to play every athlete in each contest but the amount of playing time is not guaranteed.

## Travel

All athletes in middle schools and high schools represent the community and school. Therefore, it is expected that all will dress in an acceptable manner on trips and conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with this code. Violations will result in suspension from the next contest, and any incident of a serious nature may result in suspension and possible expulsion from the team or program.

1. Be on time for all trips.
2. Dress neatly as directed by the coach. A travel shirt is recommended for athletes, managers, and trainers.
3. Be mannerly in restaurants.
4. Show respect for the opposing team's facilities. Make sure not to abuse dressing areas in any way.
5. No gambling on trips.
6. All athletes making the trip on the bus will return on the bus unless in an emergency situation or when parents are present and there is good reason for returning with parents. The travel release form must be filled out by the student and signed by his/her parents prior to the trip if they are to return with their parents. Upon checking out with their coach the athlete is to immediately leave the facility.

**Athletes are never to ride with anyone other than their own parents or those individuals listed in E-School.**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE HOUSTON ISD STUDENT ATHLETE**

### Academic Progress

Coaches will monitor the academic progress of student athletes. In the event that an athlete encounters chronic academic problems, the coach, along with the Athletic Council will consider if continuation in the athletic program is in the best interest of the student athlete regarding their academic progress.

### Behavior on the Field

Student athlete's behavior on the field should be unquestionable. Athletes are on display. They not only represent themselves but their community, school, coaches, team and family. Inappropriate displays of anger and disrespect will not be tolerated. The student athlete must learn to deal with situations where things fail to go as they might desire. An athlete should never use profanity or illegal tactics. Any type of expulsion from a contest will result in some type of game suspension in the next scheduled contest.

### Classroom Behavior

In addition to maintaining good grades, Houston ISD athletes will be expected to participate in classroom activities and show respect for other students and faculty members at all times. Athletes are expected to not engage in inappropriate disciplinary behavior. A good attendance record is important for athletes. Student athletes should notify their coaches when they are absent. Any athlete who consistently exhibits repeated poor classroom behavior or is consistently absent from class will be reviewed and may result in suspension or permanent suspension from the team, depending on the nature and consistency of the problem.

### Behavior outside of School

Athletes must remember their behavior outside of school is just as important as their behavior during school. Athletes will be held to a higher standard and therefore their behavioral expectations will be the same. They represent the District, School and community **at all times including summer months**. Inappropriate behavior outside of school will not be tolerated. The Athletic Council will determine punishment for all offenses outside of school as well as inside school!

### Suspension from School

If an athlete is suspended from school for any reason, he/she will be ineligible during the period of suspension. A second suspension in the same school year will result in review by the Athletic Council and may result in the total expulsion from athletics for the remainder of the school year. This includes on and off campus suspension (JJAEP, DAEP, OSS ISS included). This means they may not participate in practice or a game after school during the suspension. They may be in street clothes and watch the practice or game.

### Criminal Activities

If a student athlete is arrested and charged with a felony crime, he/she will automatically be suspended from the athletic activities until guilt or innocence is determined. If the student is found guilty, they will be suspended from all athletic activities for one calendar year from the first date of suspension. A misdemeanor offense will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the Athletic Council and could result in suspension from the team. Criminal mischief will not be tolerated. "Pranking" or "Vandalizing" our district facilities will be considered criminal mischief and will be punished accordingly. Game suspension and financial restitution may be imposed on all parties involved.

### Gangs and Gang-Related Activities

The presence of or involvement in gangs or gang-related activities, including the display of gang symbols, paraphernalia or apparel, is strictly prohibited. Any type of gang involvement will result in suspension and/or removal from athletics.

### Fighting / Unacceptable behaviors

Student athletes are expected to exercise self-control. **FIGHTING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** Athletic incidents will be reviewed by the Athletic Council.

Bullying, hazing, cyber bullying and harassment are serious offenses. Any athlete who engages in bullying, hazing or harassment will be suspended per the Athletic Council's discretion. Bystander behavior exhibited by athletes will not be tolerated and suspension will apply to these athletes as well.

### Social Media Policy & Guidelines for Student-Athletes

Playing and competing for Houston ISD is a privilege. Student-athletes in Houston ISD are held in the highest regard and are seen as role models in the community. As leaders you have the responsibility to portray your team, your school and yourselves in a positive manner at all times. Sometimes this means doing things that are an inconvenience to you but benefit the whole team.

Houston ISD and the athletic department will not tolerate any athlete engaging in online activity that bullies, harasses, targets, or threatens any other student, staff member, or the school community or may constitute a crime.

Texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik-Tok, Snapchat and other social media sites have increased in popularity globally, and are used by the majority of student-athletes in one form or another. Student athletes shall not engage in inappropriate or offensive behaviors in regards to social media as outlined below.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors concerning participation in online communities may include, but are not limited to, depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, comments or posts showing or promoting the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco e.g., holding cups, bottles, cans, shot glasses etc.
- Photos, videos and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity or creates a disruption as determined by the Athletic Council (examples: derogatory comments made regarding another school, taunting comments aimed at a student-athlete, coach, or team at another institution and derogatory comments against race and/or gender). No post should depict or encourage unacceptable, violent or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, racism/discrimination, fighting, vandalism, and academic dishonesty, underage drinking, and illegal drug use).
- Content online that would constitute a violation of team, school and league rules or creates a disruption as determined by the Athletic Council (examples: Commenting publicly about a coach, teammate, opponent, official, school, staff member and school employees).
- Information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary to the team or the school, which is not public information (examples: tentative or future team schedules, student-athlete injuries and eligibility status, travel plans/itineraries or information).

Student-athletes should be aware that third parties—including the media, faculty, future employees and universities could easily access your profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments and posts. This can be detrimental to a student-athlete's future options whether in sports, higher education or employment.

Everything you post is public information-any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online-even if you limit access to your site. Information (including pictures, videos and comments) may be accessible even after you remove it. Once you post a photo or comment on a social networking site, that photo or comment becomes the property of the site and may be searchable even after you remove it. Items posted in private messages or group texts that meet any of the criteria above may result in violations of the Social Media Policy.

In short, do not have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. The online social network sites are NOT a place where you can say and do whatever you want without repercussions. The information you post on a social networking site is considered public information. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image of which you can be proud for years to come.

### Training Rules for all Houston ISD Athletes

In addition to the alcohol and drug policy outlined in the high and middle school student handbooks, the following rules apply to all student athletes at all times during his/her middle school & high school athletic career.

1. No use, distribution, or possession of tobacco/nicotine of any kind including electronic cigarettes (vaping), and smokeless tobacco.  
1<sup>st</sup> offense – 1 game suspension.  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense - Punishment to be determined by the Athletic Council.

2. No use, distribution, or possession of alcoholic beverages.

1<sup>st</sup> offense - The case will be reviewed by the Athletic Council. The first offense will result in a suspension of the athlete for the average amount of games that would be played over a 30 to 60-day period of that sports regular season.

\*\*On first offense the athlete may reduce suspension by 50% by completing an approved alcohol education class and completing 10 hours of approved community service for each 30 days of the original suspension.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense - Dismissal from the athletic program for one calendar year.

3. No use, distribution, or possession of controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, or drug residual/remnants (marijuana, narcotics, etc.).

1<sup>st</sup> offense – The case will be reviewed by the Athletic Council. The first offense will result in a suspension of the athlete for the average amount of games that would be played over a 90 to 180-day period of that sports regular season \*\*On first offense the athlete may reduce suspension by 50% by completing an approved drug education class and completing 20 hours of approved community service for each 30 days of the original suspension.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – Dismissal from the athletic program for one calendar year from the date of the Athletic Council meeting.

***The above alcohol and drug policies are not separate. Any first offense would create an automatic second offense discipline with the next violation.***

### Theft

Taking things from other players, students, school, etc. will not be tolerated. Punishment will be handled individually by the Athletic Council and may result in expulsion from all athletic activities for up to one calendar year from date of the incident. At the end of one calendar year from the date of the incident all parties concerned may review the case, and his/her conduct during the previous year will determine reinstatement into the athletic program.

### Injury Guidelines

Athletic Injuries:

All injuries, HS or MS, should be reported to coaches or Licensed Athletic Trainer as soon as they occur/or are noticed.

Injuries need to be reported so that:

- A. They can be properly cared for. This may include only some treatment, possibly rehabilitation or physician referral if needed.
- B. All parties involved can be notified. This may include but not be limited to: Parent(s), Guardian(s), Coach, and Administrator(s)

If the athlete is referred to a physician, or chooses to visit a physician on their own, documentation must be provided to the proper people.

- High School: Athletic trainers – DO NOT GIVE TO YOUR COACH.
- Middle School: The Head Coach of the sport you are participating in.

The documentation is to include the following:

- Diagnosis
- Status – Not only what you can't do, but also what you can do.
- Treatment Options – High School Athletics only.
- Next appointment date.

This documentation is necessary to ensure that the athlete is medically able and cleared to participate. The guidelines outlined in the documentation will be the ones followed until another notice is received from the athletes' physician. If a coach or trainer discovers that an athlete was examined by a physician without providing documentation, they will not be allowed to participate or be provided further treatment or rehabilitation until the proper documentation is received.

Certain types of visits to a physician's office do not require you to provide a note. For example:

- Lab work, dependent upon the nature of the tests being performed.
- Allergy shots

## UIL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RULES

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

School coaches may not:

- Transport, register, or instruct students in grades 7-12 from their attendance zone in non-school baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, or volleyball camps (exception: school coaches may hold one 6-day camp in their school district for incoming 7th, 8th and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students),
- Give any instruction or schedule any practice for an individual or a team during the off-season except during the one in school day athletic period in baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, or volleyball.
- Schools and school booster clubs may not provide funds, fees, or transportation for non-school activities.

### **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY RULES**

According to UIL standards, students are eligible to represent their school in interscholastic activities if they:

- are not 19 years of age or older on or before September 1 of the current scholastic year. (See 504 handicapped exceptions.)
- have not graduated from high school.
- are enrolled by the sixth class day of the current school year or have been in attendance for fifteen calendar days immediately preceding a varsity contest.
- are full-time day students in a participating high school.
- Initially enrolled in the ninth grade not more than four calendar years ago.
- are meeting academic standards required by state law.
- live with their parents inside the school district attendance zone their first year of attendance. (Parent residence applies to varsity athletic eligibility only.) When the parents do not reside inside the district attendance zone the student could be eligible if: the student has been in continuous attendance for at least one calendar year and has not enrolled at another school; no inducement is given to the student to attend the school (for example: students or their parents must pay their room and board when they do not live with a relative; students driving back into the district should pay their own transportation costs); and it is not a violation of local school or TEA policies for the student to continue attending the school. Students placed by the Texas Youth Commission are covered under Custodial Residence (see Section 442 of the *Constitution and Contest Rules*).
- have observed all provisions of the Awards Rule.
- have not represented a college in a contest.
- have not been recruited. (Does not apply to college recruiting as permitted by rule.)
- have not violated any provision of the summer camp rule. Incoming 10-12 grade students shall not attend a baseball, basketball, football, soccer, or volleyball camp in which a seventh through twelfth grade coach from their school district attendance zone, works with, instructs, transports or registers that student in the camp. Students who will be in grades 7, 8, and 9 may attend one baseball, one basketball, one football, one soccer, one softball, and one volleyball camp in which a coach from their school district attendance zone is employed, for no more than six consecutive days each summer in each type of sports camp. Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball camps where school personnel work with their own students may be held in May, after the last day of school, June, July and August prior to the second Monday in August. If such camps are sponsored by school district personnel, they must be held within the boundaries of the school district and the superintendent or his designee shall approve the schedule of fees.
- have observed all provisions of the Athletic Amateur Rule. Students may not accept money or other valuable consideration (tangible or intangible property or service including anything that is usable, wearable, salable or consumable) for participating in any athletic sport during any part of the year. Athletes shall not allow their names to be used for the promotion of any product, plan or service. Students who inadvertently violate the amateur rule by accepting valuable consideration may regain athletic eligibility by returning the valuable consideration. If individuals return the valuable consideration within 30 days after they are informed of the rule violation, they regain their athletic eligibility when they return it. If they fail to return it within 30 days, they remain ineligible for one year from when they accepted it. During the period of time from when students receive valuable consideration until they return it, they are ineligible for varsity athletic competition in the sport in which the violation occurred. Minimum penalty for participating in a contest while ineligible is forfeiture of the contest.
- did not change schools for athletic purposes.

**HISD POLICIES SIGNATURE PAGE**

**ATHLETE NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL :** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the above Humble I.S.D. and UIL student athlete policies. I agree to abide by all the Houston I.S.D. and UIL policies. I further understand that these policies are in effect for one calendar year from the date signed.

As a Houston ISD Student- Athlete, I attest that I have received verbal and written educational material from the Houston ISD Athletic Training / Sports Medicine staff, or its designees, regarding recognition and reporting of a concussion. Furthermore, I attest that I have been educated on the medical signs and symptoms of a concussion and I agree to report any clinical signs or symptoms of a suspected head injury to my/a Staff Athletic Trainer, Team Physician or designee immediately. I understand that as a Houston ISD Student- Athlete it is my responsibility to report all injuries/illnesses, regardless of perceived severity, to my/a Staff Athletic Trainer immediately, to include concussions. I also hereby recognize and agree that my health and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between myself, the Coaching Staff, the Staff Athletic Trainers and the Team Physicians of Houston ISD.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE OF ATHLETE**

I have read and understand the above Houston I.S.D. student athlete policies and agree that my son/daughter and I will abide by all the Houston I.S.D. policies.

I have been provided the UIL Parent Information Manual regarding health and safety issues and my responsibilities as a parent/guardian. I understand that failure to provide accurate and truthful information on UIL forms could subject the student in question to penalties determined by the UIL.

I hereby give my consent for the above student to compete in University Interscholastic League approved sports, and travel with the coach or other representative of the school on any trips.

It is understood that even though protective equipment is worn by the athlete whenever needed, the possibility of an accident still remains. Neither the University Interscholastic League nor the high school assumes any responsibility in case an accident occurs. I have read and understand the University Interscholastic League rules and agree that my son/daughter will abide by all of the University Interscholastic League rules. The undersigned agrees to be responsible for the safe return of all athletic equipment issued by the school to the above named student. If, in the judgment of any representatives of the school, the above student needs immediate care and treatment as a result of any injury or sickness, I do hereby request, authorize, and consent to such care and treatment as may be given to said student by any physician, athletic trainer, nurse, hospital, or school representative; and I do hereby agree to indemnify and save harmless the school and any school representative from any claim by any person whomsoever on account of such care and treatment of said student.

Your signature below gives authorization that is necessary for the school district, its trainers, coaches, associated physicians and student insurance personnel to share information concerning medical diagnosis and treatment for your student.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

**FOOTBALL PARTICIPANTS ONLY**

I have inspected the football helmet issued to my child and to my knowledge it appears to be free of any defects.

\_\_\_\_\_

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