



# Athletics Handbook



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# Athletics Handbook

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**Basketball – Flag Football (Girls) – Soccer – Volleyball**

**Track & Field – Swimming – Tennis**

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## Athletics Department Contact Information

Athletic Director

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Athletics Coordinator

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At ISP we also offer an [After School Activities](#) program. This program is also available on the school website. For details please contact:

After School Coordinator

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### **Office Operations:**

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Fridays: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## ISP Athletics' Philosophy

The International School of Panama operates an educational based athletics sports program. We create sport participation experiences that are progressive, welcoming, developmentally appropriate, safe, and inclusive. We believe that quality sport means active and healthy students holistically developed that can make positive contributions to society. We encourage and want students to embrace and be part of as many different experiences as possible throughout their time here at ISP. We are able to provide a wide range of opportunities to accomplish this.

At ISP, we inspire our students to learn and develop through sport. Our enduring hope is that the lessons learned in the sporting arena will remain with our students for a lifetime. We strongly believe that athletics is not separate from the educational process, but rather an integral part of it.

Student participation in education-based athletics:

- Is a privilege.
- Enriches the educational experience.
- Encourages academic achievement.
- Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
- Prepares for the future in a global community.
- Develops leadership and life skills.
- Fosters the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
- Encourages positive school/community culture.
- Should be fun.

The value of education based athletics is taking educational principles back to the athletic field and empowering students athletes to become better, to become motivated and to achieve higher levels of performance both in the classroom, field and life.

We follow a sportsmanship ideal built on the idea that athletics both demonstrates and encourages character development, which then influences the moral character of the broader community. How we each participate and compete in athletics can have an effect on our personal moral and ethical behavior outside of the sports. Under a sportsmanship model, healthy competition is seen as a means of cultivating personal honor, virtue, and character. It contributes to a community of respect and trust between student athletes and in society.

The goal in sportsmanship is to pursue victory with honor by giving one's best effort. Ethics in athletics and life requires four key virtues that we emphasize in all our practices and competitions: fairness, integrity, responsibility, and respect.

The ISP Athletics department firmly believes that parent support is essential for the success of students at all ages. To achieve that goal, a full family effort is required, and we expect parents to play an active role in helping children handle the maturity of competition, balancing high expectations and time commitment with academics and learning from both successes and failures.

The Athletics Handbook helps guide students, parents and coaches. Please take the time to read the Athletics Handbook and to discuss as a family the various components included in here.

## Parent Involvement

The ISP Athletics department firmly believes that parent support is essential for the success of students at all ages. To achieve that goal, a full family effort is required, and we expect parents to play an active role in helping children handle the maturity of competition, balancing high expectations and time commitment with academics and learning from both successes and failures.

### The parent's role:

- A.** Strive to stay informed. Important information will be posted on the Athletics page of the ISP website. Read the Dolphin Dispatch, download/check the Athletics calendar through the school website and follow us on social media (@ispathletics) for up to date information about our programs, scores, news and photos.
- B.** Attend all meetings or gatherings called by your child's coach or the Athletics office. If you would like to meet or speak with your child's coach or another member of the athletics staff, before, during or after a class/practice or competition IS NOT THE TIME. Contact the Athletics office or e-mail the Athletics Coordinator to set up an appointment.
- C.** Allow the instructors/coaches to provide ALL instructions. It is their job to give constructive criticism on performance. It is a parent's role to show love, recognition and encouragement to help students have a positive view of themselves.
- D.** Push your son/daughter to show commitment by regularly attending classes/practices, competitions and other group functions.
- E.** Understand that a parent's attitude often dictates that of the son or daughter. Children subconsciously absorb messages about a parent's wishes or feelings.
- F.** Be patient and try to understand the differences in rates and styles of learning. Avoid comparing the characteristics of your child with others in his or her group or team.
- G.** You are encouraged to attend competitions and practice sessions. While in attendance, DO NOT attempt to communicate with your child and DO NOT compete with the coach for your child's attention. Coaches need each student's undivided attention.

- H. Parents must comply with instructions given to them during Athletic events by any ISP employee.
- I. Parents of children in Elementary School are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) clearly understands the procedures laid out in this handbook.
- J. Contact your child's coach or the Athletics Coordinator via email to inquire about volunteer opportunities. The Dolphins Athletics Committee (DAC) is always seeking parents who are willing to help out DAC - [pta@isp.edu.pa](mailto:pta@isp.edu.pa)

### **Athlete Standards of Conduct, Attitude and Responsibilities**

- A. A large amount of communication between the athletics office/coaches and MS/HS students will be through the student's ISP assigned email address. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the student-athletes to check their ISP assigned email address at least once within every 24-hour period. The parents of Elementary students must follow this same guideline with their email addresses filed through admissions. While many coaches choose to create 'Whatsapp' group chats, official communication from the Athletics department is issued via email.
- B. All student athletes at ISP are highly regarded representatives of the school. A team member's personal conduct reflects on other ISP athletes/coaches and the school in general. Conduct by an ISP athlete that is inappropriate or disgraceful shall be deemed a serious breach of discipline and may be grounds for denial of participation. Expectations for participants' conduct are not limited to the time period between the first official practice/tryout date and the last team competition ("in-season"). This is a year-round good behavior commitment whether on or off school property (including cell phone usage and internet "cyber-conduct").
- C. All student athletes at ISP are subject to all athletics program rules and procedures as outlined in this handbook and all sources of school policy. Participants are also subject to learn rules and guidelines as outlined by the coaches of their team. The minimum standards set by the school do not necessarily meet the standards of conduct, dress and appearance expected of athletes and members of specific teams.
- D. Each coach may provide information to team participants setting forth additional standards of training, behavior and appearance which are in effect for that team. These requirements are not necessarily the same from team to team or from coach to coach.
- E. Students may not participate in the ISP after school programs while under official school suspension or expulsion. Student athletes may also be denied participation in athletic practices and/or competitions due to not meeting ISP expectations of attendance, behavior or academics.
- F. Any student who is not feeling well enough to participate in P.E. will not be permitted to participate in the sport practice/competition that same day.

**G.** Grades will be checked periodically throughout the term to ensure that athletes are coping with the demands of both academics and athletics. Academic probation will be reviewed and determined by the High School Principal and Assistant Principal. The Athletic Director and Principal may suggest periods of time off from the season to provide appropriate support if an athlete has failing grades.

**H.** Competition playing time is always determined by the head coach of each team and may be used as disciplinary action, provided the student athlete is still participating as a sideline member of the team.

**I.** Students are to respect the property of the school and of others. Theft or willful destruction of property or equipment will call for disciplinary action, which may include denial of participation in the athletics program and reimbursement of any monetary damages. Each student is responsible for ensuring the safety of their own personal valuables. The use of lockers and personal locks are the only sure way to avoid losing valuables. Refrain from placing bags in a corridor or cubby or at an unsecured space with valuables inside. The school is not responsible for your valuables in such cases. Should you need to store your valuables, use a locker and a personal lock. If you use the lockers without a lock, you have not secured your belongings.

**J.** Profanity, outbursts of temper, fighting, bullying, insubordination or other such unbecoming or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated, and will call for disciplinary action, which may include denial of participation from the athletics program. All students are to control their tempers while always respecting the school, their coach, their opponents, the officials/referees, the equipment and themselves.

**K.** Consequences when students do not meet our behavior expectations normally include an initial reflection. Repeated indiscipline would result in a suspension from practices/games for a period of time. Continued indiscipline may result in removal from the program for the remainder of the semester or the school year. Depending on the severity of the circumstance steps may be combined or skipped.

**L.** Student athletes are prohibited from the use, sale or possession of alcohol, tobacco products or illegal drugs in and out of season, 365 days a year, on school grounds or off school grounds. Athletics will follow the policies of the relevant divisions. Please refer to the Family Handbook for rules related to alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

### **Calendar, Schedules and Practices**

**A.** Occasionally ISP will host an AASCA tournament. All after school activities are cancelled during any ISP hosted AASCA athletic tournament. AASCA tournaments are five days in duration and include the weekend (Wednesday – Sunday).

**B.** Seasons for sports vary widely and may change year to year based on AASCA, league structures and practice space availability. Up to date information will be posted on the Athletics section of the ISP website and/or communicated through email via the Athletics Coordinator.



**C.** Athletic teams' schedules will look different depending on the sport, team and league participating in. Additional practice/es may be called by a coach from time to time. Please see the Athletics section of the ISP website or contact the Coordinator of Athletics if you are unsure.

**D.** ISP follows a different calendar from other schools in Panama. This means that many leagues continue to have games during ISP vacations. At the end of the ISP school year in June, many leagues are beginning the playoff games and ISP students enrolled in these teams are expected to make plans to remain in the country until the final game has been played.

**E.** In cases of adverse weather practices will continue as regular. Students should not return home unless it is a school decision communicated by the Athletics office. Coaches continue to supervise players in adverse weather and we often have a dry-land activity prepared when it is unsafe to train outdoors. In the interests of health and hygiene students should change back into dry clothes at the end of practice and before embarking on the school bus.

**F.** Athletics are considered an extension of the school day and attendance to all team functions is mandatory in most cases. Each sport has its own regulations in regards to attendance, please see the Athletics section of the ISP website or contact the Coordinator of Athletics. Although family and school are more important than sports, when you choose to become a member of a team, you and your family choose to make some efforts to honor your commitment. Remember that the team must come before any personal desires. This includes not missing tryouts, meetings, practices or games for family vacations/activities or school projects that should have been completed at another time. Attendance at all team functions is critical in certain aspects of individual/team development. Attendance and punctuality are essential for an athlete to receive maximum benefit from her/his participation in athletics. There may be consequences for missing games, practices or other official team functions. These consequences will be determined by the head coach and may include denial of participation, loss of playing time or other such measures. There may be emergency circumstances that merit pardon from consequences but this does not apply to avoidable or foreseeable conflicts. Information about any special circumstances is to be given, in writing, to the coach in advance of the time period in question (when possible). Every attempt will be made to honor religious holidays, scheduled vacations and long weekends, however these are often unavoidable given that ISP follows a different calendar from other schools in Panama.

**G.** While the official language of ISP is English, many of our after school coaches and instructors are not English speakers. Spanish is the language of most of our local and international competitions including ceremonies, referees, coaches and event organizers. The coach's responsibility is to assure that no student-athlete is ever in a situation where he or she is "left out" because he/she is not Spanish speaking. It is the coach's responsibility to provide a system that is developmentally appropriate to the age of the team so structures are in place to circumvent this: buddy systems, visual cues, periodic team meetings, etc.

## Competitions

**A.** Attendance at competitions is sport specific and generally mandatory for all student athletes. Students will not be allowed to train with a team if they are not willing to represent the school in competitions.

**B.** Competitions in Panama City typically take place in the afternoons between 3:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., or on weekends. Some tournaments/meets involve full weekend participation; travel tournaments/meets may involve full weekends and multiple days of missed school.

**C.** Parents are responsible for arranging transportation during competitions which take place outside of the school bus service hours and during weekends.

**D.** Competition at the junior varsity (Sub 16) and varsity (Sub 18) levels is highly competitive and "playing time" is merit based; not all team members may participate in every competition. "Playing Time" is always the coach's final decision.

**E.** Sub 11-14 competitions are developmental, and though not based on winning, all team members will participate throughout the season, but "playing time" may vary. "Playing Time" is always the coach's final decision.

**F.** In Sub 10, and below, the emphasis of competition is on teamwork and joy of playing rather than winning, and all team members share participation time. Variations in "playing time" may occur based on attendance or discipline issues. "Playing Time" is always the coach's final decision.

**G.** Team members (without importance given to "playing time") are expected to attend and stay for the duration of all competitions should they wish to remain a member of that team.

**H.** It is an expectation that student athletes and at least one parent/guardian attend parent meetings prior to participation in an overnight trip.

**I.** ISP participates in AASCA (Association of American Schools in Central America) tournaments throughout the school year. AASCA is a group of 28 international schools spanning six countries (Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama).

ISP enters teams from the following sports:

- Basketball (Boys and Girls)
- Track & Field (Boys and Girls)
- Swimming (Boys and Girls)
- Soccer (Boys and Girls)
- Tennis (Boys and Girls)
- Volleyball (Boys and Girls)

The Association of American Schools of Central America (AASCA) is our biggest priority for international competitions and includes an annual U19 tournament in Volleyball,

Basketball, Soccer and U14/U19 tournaments in the individual sports of Tennis, Track & Field and swimming.

### **AASCA Tournaments**

AASCA tournaments carry a cost to parents. Payments are made in installments and the first installment is normally due shortly after the selection of the team. Student eligibility is determined in collaboration with HS/MS Administration before each trip. ISP team participation is based on meeting the minimum numbers required for participation. Detailed trip information is communicated to students and parents/guardians by the Athletics office.

### **Costs and Fees**

**A.** For the 2021-2022 School Year there will be a registration fee for Elementary School students of \$325 per team, per semester. The fee for Middle School enrollment in athletics is \$225 per semester. Due to space constraints some Elementary School sports will be offered for one day a week, this fee will be \$170 per semester.

**B.** Prorated discounts are not issued for students who choose to miss certain practices or decide to quit during the season.

**C.** Parents are required to purchase the ISP playing uniform as well as the travel tracksuit. The travel tracksuit is only necessary for trips.

**D.** Participation in athletics also carries some related costs, such as:

- league registration fees.
- uniform costs.
- travel to tournaments outside of Panama City.

Many private leagues in Panama include additional uniforms, banquets and other costs which are included in the student athlete fee to participate in the league. Most private leagues also charge entry fees to parents and these can include games played on campus at ISP. Additionally, some sports require additional associated equipment purchases such as shin guards, knee pads, mouth guards, etc.

**E.** Failure to pay for an AASCA trip ahead of the travel date will result in the student not being eligible to travel. Failure to pay for a private league before the first day of competition will result in the student not being eligible to participate until payment is made.

### **Team Participation, Tryout and Selection Process**

**A.** Because of the popularity of some sports, it is possible that not every student will have the opportunity to participate in the sport or activity of his/her first choice. A tryout process is used to determine roster spots in such cases.

**B.** Tryouts permit coaches to decide which players are included in which teams. Students are encouraged to tryout in their own age group. To play up, students must

have the approval of the Athletics Coordinator. Selections may be based on attitude, effort, and/or ability depending on the sport or level.

**C.** Once the tryout for a team is finished no student will be allowed, in most cases, to join the team until the following round of tryouts takes place. Exceptions to this rule may occur. In all cases, approval of the Athletics Coordinator must be obtained.

**D.** Leagues in Panama are normally based on age, not grade level. Students must be at or below a certain age to be eligible to participate in a league of a particular age category. For each league, the cutoff date may vary. For example, if a player is interested in the sub 12 basketball team, he or she must be 12 years old or younger by the cutoff date requested by that league.

**E.** At ISP we pride ourselves on being a school that does not cancel or forfeit games. There are occasions when a team is closed down due to lack of interest. This number varies depending on sport, space availability and other factors. Teams will only be formed with the following as a minimum number:

- Soccer : 12 players
- Flag Football: 12 players
- Basketball: 8 players
- Volleyball: 8 players
- Tennis: 8 players
- Track and Field: 8 athletes
- Swimming: 8 athletes

## Student Registration Guidelines

**A.** Only ISP enrolled students may register and participate in tryouts, practices and competitions. Students who transfer from ISP to another school will cease to play or practice for ISP on the day their enrollment at ISP stops or on the day they begin to attend another school (whichever is first). This rule supersedes that of any league rule.

**B.** Students will not be allowed to enroll in an athletics team if the family is not in Financial Good Standing with ISP.

**C.** Students must sign up at least one day prior to their first day of practice.

**D.** After a tryout period has concluded and teams have been established, there shall be no "late tryouts" unless authorized by the Athletics Coordinator and due to verifiable extenuating circumstances (medical, accident/injury, family emergency). The family must provide written documentation of such circumstances for review. Other important factors when assessing the possibility of permitting a late-tryout include timely contact by the family about the situation and the athlete's history in the sport.

**E.** Once students reach a level at which they will begin participating in league competitions, they will be informed by their head coach or Athletics Coordinator concerning which documents they will need to deliver to ensure participation in all tournaments, leagues and other competitions (this may include: birth certificate, photos, physical exams, passports, etc.). Failure to submit these documents in a timely

manner may exclude (based on league rules) the student from being on the team or eligible to participate in league games.

### **Campus Use, Team Areas and Equipment**

**A.** School-assigned lockers should be used to store valuable objects. Students are required to bring their own lock to make sure valuables are secure. Permanent lockers in the changing rooms will not be permitted; they are shared spaces. Locks left on lockers in the main locker rooms may be cut off at the end of each school day.

**B.** The neatness and cleanliness of locker rooms, fitness rooms, hallways and other training facilities are the joint responsibility of athletes, coaches and all school personnel. Take pride in ISP facilities and help ensure that they last to help serve the generations that follow.

**C.** Team members are responsible for all school equipment issued to them and for all their own personal equipment. Make sure you check your protective equipment every day before practice or a game.

**D.** Equipment, jerseys or other gear lent to student athletes must be returned at the request of the head coach or Athletics Coordinator. Failure to comply with this request may result in institutional actions taken to resolve the issue.

**E.** Equipment rooms, coaches' offices and other campus sport facilities are not to be entered or used without permission from a member of the athletics staff.

### **Afternoon Campus Supervision**

**A.** ISP encourages students to remain on campus for their own positive enrichment. However, security is our priority. We consider remaining on campus a privilege; the ISP campus is not available for casual "hanging out." To keep the campus safe and orderly, ISP reserves the right to require any student to return home on the 2:55 p.m. bus who is not making positive use of the afternoon, or who is otherwise not behaving according to ISP expectations.

**B.** Therefore, please note the following guidelines for students who remain on campus:

- Elementary School students must be registered in a VAPA, ASA or Athletics program.
- Middle School and High School students must be registered in a VAPA, ASA or Athletics program, after school approved club or otherwise be engaged in a study hall, or be working quietly in their respective library.

**C.** As stated in the ISP Faculty and Staff Handbook private tutoring on campus is not permitted. This includes any private tutoring in the areas of academics, athletics and the arts.

**D.** Practices and competitions outdoors may be delayed or suspended due to adverse weather. The full 'Lightning Protocol' can be found on the Athletics section of the ISP website.

**E.** Coaches follow the ISP Concussion protocols in case of head injuries. See the Athletics section of the ISP website for more details.

### After School Transportation

Families are responsible for arranging bus transportation home from school directly with their transport provider. Students are responsible for arriving on time to the buses. Students who have alternative transportation must be picked up at 4:15 p.m. outside the PAC.

For away games the Athletics department coordinates and pays for transportation to the game venue and to drop students off at home or at a satellite location after the game. The team bus is for the students on the team roster and the coach only (not for fans or siblings).

Some game venues around Panama City will not have the same spacious parking that we offer here at ISP. Parents attending away games may face some frustrations with parking limitations as well as some very strict access control rules at some schools.

#### Late Bus Dismissals:

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 4:15 PM
- Fridays : 3:00 PM

When the games are in school during the week, students may take the regular after school bus dismissal at 4:30 PM if the competition finishes on time. We strongly recommend that parents make their own transportation arrangements home for any competitions which may finish later than the bus dismissal time.

#### Transportation Contact Information:

- **Teddy Edwards (Bus Provider)**  
[herciliaschoolbus@hotmail.com](mailto:herciliaschoolbus@hotmail.com)  
(507) 6612 3935 / 6613 2702 / 6676 2702
- **Misar Transportes - (Bus Provider)**  
[misartransportes@gmail.com](mailto:misartransportes@gmail.com)  
(507) 6530 2525 / 6780 3131
- **Jose Cruz - ISP Security and Transportation Manager**  
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- **Johan Hernández - ISP Transport Coordinator**  
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