

# MEXIA ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint players and parents with the philosophy, policies and procedures of the Mexia ISD athletic program. You are expected to know the content of this handbook.

This program is based on making a commitment to a group and placing group goals and needs above individual desires; therefore, this handbook will stress the team concept. We believe this to be essential to the public school mission of teaching young people to be positive, productive citizens.

We also want to promote an open line of communication between you and the coaching staff. The coaches are professionals who have made a commitment to this program and the students of Mexia ISD. Remember that we are here to help you, so never hesitate to contact us.

### **BLACKCATS ATHLETIC PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT:**

OUR COMMITMENT IS TO BE THE BEST INDIVIDUALS WE CAN BE ON AND OFF THE PLAYING SURFACE. WE WILL STRIVE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, ATHLETIC SUCCESS, AND BECOME POSITIVE CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. WE WILL UNDERSTAND THAT OUR PLATFORM ALLOWS US THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS, AND WE WILL ACCEPT THAT RESPONSIBILITY WITH PRIDE. WE WILL STRIVE TO BE ON TIME, BE RESPECTFUL, AND WORK HARD IN EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES. WE WILL PLAY NOT FOR OURSELVES, BUT FOR MEXIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, OUR TEAMMATES, THE TRADITIONS LAID BEFORE US, AND FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME. WE WILL BE CHAMPIONS!

### **Blackcats Athletics Core Values:**

**Be Respectful:** Treat others better than you want to be treated

**Be on Time:** Appreciate the time that you are given, and be courteous of others

**Work Hard:** Do your absolute best in everything that you do

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## **PLAYER EVALUATION**

In maintaining our pledge to fill competitive teams, made up of tough players who exhibit pride and ethical conduct in all situations, the coaching staff will use the following criteria in placing players in various positions and establishing a depth chart.

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|--------------|--|
| 1. TALENT    | At the varsity level we are trying to put the best athletes on the field & court. Talent can be improved through hard work.  |
| 2. CHARACTER | Terms such as heart, courage, dedication, unselfishness and perseverance have been used to describe an athlete with character. These attributes are valuable in life and will be a great factor in evaluating a player's value to his/her team.  |
| 3. KNOWLEDGE | A player unsure of his/her assignment will hesitate in the heat of battle and hurt the team. Knowledge of assignment and responsibility is vital.  |
| 4. EFFORT    | A 100% effort is expected at all times. This is the key factor that will make championship teams. 100% effort is a sign of an unselfish player. True leaders lead by example. An average player giving 100% is more valuable than the talented player who may relax or rest at a crucial moment. |
| 5. ATTITUDE  | A positive attitude is needed in order to be successful in all phases of life. Attitude is contagious, especially in a team setting, set a positive attitude in workouts, practice & games.  |
| 6. TOUGHNESS | Competition demands physical toughness. Players who can hold up to the physical rigors of their chosen sports will be invaluable to the team. The team cannot rely on the player whose toughness is questionable.  |

## **EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT ATHLETES**

### **ATHLETIC CLASS**

All students who participate in football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, tennis, baseball or softball must be enrolled in the athletic class. Athletes who are not in-season will participate in an off-season conditioning program. Students must be approved to enroll in the athletic class.

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## **ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

Academics come first in the educational environment. Our athletes are students first and should put academics above athletics at all times. Our coaches will check grades on students weekly. We will have Morning Tutorials for those students who have a failing grade or a grade below the standard chosen by the Head Coach. It is our belief that if our student-athletes turn in quality work and do so on time that we will not have any athletes ineligible due to grades. If a student is tardy or misses a Tutorial period in the morning, he or she will be held after practice and be asked to complete some “motivational exercise.”

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Academic Environment**

Student athletes are expected to have a good school attendance record. It is difficult to be academically successful if attendance is poor. Students who have habitual eligibility problems may be removed from the athletic program.

### **Athletic Environment**

Student athletes are expected to be on time to all team meetings, practices and contests. Legitimate emergencies and illnesses should be the only excuses for not meeting this responsibility. Absences must be reported to a coach prior to the meeting, practice or contest. All absences will warrant make-up work. Dishonesty regarding an absence will warrant disciplinary action. Participation in an activity outside of the regular MISD curricular or extracurricular programs will not be considered an excused absence. The coach will determine if the reason given merits an excused absence.

Students must inform their coach of any conflict with another school activity well in advance of the date of conflict. The adult sponsors of the activities can then work to resolve the conflict without the student being caught in the middle. However, excessive absences for *any* reason cannot be tolerated in a team activity. The head coach of each sport will work together with the athletic director to establish playing time policy in regard to absences. Example: (unexcused absence) 1 missed football practice=1 Qtr of the next game missed.

**All absences will require make-up work.**

**Those who do not practice should not expect to play!**

**COACHES PHONE – 254-562-4015**

## **CONDUCT**

Athletes represent the school and community at all times. In order for us to protect the pride and tradition of the Mexia Blackcats, student athletes will be held to the highest standard of conduct.

### **Academic Environment**

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We will support the teachers and administrators in their efforts to maintain a positive school environment. As an athletic program we represent the largest group of students in one organization in the school environment. We expect our athletes to set the tone in the academic environment for the whole school. We will not allow habitual disciplinary action to interfere with our program philosophy and team goals. Any athlete that does not represent our school and athletic program in a positive way will be dealt with by the athletic director.

## **Athletic Environment**

Unsportsmanlike conduct through language or actions can cost the team and will not be tolerated. Never disrespect coaches, teammates, opponents, fans or officials.

Insubordinate behavior will not be tolerated. Student athletes must understand that they represent the program 24 hours a day throughout the calendar year.

## **Social Media**

Students must be aware that social media can be used in a positive way and/or a negative way. Any negativity posted on social media will be treated as negativity in the school environment and will warrant disciplinary action and possible removal. Pictures posted of smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages or any use of illegal drugs will be dealt with just as it would if they were caught in the action. We want our athletes to understand that college recruiters and potential employers look for these things and it could greatly affect your future.

## **DO WHAT IS RIGHT BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT!**

### **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

All members of a team will dress uniformly. Our athletes will wear what is issued to them by the school. On game days our athletes will wear what the team is wearing which will be communicated by the coach. When we are participating in a contest, we will be dressed uniformly from head-to-toe. The coach must approve any equipment not issued by the school. Student athletes are expected to take care of equipment. Jewelry cannot be worn while engaged in any workout or contest. Student athletes must dress appropriately while traveling. All athletes will be expected to follow the student dress code that is established by Mexia ISD.

### **TRAVEL**

Athletes are expected to travel to and from contests on the team bus. Care of equipment after a contest is the responsibility of each player. The campus principal and the coach must approve exceptions to this rule prior to leaving campus. The head coach of a sport may allow a sign-out sheet for their team to leave with their parent only. No athlete will be allowed to ride with another family or friend without principal approval prior to the contest.

### **INJURIES**

Injuries should be reported to the coach and athletic trainer immediately. If an athlete sees a doctor we must receive written instructions regarding treatment and limitations. If a doctor instructs an athlete to limit his/her participation, we will not lift the restrictions

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without a written release. Students must suit out and attend practices unless the injury or illness prevents this. Notes from parents will not be accepted as for missing practice or for an athlete to sit out. Communicate with the coaches if there is an issue that could keep an athlete from participating.

If a student suffers a concussion, we will follow the UIL guidelines before being allowed back to practice and competition.

## **QUITTING**

Quitting is contrary to the character traits we want student athletes to develop. Parents should see that their child fulfills his/her commitment through the season. Parents must contact the head coach if a player is quitting. An athlete who quits may not be allowed to participate on other teams. If an athlete chooses to quit, he/she may not be able to participate in the next sport until (the disciplinary action is complete and) the last sport is complete.

## **STEALING**

Stealing will not be tolerated. Any offense could result in the suspension or removal from the athletic program. We must be able to trust each other in the locker room setting. Athletes should not "borrow" items from teammates.

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

Possession or use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco is unacceptable for student athletes. Student athletes are expected to avoid circumstances that place them in an environment where illicit substances are being used. Participants in UIL athletic events are subject to random drug & steroid testing.

MEXIA ISD conducts drug testing at the school. The intent of this program is to deter students from drug use. All athletes will be tested at the beginning of the school year or before their activity begins. After that they will be subject to random drug tests. The policy and procedures can be found in the student handbook.

## **ISS—DAEP**

If a student is put in ISS for multiple days & a game or competition falls on one of those days, the student will be held out of the game or competition. If a student is in ISS they are still expected to practice. Additional suspension and punishment will be at the discretion of the coach and must be communicated to the Athletic Director.

If a student is in DAEP, they will not be allowed to practice or play in games or competition.

## **HAZING**

Hazing, Bullying, Initiation, or any Harassment will not be tolerated in any way shape or form. Any Athletes involved in such behavior may be removed from the program.

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## CONSEQUENCES

Consequences for engaging in any behavior contrary to the standards of the athletic program may include, but are not limited to:

- Coach/athlete conference
- Coach/parent/athlete conference
- Extra physical conditioning
- Loss of playing time
- Suspension
- Dismissal

Note: The MEXIA ISD Athletic Department Policies are guidelines for the athletic department. The Athletic Director has the option of changing or recommending a different course of action depending on the situation.

**CODE BLACK**

## **SPECIAL NOTES TO PARENTS**

One of the best ways to show your child how much you care about him/her is to show a special interest in the things that are important to him/her. Sports may be one of the things your child considers most important. Please consider the following:

**Loyalty to our school** – Encourage your child to play multiple sports for the school. Not only will it make our athletic program stronger in numbers but competing is a way of life. If your child is competing year-round, he/she will be a stronger citizen and worker later. We as coaches are involved in multiple sports and will highly encourage ALL athletes to participate in two or more sports for the better of the district. We would like to be very competitive in all sports that we offer.

**Education** - Help your child realize that education is paramount to future success. The following suggestions, if followed, will show your child that you value academic success.

- Make sure your child attends school every day.
- Have your child keep a consistent study schedule.
- Ensure that your child has a suitable place to study.
- Have your child keep notebooks for each class.
- Have your child keep a calendar.
- Know your child's teachers. Talk to them regularly and check academic progress.

**Transportation** – Be responsible for getting your child to all team functions on time. Make sure your child is picked up promptly after practices and contests.

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**Team policies and training rules** – All of the policies and training rules are meant to foster the team concept and help your child mature. Please know the policies and help us enforce them.

**Attitude** – The key ingredient to the success of any group is the attitude of individuals within the group. Please help us to foster a positive attitude and willingness to sacrifice. Discourage any negative behavior – especially quitting. Perseverance is one of the greatest character traits we can teach.

**Team Roles** – All teams need players, coaches, cheerleaders, and fans. We all need to do the best we can in *our* role and allow others to do the same. As a parent, your main concern is the well being of an individual – your child. As coaches, we **MUST** make our priority the well being of the team as a whole. Please remember this and know that we are making decisions based on this commitment to the team.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A BLACKCAT PARENT

1. Encourage good sportsmanship by being a positive role model.
2. Do your best to make athletics a positive experience for all student athletes, coaches, officials and fans. If your child is not a starter, reassure him/her that all roles are vital to a team. Remember that your ticket is a privilege to observe a contest, not to berate officials, coaches or players.
3. Insist that your child respect other players, officials, coaches and fans.
4. Encourage your child to follow team rules. We expect more from our athletes than we do the average student walking the halls. Your child will have to make sacrifices for the good of the group; this is a key to success in life. Make sure your own behavior reinforces the standard of conduct we expect from student athletes.
5. Do your best to understand the rules of the contest.
6. Show an appreciation for outstanding play and effort by either team.
7. Be a "team" fan, not a "my child" fan. Don't be jealous of the individual success of other players.
8. Help your child learn that success is measured by effort, progress and ethical conduct. Insist that your child do his/her best in the classroom.
9. Address concerns with the coach at the appropriate time and place. Follow the chain of command to address concerns. Remember that coaches are human and any public slander of their ability or judgment is detrimental to the team.
10. Strive to understand the importance of the team. As parents, you are a vital part of our team. If parents, coaches, and players all believe in each other and support each other, then all things are possible.

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I have read and understand all the policies stated in the MEXIA ISD Athletic Handbook. I will keep a hard copy for review or will print an electronic copy from the athletic webpage. My child and I understand and will abide by all the policies put in place by the MEXIA ISD Athletic handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date

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