

RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK/AGREEMENT



2020-2021

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Sec. 1-Introduction

This handbook was written for the student-athletes at Richland County High School so that athletes and their parents may be better informed of the athletic rules and policies. Regardless of how complete a handbook may be, it cannot anticipate all of the different situations that may occur. It is meant rather as a guide to point out the direction of the Athletic Department. The penalties noted herein shall be considered minimal and no way implies that more severe action cannot be taken.

Participation in competitive interscholastic athletics or extra-curricular activities is a privilege available to every student in the Richland County School District. The student, by accepting the privilege in athletic or extra-curricular activities, is a representative of both the high school and school district on the playing field/court, in practice, and in the community.

Sec. 2-Philosophy

Extra-curricular activities are a valuable extension of the entire educational program. It is important to point out that student-athletes are to be students first, with participation in athletics being secondary. Athletics provide a positive arena to help our student-athletes learn the meaning of teamwork and develop a great work ethic, which will be a positive asset to their future. It is the goal that each student-athlete at Richland County High School develop positive attitudes and traits from the programs that are offered. In addition, participation in athletics can assist in the development of leadership qualities, self-discipline, and good sportsmanship as well as physical development.

Sec. 3-Board Policy

The interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted in accordance with existing Board of Education policies and rules and regulations. While the Board of Education takes great pride in winning, it does not condone "winning at any cost" and discourages any and all pressure which might tend to neglect good sportsmanship and good mental health. At all times the athletic program must be conducted in a way that justifies it as an educational activity.

Sec. 4-Student Athletic Requirements

Each student must complete the following in order to participate in athletics at Richland County High School:

- Athletic handbook/code of conduct form must be signed by the parent/guardian and the student regarding the acceptance of the athletic handbook/code of conduct policy.
- Each student must have a current physical exam form or statement from his/her doctor indicating that he/she is physically fit to participate in sports. A copy of this exam or statement must be on file in the Athletic Office (High School) **BEFORE** the student may practice or compete in a sport. All physical exams are good for 395 days from the date

the physical was completed.

- An information/parent permission form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian giving permission for the student to participate in athletics at Richland County High School.
- An IHSA performance enhancing substance testing form must be signed by the parent/guardian and student.
- A baseline concussion test must be given by the athletic trainer before the student is allowed to practice or compete in a sport. In addition, the concussion information form must be signed by the parent/guardian and the student.
- Any athlete who is suspected to have a concussion is to be removed from the interscholastic athletic practice or contest in accordance with the Illinois Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act, and undergo a “return-to-play “ protocol as established by the school’s Concussion Oversight Team (RCHS nurse, RCHS certified athletic trainer, and CRMH physician).
- The student-athlete and the parent/guardian must attend a mandatory fall athletic meeting at the beginning of each school year. This meeting will be publicized well in advance and will be led by the school administration (Athletic Director and/or Principal, etc.) to highlight the RCHS Athletic Handbook and Athletic Code of Conduct. In addition, each coach will have his/her own pre-season meeting that the student athlete and a parent/guardian must attend.

Sec. 5-Eligibility

Each student-athlete must pass twenty five (25) credit hours (3 of 4 classes) of high school work per week. Grades will be checked at the end of each week by the athletic director or his/her designee. Coaches and student athletes will be notified by the athletic director or his/her designee no later than Monday of any student who is ineligible for the week. The week for ineligibility runs from Monday through Sunday. Turning in extra credit, missing homework, etc. will not take a student-athlete off the ineligibility list until the week of ineligibility is completed.

Each student-athlete must have passed twenty five (25) credit hours of high school work (3 of 4 classes) in the previous semester to be eligible for the current semester (except first semester freshmen).

Sec. 6-Athletic Awards

- Varsity letters
 - Every player that becomes a member of a varsity team during the season, finishes the season in good standing, and meets the criteria set forth by the Head Coach of the particular sport will earn a varsity letter.
 - Varsity athletes will receive one (1) varsity letter per sport in high school.
 - The first time an athlete earns a varsity letter in a particular sport, he/she will receive a Varsity “O” and a sport specific pin.
 - The second, third and fourth time an athlete has earned a varsity letter in the same sport, the athlete will receive an additional sport specific pin but no

- additional letter.
- Junior Varsity Certificates
 - Any student who participates in a school sponsored athletic sport and finishes the season in good standing who does not meet the criteria to earn a varsity letter will receive a junior varsity certificate.
- Numerals
 - An athlete will earn his/her graduation year numerals the first time he/she becomes a member of a school sponsored athletic sport and finishes the season in good standing.

Sec. 7-Practice Requirements

Student-athletes must attend all practice sessions prior to a contest unless excused by the coach prior to any absence. If a practice session is missed and is unexcused, then he/she will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by his/her coach.

Sec. 8-Absence Policy

An athlete who is absent from school after 11:00 a.m. on the day of an activity is ineligible for any activity on that day unless the absence has been approved in writing by the principal. Exceptions may be made by the coach: 1) for a medical absence pre-arranged with the coach or 2) for a death in the athlete's family. An athlete who has one or more truancies or who has been suspended from school may be suspended from participation in athletic activities by administration.

An athlete who is absent from school on a Friday before a Saturday event may be withheld from Saturday activities at the sole discretion of the coach.

Sec. 9-Behavioral Conduct

Misconduct by student-athletes will not be tolerated. Misconduct shall include but shall not be limited to:

- a. Insubordination; or
- b. Any behavior or action which is negligently or intentionally injurious to a person or property or which places a person or property at risk of injury or damage; or
- c. Any behavior which disrupts the appropriate conduct of a school program or activity; or
- d. Hazing, bullying, or harassment of any kind; or
- e. Use of profanity; or
- f. Exhibition of bad sportsmanship; or
- g. Violation of any school rules or regulations or law.

Coaches and school officials will impose disciplinary measures appropriate to the offenses committed. The discipline imposed for any particular offense shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of the coaching staff and school officials.

Sec. 10-Behavior During Practice/Games

It is the student athlete's responsibility to learn and demonstrate proper behavior. Such behavior can be described as actions by student athletes which promote cooperation and learning during practice, encourages a profitable work ethic, and results in an excellent competition coupled with good sportsmanship on the playing field.

The coaching staff, for the benefit of the team and community, will not tolerate the actions of players who show a lack of concern for the above behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, if improper behavior is observed in practice or game situations, corrective disciplinary action will be taken.

The coach will establish guidelines to determine what corrective disciplinary action will be taken. The actions will be explained fully to the student before the season starts, and it will be fair and consistent throughout the season. This will occur at the pre- season meetings.

Sec. 11-School Uniforms/Equipment

All uniforms and equipment issued to the student-athlete must be returned and accounted for after the last game of the season as instructed by the coach. Lost or stolen items are the responsibility of the player, and he/she must pay the present day replacement cost of any items issued and not returned.

Any returned items, which have been damaged, not resulting from normal wear and tear, must be replaced or repaired. The replacement or repair bill(s) becomes the responsibility of the student athlete.

Sec. 12-Transportation

All athletes shall travel to athletic events and return home from athletic events with the team on which the athlete competes by use of school approved means of transportation. A written waiver of this rule may be issued by a coach or administrator upon advance written request of an athlete's parent or guardian and provided the parent or guardian appears and accepts custody of the athlete. In no case shall a waiver be issued unless the alternate means of transportation anticipated by the waiver will be provided by the parent. Oral requests shall not be honored and oral permissions shall not be valid.

Any student athlete found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the school district's athletic discipline policies, rules and regulations as provided herein.

Sec. 13-Dress Code

Sport-specific school uniforms will be provided for student athletes, who are expected to wear them in the manner established by the coaching staff in advance of the sport's season. A student who refuses to wear the school-provided uniform or refuses to comply with the required dress protocol for the sport will be prohibited from participation until the student complies with the dress requirements. Students who wish to receive exemption from certain requirements shall apply in writing to the head coach of the sport, whose decision shall be final.

Sec. 14-Cut Policy

Student-athletes may be cut from all levels of competition. Tryouts may be conducted by the coaching staff at each level of play. Coaches may cut the squads based on the following criteria:

- The number of uniforms available for the players
- Improper attitude of the individuals

The selection of the team members will be based upon:

- Overall talent and ability
- Character, attitude & personality of the individual
- Work habits and loyalty to the program
- Positions needed on the team or activity
- Classroom work

Sec. 15-Participation in Concurrent Sports

Student athletes will be allowed to participate in two concurrent sports when it is determined to be acceptable by both coaches involved. It is the responsibility of the coaches to work out an acceptable schedule for the student-athlete's participation, thus preventing extreme practice demands being placed on the athletes.

Sec. 16-Chain of Command

Most problems can be solved by going through proper channels as set forth in this policy. If the student-athlete has any concerns or questions about the sports program, he/she should contact the coaching staff first. If the parent/guardian of the student-athlete has any questions or concerns about his/her son/daughter or the program, he/she should first talk with the son/daughter to understand the problem.

If further inquiry is necessary, the parent/guardian should contact the following in order as listed below (steps should not be skipped):

- Coaching staff
 - Immediately before, during, or after the completion of a game is not an appropriate time to contact the coaching staff.
- Athletic director
- Principal
- Superintendent
- Board of Education

Sec. 17-Roles & Responsibilities

- Student-Athlete
 - Meet classroom expectations
 - Be positive and have a good attitude
 - Know and follow school and team rules
 - Support your team and teammates
 - Challenge yourself as a participant and person
 - Communicate with the coach
 - Notify the coach of scheduling conflicts in advance
 - Have fun!

- Parent
 - Support your student-athlete
 - Set a good example in your conduct
 - Support all participants
 - Respect the officials
 - Be positive!
 - Respect the coach's role as teacher
 - Practice time is class time and games are performance assessments
 - Scheduled meetings with coaches should occur at a mutually agreed upon time
 - Enjoy and cherish your time with your athlete!

- Coach
 - Be a good role model by respecting all students and setting a good example for fans
 - Be positive, fair, and consistent with the participants
 - Use appropriate language
 - Communicate with students and parents
 - Set goals, procedures, and rules
 - Coordinate practices and schedules
 - Protect the safety of all participants: Includes parent notification if a concussion is suspected.
 - Monitor and encourage academic progress
 - Be available to talk with participants and parents

Sec. 18-Code of Conduct

RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

The Illinois High School Association forms the basis of the Code of Conduct for Richland County High School Athletes. Contestants' conduct, in and out of school, shall be such as; (1) Not to reflect discredit upon their school and the Association; (2) Not to create a disruptive influence on the discipline, good order, morale or educational environment in the school. Students who represent Richland County High School in interscholastic athletic contests will be expected to maintain a high standard of personal conduct throughout the year.

The RCHS coaching staff insists that student athletes are students first! Coaches will cooperate with teachers to insure that athletes are making normal progress both socially and academically. Guidelines governing academic eligibility will be those set down by RCHS and the Illinois High School Association and will be strictly enforced. We expect our athletes to conduct themselves in a manner that will make both the school and community proud of our program.

Athletes are expected to cooperate with their teachers and the high school administration. Excessive absences, tardies, detentions, or suspensions may be cause for disciplinary action or dismissal from the team.

We further state that good health habits contribute to the mental and physical well being of the students and enable the athlete to be a personal and team contributor to the sport and/or program.

RULES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

These rules and procedures work within the policies and guidelines established by the governing Board of Education of Richland County School District #1. All students who choose to participate as athletes of Richland County High School shall abide by the following rules and any other rules set forth by their coach(es).

1. At no time, including times of the year when a student is not participating in athletics, is a student allowed to use or be in possession of any form of alcoholic beverage, tobacco, e-cigarette/vapor pen or drug not prescribed by a physician licensed by the State of Illinois for his or her own use.
2. The school athletic year for all student athletes begins with the first day of practice for a Fall sport as authorized by the IHSA, and continues for the entire four(4) years, and/or as long as a student athlete is a member of an athletic team.
3. The Athletic Director and Administration shall be responsible for determining if a violation of these rules has taken place.
4. If a violation has taken place, the appropriate penalty as expressed in the policy shall be imposed.
5. The Athletic Director and/or coach will notify the parent of the student who may request a conference with the Athletic Director, coach, and administrator.
6. The following penalty(ies) will be enforced for violation of these rules:

FIRST OFFENSE

The student athlete shall be suspended for one contest in the following sports: football, girls' and boys' track. All other sports (including cheerleading) will be suspended for two (2) contests.

SECOND OFFENSE

A student athlete found guilty of a second offense in any one athletic year will be removed from participation in all sports for one calendar year from the date of the second offense.

THIRD OFFENSE

A student athlete found guilty of a third offense will be removed from participation in all sports permanently at Richland County High School.

7. No student athlete may practice or participate in any sport on the days suspended from school for disciplinary reasons.
8. Any student who has not been a part of the athletic program for over a year may be subject to a meeting which includes the student, parents, coach, Athletic Director, and Administrator before returning to the athletic program.
9. These are to be considered minimum standards for athletes. INDIVIDUAL COACHES MAY SET STANDARDS ABOVE THESE MINIMUMS BY NOTIFYING, IN WRITING, EACH ATHLETE, THE RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, AND A RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR.