

2023-24 Era Independent School District Athletic Department Policies and Procedures

Article I: Purpose, Benefits and Privilege

Era Independent School District provides an Athletic Program as school sponsored activities that support, but are not directly related to the instruction of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills as mandated by the Texas Education Agency. The purpose of these extracurricular activities in the educational system is to teach the intangible factors of work ethic, character, discipline, responsibility, teamwork, respect and trust.

These factors, which form the basis of ethical and moral standards, are of paramount importance in today's highly competitive world society. High school athletics in Texas in the 21st century is the catalyst for preparing our young people for success in this society. Era ISD Athletic Department offers the above, and many more, worthwhile and significant contributions to a student's personal, physical and social development.

It also requires a student to meet specific requirements that are above and beyond the normal school standards for all students.

Participation in extracurricular activities is a voluntary privilege and not a right. Students must meet the specific requirements in order to participate. These requirements will be monitored and consequences enforced by Era ISD Administration, Athletic Director and Coaching Staff. This document has been created to outline the general concepts of these specific requirements.

Article II: Objectives and Standards

Interscholastic athletics represents an area of great potential for the pursuit of excellence. Athletes must strive to reach their highest potential in character, academic and athletic development in order to receive the full benefits of their athletic endeavors. The focus of an intensive, well-balanced program of athletics revolves around standards designed to progress athletes in these three major objectives. Era ISD Athletic Department and personnel will strive to support the objectives of strong character, high academic achievement and athletic excellence in positive and constructive avenues.

However, when an objective is compromised, consequences must be evoked to reinforce the objective. Consequences may include, but are not limited to conferences, physical exercise, also called hornet reminders, suspension, zero tolerance contracts or removal from athletics. Any athlete that continually falls short of objective expectations or persistently commits offenses may be subject to reduced playing time, suspension, zero tolerance contracts or removal from athletics. Era ISD Athletic Policies & Procedures

Article III: Major Offenses and Consequences relating to Character

The character of an athlete is the essence of who they are and what they stand for in life. Choices student athletes make when faced with difficult dilemmas are at the very heart of personal character progression. Demonstrating a strong personal character, both on and off the field, is critical in the development of a student's ethical and moral base. The following standards and consequences are of significant importance in the development of a strong character.

- 3.1 ***Offenses related to:*** Vaping, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, theft, criminal mischief, vandalism, and assault.... etc. ***Consequences may include:*** hornet reminders, suspension, zero tolerance contracts or removal from athletics as determined by the Athletic Director. UIL or TEA rules that affect eligibility may also apply.
- 3.2 ***Offenses related to:*** Quitting the athletic program. ***Consequences:*** Handled on an individual basis depending on the circumstances involved; reinstatement may be granted by the Athletic Director and may also include hornet reminders, possible limits on playing time, and/or compliance with a zero tolerance contract pertaining to future quitting. If an athlete is reinstated they

must go through a full offseason before returning to competition. Regular & consistent attendance during summer workouts may be substituted for an offseason.

- 3.3** *Offenses related to:* Quitting an individual sport during the season *Consequences:* 40 miles before the athlete may participate in any other sport and compliance with a zero tolerance contract pertaining to future quitting. Exception: The first two weeks, 14 calendar days, of the season is considered a “trial period” for athletes. If an athlete makes the decision not to participate during this “trial period” these consequences may be waived upon a conference and review of the circumstances with the Head Coach.

Article IV: Major Offenses and Consequences relating to Academics

The most important priority of Era ISD Athletic Department is to support the educational efforts of Era ISD. Athletes should passionately pursue excellence in the classroom. Success in academics will greatly prepare student athletes for their future pursuits and broaden college or career opportunities. Students should not only strive to achieve high grades, but also strive to learn as much as they can in their academic arenas. The following standards and consequences are of significant importance in the development of a strong academic foundation.

- 4.1** *Offenses related to:* Placement in DAEP. *Consequences:* Athlete will be suspended from all athletic activities until DAEP assignment is complete. Athlete’s status will be reviewed by the Athletic Director upon completion of the DAEP placement. *Other Consequences* may include: hornet reminders, suspension, zero tolerance contracts and/or removal from athletics.
- 4.2** *Offenses related to:* Placement in ISS or OSS. *Consequences:* Athlete will be suspended from the next athletic contest if a placement of more than one full/complete school day occurs in-season. If the athlete is participating in multiple in-season sports, then the athlete is suspended from the next contest in each in-season sport. The athlete, at the discretion of the Head Coach, may accompany the team, but will not be allowed any playing time. *Other consequences may include:* hornet reminders, suspension, zero tolerance contracts and/or removal from athletics.

Consequences for a placement in ISS or OSS one full/complete school day, or less, will result in hornet reminders.

Multiple ISS or OSS placements, regardless of length, may result in increased hornet reminders, suspension, zero tolerance contracts and/or removal from current team and possibly athletics.

- 4.3** *Offenses related to:* School conduct referrals or communication of a problem from a teacher. *Consequences:* hornet reminders, playing time limited, and/or suspension,
- 4.4** *Offenses related to:* Failing grade at three or six weeks’ grade report, or coach’s grade check. *Consequences:* UIL rules will apply and may affect game eligibility, hornet reminders, playing time limited, suspension and/or removal from the team.

Article V: Major Offenses and Consequences relating to Athletics

Athletic competition in Texas is strong. It is imperative that Era ISD Athletic Department create an organized and highly developed program that gives Era athletes every opportunity to reach their full athletic potential. This program is very reliant on full participation and support of athletes and parents. Effort, sportsmanship, attitude, teamwork, respect and trust are key components in successful athletic programs. The following standards and consequences are of significant importance in the development of a competitive athletic atmosphere.

- 5.1** *Offenses related to:* Attendance. *Consequences:* Absence from a mandatory game, practice or meeting without prior communication to the coach of the absence results in hornet reminders and may result in reduced playing time, suspension or a zero tolerance contract. If the athlete communicates the absence and the reason for the absence before the event begins, the consequences may be reduced.

- 5.2** *Offenses related to:* Tardiness or missing partial events *Consequences:* Being late or missing part of a mandatory game, practice or meeting without prior communication to the coach of the absence results in hornet reminders and may result in reduced playing time, suspension or a zero tolerance contract. If the athlete communicates the absence and the reason for the absence before the event begins, the consequences may be reduced.
- 5.3** *Offenses related to:* Lack of sportsmanship or disrespect for officials, coaches, teammates, opponents or fans. *Consequences:* Handled on an individual basis depending on the circumstances involved. Consequences may include hornet reminders, possible limits on playing time, suspension and compliance with a zero tolerance contract pertaining to future offenses.
- 5.4** *Offenses related to:* Issued equipment. *Consequences:* Loss of issued athletic equipment may result in financial replacement and may result in hornet reminders, suspension and compliance with a zero tolerance contract pertaining to future offenses.

Article VI: Minor Offenses

There are many other expectations of behavior and process that athletes are required to follow. Rules and expectations are developed to support an organized, safe, team oriented and respected environment. Many of these are sport specific and are outlined in individual sport's expectations and discipline plan. They include, but are not limited to, things like: the use of profanity, dress, appearance and team attire, cleanliness of lockers and locker rooms.... etc. These offenses may result in individual or team punishment and may include hornet reminders.

Article VII: Athletic Injuries

Student athletes and parents should be aware that any athletic participation will always have inherent dangers and injuries may occur. Care will be taken by all concerned to minimize such dangers through the use of appropriate equipment and proper training methods. Coaches are very familiar with athletic injuries and need to be informed before an athlete seeks medical attention from a doctor. In most cases we may be able to get the athlete seen by an athletic trainer and/or doctor trained in the diagnoses, treatment and rehabilitation of sport related injuries. Also, any athlete that is injured during the course of the season or has an illness of a minor nature and is unable to participate due to this injury or illness must continue to follow all expectations, rules, and regulations, if the athlete wishes to remain a part of the team. If an athlete cannot participate, he/she may be required attend all practice sessions and sit with the team during competitions. Failure to attend practices and competitions while injured can result in dismissal from the team. *Athletes can learn from each practice session, whether they are actually working out or simply observing.*

Article VIII: Relationships, Expectations and Communication

Respectful interaction between coaches, athletes and parents will provide the quality experience desired from scholastic athletics. As in any competitive environment with high expectations, disagreements and conflicts will arise. Parenting, coaching and being a student athlete are all very difficult endeavors. By establishing common understanding, all are better able to accept the actions of others and provide a more positive experience for everyone. In order to establish the best environment possible, some necessary expectations and communication guidelines have been developed. Parents and athletes should strive to maintain these guidelines.

8.1 *Expectations of Parents:*

1. Positively support your athlete's and the school's athletic endeavors.
2. Aid your athlete in meeting all requirements of team participation including full attendance at practices, contests and meetings.
3. Communicate any scheduling conflicts well in advance.
4. Communicate with the coach any situation or issue that requires a conference by following the conflict resolution policy.
5. Create an atmosphere of school spirit and positive support that enhances the team oriented aspect of athletics.

8.2 *Expectations of Athletes:*

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, Era ISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than it would for those students who choose not to participate in these activities.

1. Believe in yourself, teammates and coaches.
2. Participate with passion, purpose and full effort.
3. Strive to be the best you can be in the classroom.
4. Conduct yourself with strong character, poise, dignity and class. Do what is right.
5. Have a team oriented mindset and be ready to sacrifice for the Team.
6. Represent your Team, School, Family, and Community to the best of your ability.

Article IX: Communication With The Coach

Conflict Resolution Policy: Communication Procedures

It is important to understand there may be times when things do not go the way an athlete or parent may have envisioned it. There are certain concerns that are very appropriate for a parent to discuss with a coach. There are also issues that are not appropriate for discussion with an athlete's coach. Coaches make decisions based on years of preparation and experience as well as many hours of observation and evaluation of the whole team. These decisions are made in the best interests of all athletes participating and not necessarily of one particular athlete.

9.1 *Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:*

1. The mental or physical treatment of your athlete.
2. What your athlete needs to do to improve, both athletically or academically.
3. Concerns about your athlete's behavior either at or away from school.

9.2 *Issues not appropriate for discussion with a coach:*

1. How much playing time each athlete is getting.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Specific situations relative to student athletes other than your athlete.

9.3 *Conflict Resolution*

Era Independent School District is committed to the following procedures for successfully resolving any conflict that may arise. Conferences should be held at the coach's regular conference time during school hours. Contact athletic department personnel by school phone or e-mail and communication will be returned in a timely manner.

It is inappropriate to approach any coach with concerns prior to and especially at the conclusion of an athletic contest. No conference will be held for at least 24 hours after an athletic contest. The following conference steps should be taken in the order listed to resolve conflicts.

1. Athlete and coach conference.
2. Parent, athlete and coach conference.
3. Athletic Director, parent, athlete and coach conference.

*****If after this process the parent wishes to appeal a decision concerning a situation, an appeal must be directed to the Superintendent of Era ISD. *****

Article X: Drug Testing Policy

All participants must submit to a drug test prior to their first competition, and random drug testing throughout the school year. In order to insure a safe, healthy drug free environment for our athletes, we require that they submit to drug testing per Era ISD extracurricular policy. The following procedures apply for a failed drug test.

The **1st failed test** will result in a 30-day suspension from all extracurricular activities and the athlete will have to run 20 miles. The athlete will remain with the team and continue to practice throughout his or her suspension. The athlete in question will also be retested per Era ISD policy.

The **2nd failed test** will result in a 180-day suspension from all extracurricular activities, removal from the current sport or sports, the athlete will have to run 60 miles, and sign a zero tolerance contract. The athlete in question will also be retested per Era ISD policy.

The **3rd failed test** will result in indefinite removal from the athletic program. After one calendar year the athlete make a request in writing to the Athletic Director for reinstatement. The written request should contain reasons for wanting reinstatement, and what the athlete has done in the past year to warrant reinstatement. Conditions for reinstate may include, mileage to be ran, a zero tolerance contract, or other conditions as determined by the Athletic Director.

Article XI: Dress & Grooming

In addition to following the regular school rules regarding dress code (found in the student handbook), athletes have additional expectations in regard to hairstyle and jewelry. No facial hair is allowed. Hair must be well kept and groomed. Initials, numbers or other insignia shaved on the heads of athletes will not be accepted. Hair on male athletes must not go below the eyebrows, below the bottom of the ear, or touch the collar of a shirt with a collar. Hair on males may not be tied up in a bun, ponytail, etc. All tattoos must be covered during all competitions, as required during the school day, and at all school events. Shorts are not to be rolled or worn in a way that undergarments/underwear are visible at any time. Female athletes, who have long hair, must wear hair, including long bangs, pulled back from the face during all athletic practices and competitions. In accordance with UIL rules and regulations, for safety reasons, athletes are not allowed to wear jewelry of any kind during most athletic competitions. For the same reason, jewelry will not be allowed during athletic practices. Male athletes are not allowed to wear earrings at any time while on the campus of Era ISD or while attending any Era ISD school or athletic event at another location, either as a spectator or participant. All caps/hats must be worn correctly at all times during school sponsored events/competitions and while the student is on school property.

Game shoes must be a neutral color or school color (black, white, “yellow or athletic gold”) or a combination of these colors. Please check with the Head Coach of the sport or the Athletic Director prior to purchasing shoes if you have any questions. A one-time special permission for different color shoes maybe given during a season.

Coaches may also implement game day dress codes and a dress code for traveling to out of town games. Failure to abide by these dress codes will result in hornet reminders, loss of playing time, and/or suspension

Article XII: Team Travel

All regular school transportation rules and regulations apply when on an athletic trip. *All varsity athletes are expected to ride the transportation provided by Era ISD to and from all competitions.* The approval of the Head Coach must be obtained for an athlete to return home with his/her parent/guardian, and this will only occur in rare circumstances. Even with a letter from the parent prior to the activity, Era ISD may or may not allow a student to leave with any person other than the parent/guardian of that student athlete. These instances will be looked at on a case by case basis and will be up to the discretion of the Head Coach and/or the Athletic Director. The Athletic Department strongly urges that all athletes leave with a parent/guardian only in emergency situations. Any athlete not riding home with their team must sign out with a coach that is responsible for the team.

Athletes will follow the dress code for all team trips, if not dressed in the team uniform before leaving the school. Team shirts may be required for some sports, and athletes will be expected to dress in them for each trip. If an athlete wishes to wear a cap, it must be approved by the coach in charge and must be removed before entering any building. All caps/hats must be worn correctly at all times during school sponsored events, and while the student is on school property. All other clothing will be in good condition (no holes, ragged, or sagging pants/shorts). Food and/or drinks will only be allowed on the bus with the approval of the coaches. Coaches may restrict the use of or take up portable devices such as cell phones, iPods/MP3 players, electronic games, etc. on out of town trips and prior to home games. These items may be taken up at a reasonable time before games, but will be returned to the athlete once the game/contest and any post game meetings or talks are completed.

Article XIII: Participation on Non-School Teams

One purpose of the Era ISD Athletic program is to promote Era ISD and its students. It is of the utmost importance for student athletes to be totally committed to the program, teams and teammates in the school sports that they participate in. Among other things, the coaching staff plans practices, workouts, and games with the safety and wellbeing of the student athletes in mind. When athletes are participating in non-school competitions the athletes may face additional wear and tear on their bodies and thus increase the chance of injury. Therefore, it is discouraged for high school athletes that are currently in-season, especially those on varsity, to take part in full team practices and/or contests of a non-school team. Working on individual skills that are needed in other sports is understandable as long as it is not in a team setting or competition nor interfering with the athlete's role and availability in the current in-season sport.

Article XIV: Offseason

The purpose of the off-season program is to improve the athletic program by enhancing each athlete's abilities. Drills and activities to improve speed, strength, and agility will be utilized. It is mandatory for all athletes to participate in the off-season program if they wish to participate in athletics. An off-season program will be used for those athletes that do not wish to participate in the in-season sports during the fall and winter months. During the spring all athletes will go through strength/conditioning workouts, and then go to practice for their spring sport(s). This is organized by the Athletic Director and the Head Coaches of Spring sports. If an athlete plans to participate in a winter sport (basketball) or spring sport (baseball, softball, track), then they must be enrolled in the athletic period and participating in offseason by the 14th school day of the school year.

Article XV: Social Media

Student-athletes need to keep in mind that in most cases it is someone in the community that makes the staff of Era ISD aware of what is being posted on social media. They, along with the staff of Era ISD, do not want Era ISD to be embarrassed by anything on social media.

Student-athletes are responsible for their actions on social media and other websites, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Toc, etc. Any photos, comments, or other evidence that suggests a violation of this handbook has occurred can be investigated.

Any inappropriate postings on any social media, blog sites, etc. by a student-athlete will be handled on an individual basis by the Athletic Director and the Head Coach of the in-season sport. Inappropriate postings include but are not limited to obscene or vulgar language; graphic images or videos; sexually explicit language or imagery; threats; unkind or inflammatory remarks about Era ISD, its faculty, staff, administration, coaches, and/or students. Student-athletes are also to refrain from making any inappropriate posts or remarks about other schools, their employees, and their students, including taunting an opponent.

Also, student-athletes may not post any information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary to the Athletic Department or the school which is not public information including but not limited to student-athlete injuries, student-athlete eligibility status, team strategies, etc.

Consequences for postings or photos as described above will be handled on an individual basis depending on the severity of the post by the Athletic Director and the Head Coach of the in-season sport. Possible consequences include hornet reminders, suspension, and/or zero tolerance contracts.

Article XVI: Conclusion

The Athletic Director empowers the coaching staff to enforce and maintain all policies and standards described in the Athletic Handbook. Communication will be maintained between the coaching staff, the Athletic Director, and the campus Principal when infractions warrant suspension from athletic activities.

Each Head Coach shall have the authority, with the agreement of the Athletic Director, to suspend or place on probation any athlete participating in a sport under their direction for major or minor infractions of the standards of the Era ISD Athletic Department.

Acting either upon the recommendation of a coach, or in his/her best judgment, the Athletic Director may suspend or place on probation any athlete for a major infraction, or repeated infractions, of the standards set forth in this athletic handbook.

The Era ISD Athletic Department is under the governance of the University Interscholastic League. It is obligated to follow all UIL rules and regulations. UIL policy may be viewed online at www.uiltexas.org.

A parent information handbook may be found at

https://www.uiltexas.org/files/athletics/manuals/Parent_Info_Handbook_22-23.pdf. This is a document that provides good concise information for parents. The Era ISD Athletic Department highly recommends all parents read and be familiar with the information in this handbook. It covers many topics including general rules, sportsmanship, as well as safety and health information pertaining to scholastic athletics.

The Era ISD Athletic Department is committed to provide an atmosphere that leads to a positive and rewarding experience for all athletes. This document is designed to aid in the accomplishment of the objectives that are outlined in its content and provide a consistent avenue for the handling of situations that arise in the daily aspects of athletic activity.

In order to meet the growing needs of our student population we have added programs over the past several years, therefore we need maximum participation in all sports. We also believe participation in multiple sports creates more well-rounded athletes. We do not believe that specializing at this age has any benefits to our athletes or our athletic program. Therefore, we encourage our athletes to participate **in a minimum of two sports** that are conducted as part of the athletic program.

***Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Era Independent School District
Athletic Department Policies and Procedures***

Please sign and return the completed form below so we may verify that you have reviewed, or will review, the Era ISD Athletic Department Policies and Procedures online at <https://www.eraisd.net/Page/4206>. You may also access the Athletic Department Policies and Procedures by going to www.eraisd.net, then clicking on the “Athletics” tab, and then clicking on “Athletic Handbook”. Your signature(s) signify that you and your student athlete agree to abide by the guidelines presented.

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If you do not have internet access, and are requesting a printed copy of the Era ISD Athletic Department Policies and Procedures, please check the box below, and a copy will be sent home with your student athlete.

I am requesting a printed copy of the Era ISD Athletic Department Policies and Procedures be sent home with my student athlete.