



HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

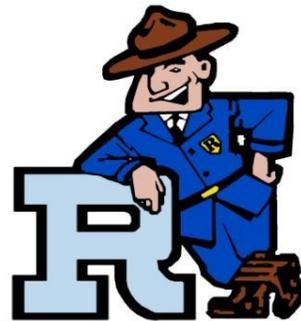


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Contact Information

High School	Main Office	Attendance	Athletic Director	Athletic Phone
El Diamante	735-3505	735-3516	Kimberly Watamura	735-3501
Golden West	730-7814	730-7809	John DeLong	730-7813
Mt. Whitney	730-7610	730-7602	Luke Vidak	730-7607
Redwood	730-7367	730-7399	Michael Wright	730-7715
Middle School	Main Office	Attendance	Athletic Director	Athletic Phone
Divisadero	730-7667	730-7666	Jameson Endres	730-7660
Green Acres	730-7673	730-7677	John Freitas	730-7671
La Joya	730-7921	730-7924	Sean Hunt	730-7921
Ridgeview	931-8002	622-3308	Pete Siqueiros	931-8005
Valley Oak	730-7681 ext. 141	730-7681 ext. 143	Richard Guerrero	917-0381
District Address	Main Office	Athletic Programs		Phone
5000 W. Cypress Ave	730-7300	John Perez – K-8, 7-8, 9-12 Jacob Hutchison – K-8, 7-8, 9-12		730-7515 730-7515

VUSD Athletic Philosophy

The Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) believes that an athletic program provides opportunity for students to acquire tools for lifelong personal growth and fulfillment of potential. These tools include: self-discipline, commitment to team, self-sacrifice/dedication, perseverance, and sportsmanship.

VUSD hires coaches who demonstrate the core values that support our student-athletes' social and physical development. VUSD commits to providing the broadest range of competitive programs for our student-athletes. At all times, VUSD's athletic programs will be complementary and supportive of the educational goals at VUSD.

VUSD, as a member of the California Interscholastic Federation Central Section (CIF-CS), is committed to the exhibition of sportsmanship and ethical behaviors in and around all athletic events. All contests must be safe, controlled, fair, courteous and orderly for all student-athletes and fans. It is the intent of the VUSD and the CIF that violence in any form will not be tolerated. In order to enforce this policy, VUSD has adopted rules and regulations which set forth the manner of enforcement of this policy and the penalties incurred when violation of the policy occurs. VUSD shall require that the following Code of Ethics be issued to each student-athlete annually and will require annual signing by the student-athlete, parent/guardian, and coaches prior to participation.

VUSD Code of Ethics

All coaches, parents, and student-athletes will...

1. ...recognize and reinforce that academics are our student-athletes' top priority.
2. ...uphold the ideals of sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
3. ...show courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
4. ...respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
5. ...achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game.
6. ...uphold the standards of conduct and the standards of eligibility.
7. ...recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of all participants.
8. ...remember to keep athletics in perspective; an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life and death.

CIF Code of Ethics

1. To emphasize the proper ideas of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
2. To eliminate all possibilities which tend to destroy the best values of the game.
3. To stress the values derived from playing the game fairly.
4. To show cordial courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
5. To establish a happy relationship between visitors and hosts.
6. To respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
7. To achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
8. To encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgment by the players on a team.
9. To recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the individual players.
10. To remember that an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life and death for player, coach, school, official, fan, or nation.

Expectations of Student-Athletes (In and Out of Season)

1. Participation in athletics is voluntary.
2. Participation is a privilege and not a right.
3. Student-athletes will adhere to the standards of conduct as defined in the VUSD Code of Ethics and the CIF Code of Ethics at all times.
4. Maintaining academic eligibility is the student's responsibility. Eligibility can also be lost because of poor attendance or citizenship.
5. The commitment a student-athlete makes to his/her team and coach requires that choices be made and priorities kept.
6. The student-athlete will show respect for all coaches, teachers, peers, officials, spectators, school facilities and equipment, and opponents at all times.
7. Student-athletes will be prepared physically and mentally for the upcoming sport's season. Preparation may include strength training, conditioning, and sport-specific skills training.

8. Student-athletes will arrive to all team practices on time, be ready to listen, and prepared to learn.
9. Student-athletes will communicate openly and honestly with coaches and school officials.
10. Student-athletes understand that coaches will make decisions based on what is best for the entire team/program.
11. Student-athletes will adhere to all team/program requirements set forth by the program's/team's coaching staff.

Expectations of Parents

1. Emphasize that academics always come first.
2. Be supportive of your student-athlete, school, coaches, and program.
3. Understand the importance of the complete student-athlete which requires both mental and physical preparation.
4. Emphasize perseverance.
5. Attend all parent meetings that pertain to the team/program.
6. Consider scheduled practices and games when planning family appointments and/or events.
7. Parents will adhere to the standards of conduct as defined in the VUSD Code of Ethics and the CIF Code of Ethics at all times.
8. Parents will understand the strengths and limitations of their student-athletes.
9. Parents will communicate openly, honestly, and at an appropriate time with coaches and school officials.
10. Parents will understand that coaches will make decisions based on what is best for the entire team/program.
11. Parents will accept all team/program requirements set forth by the program's/team's coaching staff.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Coaches will emphasize that academics always come first. As such, practice times and duration will be reasonable, age-appropriate, and well-communicated. Players shall not be penalized for missing practice for graded co-curricular events.
2. Coaches will use good judgment in dealing with all things related to their program and VUSD.
3. Coaches will give each student-athlete an opportunity to try out for the team.
4. Coaches will communicate in a positive manner.
5. Coaches will have an informational meeting prior to the season.
6. Coaches will be well-trained in teaching all aspects of the sport.
7. Coaches will be positive and enthusiastic.
8. Coaches will determine playing time.
9. Coaches will use honest, clear, effective, and appropriate verbal and multimedia communication with students and parents.

Conduct on and off the Field

At all times (on and off campus): Coaches and student-athletes represent their team, school, and community. Coaches and student-athletes should be conscious of their appearance, behavior, and citizenship at all times. Student-athletes can be held accountable for misbehavior in accordance with CIF Policy, VUSD Board Policy 6145, <https://techservices.vusd.org/boardpolicies/BP6145.PDF>, Student Activity Code and a coach's team policy.

Letter Requirements

Because of the differences in many sports, each school/coach sets their requirements.

Quitting a Sport

The head coach may or may not allow a player that has quit the team to return. Student-athletes who quit a team may lose all rights of a team member including, but not limited to, physical education credit, awards or post season honors. A player who quits a sport after a two (2) week grace period may not go out for the next sport until the previous sport season concludes.

Responsibility for Equipment

Student-athletes shall assume responsibility for all athletic equipment issued to him/her and will be expected to pay for any damaged or lost equipment.

Release to Parents/Guardians/Friends of Family and Driving Your Own Car

Student-athletes shall ride to and from all contests on school provided transportation. In special instances, student-athletes may ride home only with their parent(s) or guardian(s). Requests must state specific reasons and be submitted in writing, signed by a parent or guardian, and approved by the Athletic Director or the Principal at least 24 hours in advance of the contest. In addition to visual contact, a parent release card must be signed by the parent or guardian. We realize that there may be other commitments such as homework, tests, family emergencies & conflicts, work, or other legitimate reasons.

Under no circumstances will a student-athlete be released to another student driving a vehicle.

Playoff Participation Criteria

Playoffs are determined by CIF Central Section, access this link for more information (pg., 17, item B): [California Interscholastic Federation - Central Section Athletics \(cifcs.org\)](http://California Interscholastic Federation - Central Section Athletics (cifcs.org))

1. To enter Section playoffs, a team must have a regular season winning percentage of 30% or better.
 - a. For football only a school may petition for a waiver of the "30% rule"

Note: Schools may choose not to participate in the playoffs in which a team qualified. Reasons for this decision may include competitiveness, safety, travel, and other concerns. The final decision on playoff participation rests with the Principal.

Complaint Procedure

Our athletic complaint procedure is intended to address concerns of alleged unfair treatment of student-athletes. It is our belief that a quick and honest discussion between all parties will result in the positive resolution of concerns and an improvement of the atmosphere for both student-athletes and coaches. It is the intent that problems be resolved at the lowest level.

Complaints against staff members will be investigated pursuant to the procedures set forth in BP 1312.1. Please contact your school's Athletic Director or access this link for more information: <https://techservices.vusd.org/boardpolicies/BP1312-1.PDF>

The coach has full discretion in the following areas and complaints regarding coaching decisions in these areas will not be entertained:

- Student-athlete not given enough playing time.
- Student-athlete not playing the right position.
- Strategies used by the coach.
- Win/loss record of the team or coach.

Competition on an Outside Team (Club Sports)

Visalia Unified School District adheres strictly to all CIF-Central Section policies regarding competition on an outside team. Detailed information is available at:

https://cifstate.org/governance/constitution/600_Series.pdf

Pre-Season/Off-Season Practice and Season of Sport

Visalia Unified School District adheres strictly to all CIF-Central Section policies regarding Pre-Season/Off-Season Practice and Season of Sport. Detailed information is available at: [California Interscholastic Federation - Central Section Athletics \(cifcs.org\)](https://www.cifcs.org/) p. 63-65.

Tryouts

Tryouts are an audition and a platform to demonstrate the required athletic skills for a position on a team. Tryouts are seasonal, and student-athletes should come to tryouts prepared for competition as there is no entitlement for returning players to make a team.

Season	Sport	Tryouts Begin
Fall	Boys'/Girls' Cross Country	Tryouts, in accordance with CIF guidelines, are conducted in the week/weeks leading up to the season. Contact your school's Athletic Director for more information.
	Boys'/ Girls' Water Polo	
	Football	
	Girls' Golf	
	Girls' Tennis	
	Girls' Volleyball	
Winter	Boys'/Girls' Wrestling	
	Boys'/Girls' Soccer	
	Boys'/Girls' Basketball	
Spring	Softball	
	Baseball	
	Boys'/Girls' Swimming and Diving	
	Boys'/Girls' Track and Field	
	Boys' Tennis	
	Boys' Golf	

Eligibility

Student-athletes must satisfy all eligibility as described below:

Residential Eligibility

A student has residential eligibility upon initial enrollment in:

- The ninth grade of any CIF high school or;
- Tenth grade of any CIF high school from ninth grade of a junior high school or;
- Any CIF school as a member of an approved foreign exchange program as outlined in CIF bylaws

Note: Any student “recruited” or “encouraged to attend” a school by anyone connected directly or indirectly with that school will lose athletic eligibility at that school. In addition, the school may be sanctioned by CIF.

Linked Learning Academies

- All CIF eligibility rules will be enforced for students who participate in athletics.
- Students must participate in the athletic program in which their academy resides.
- Students attending an academy outside of their home school boundary are considered students of that academy high school and can participate only in that academy high school’s athletic program.
- Any student who transfers from an academy high school outside of their home school boundary back to their home school boundary high school or another high school is subject to all CIF eligibility rules regarding transfers.

Visalia Technical Early College (VTEC) High School and Visalia Charter Independent Study (VCIS) Participation in Athletics

- All CIF eligibility rules will be enforced for VTEC & VCIS students who participate in athletics.
- Participation in athletics for VTEC & VCIS students is open only to students who reside in the VUSD boundaries. Students who attend VTEC or VCIS and reside in a district outside of VUSD will not be allowed to participate in athletics at any VUSD high school.
- Students will be allowed to participate in athletics only at the high school in their home school boundary. A student will not be allowed to transfer to a non-home school boundary athletic program at any time.
- VTEC & VCIS students and parents will be responsible for their own transportation to all practices, games, and bus departures for away games at the home school boundary high school.
- All VUSD attendance and discipline policies in regards to extracurricular participation will apply to VTEC & VCIS students and will be enforced by the home school boundary high school athletic program.
- VTEC & VCIS students need to contact the Athletic Director at their home school boundary high school for information regarding physicals, practices, off-season workouts, etc.

Age Limitations

No student, whose 19th birthday is attained prior to June 15, shall participate or practice on any team. A student whose 19th birthday is on June 14, or before is ineligible.

Changing Schools/Transfers

A student may have transfer eligibility provided the student is compelled to move from any school to a CIF school due to:

1. A bona fide change of residence from one school attendance to the attendance area of the new school by the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or caregiver with whom the student was living when the student established residential eligibility at the prior school or;
2. A ruling by the Board of Education of a school district, which has two or more high schools, provided the change of school is not the result of disciplinary actions.
3. Students living with caregivers are not automatically eligible for athletics.
4. CIF transfer forms must be filed on all transfer students, no matter what the circumstances may be. See your Athletic Director for the proper forms. Avoiding this process may affect your athletic eligibility as well as the school's standing within the CIF.

Academic Eligibility Criteria

In order to emphasize the importance of academic achievement, the following constitute *minimum* requirements for student participation in athletics:

1. The student is currently enrolled in at least 20 semester units of work.
2. The student passed at least 20 semester units of work at the completion of the previous regular grading period. **(No probationary period granted without this criterion met.)**
3. The student is maintaining minimum progress toward meeting the high school graduation requirements as prescribed by the Governing Board.
4. The student has maintained at least a 2.0 grade point average (with no more than one "F") on a 4.0 scale—calculated from grades in all enrolled classes—during the previous grading period. If

a student-athlete falls below the 2.0 requirement, a grading probationary period will be provided to allow the student to bring up his/her grades. If unsuccessful in bringing the grades up to the standard required, the student will not be eligible for participation in student activities during the next grading period and until his/her grades meet the academic standards at the regular grade reporting period.

5. All incoming ninth grade students are eligible for participation through the first grading period. Those students who were academically ineligible (or on probation) in the eighth grade will enter the ninth grade on probationary status. This includes all students who were required to attend eighth-grade summer school as a condition of promotion.

Previous Six-Week Progress Card/Report Card	Most Recent Six-Week Progress Card/Report Card	Athletically Eligible?
Did NOT meet all requirements eligibility criteria	Did NOT meet all requirements eligibility criteria	No
Did NOT meet all requirements eligibility criteria	Did meet all requirements eligibility criteria	Yes
Did meet all requirements eligibility criteria	*Did NOT meet all requirements eligibility criteria	Yes, but on Probation
On Probation	Did NOT meet all requirements eligibility criteria	No
On Probation	Did meet all requirements eligibility criteria	Yes

** The student must pass at least 20 semester units of work at the completion of the previous regular grading period. (No probationary period granted without this criterion met.)*

Additional Information

- Transfer students from outside of the district have one grading grace period, but they must satisfy the "passing 20 credits" stipulation to be eligible.
- Students are not declared re-eligible or off probation until the Monday following the issuance and distribution of the district generated grade report to the Athletic Director. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this CIF rule such as obtaining hand written grades by the student's instructors, counselors or administrators.
- It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to check with his/her Counselor or Athletic Director at the beginning of the fall semester if they feel that their summer school grades have affected their eligibility.
- Summer school grades may not necessarily improve eligibility. The following factors are to be considered:
 - An "F" on an end-of-semester report card may be replaced by taking the exact same class in summer school. This might satisfy the GPA and the "no more than one F" rule.
 - A summer school class will be added to the semester classes if it is not a duplicate. This would affect the GPA but not the "no more than one F" rule.
 - Students, if eligible under CIF rules, may compete in athletics at the time of first enrollment in a high school in the Visalia Unified School District.

Attendance

Student-athletes shall be in attendance for all periods of the day of the event/practice (or in attendance the day prior on a weekend event/practice) unless excused by the Principal or Athletic Director in advance or be ineligible for the first event following administrative contact.

Suspension from Participation

Student-athletes suspended from school for disciplinary reasons will be suspended from extracurricular activities for a period proportional to their time of suspension.
(1 day of disciplinary suspension = 1 week of athletic suspension)

Risk Warning

SERIOUS, CATASTROPHIC AND PERHAPS FATAL INJURY MAY RESULT FROM ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION. By its very nature, competitive athletics may put students in situations in which SERIOUS, CATASTROPHIC and perhaps FATAL ACCIDENTS may occur. Students and parents must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution or supervision will totally eliminate all risk of injury. Just as driving involves choice of risk, athletic participation by students also may be inherently dangerous. The obligation of parents and students in making this choice to participate cannot be overstated. There have been accidents resulting in death, paralysis, or serious/permanent physical impairment as a result of athletic competition. By granting permission for your student to participate in athletic competition, you, as a parent or guardian, acknowledge that such a risk exists. By choosing to participate, you, the student, acknowledge that such a risk exists.

Parent/Student-Athlete Concussion Information

AB25, Education Code 49475, AB 2127

All student-athletes and their parent/guardian must receive information about concussion and head injury before beginning athletic competition. Students suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury must be removed from play and not allowed to return to the sport until he/she is evaluated by and receives a written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in the management of concussion and head injury.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

California State Law AB 217 states that return to play (i.e. competition) cannot be sooner than 7 days after evaluation by a physician (MD/DO) who has made the diagnosis of a concussion, and only after a graduated CIF Concussion Return to Play (RTP) Protocol has been completed.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion?

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If a student-athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he/she should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a physician (MD/DO) says he/she is symptom-free, is cleared to return to play, and completes the CIF Concussion Return to Play (RTP) Protocol.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff	Possible Symptoms Reported by Student-athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or “pressure” in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsy	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can’t recall events after hit or fall	Just not “feeling right” or “feeling down”

Concussion Danger Signs

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. A student-athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt the head or body he/she exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

Why Should a Student-Athlete Report His/Her Symptoms?

If a student-athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While a student-athlete's brain is healing, he/she is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young student-athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.

What Should You Do If You Think Your Student-Athlete Has a Concussion?

If you suspect that a student-athlete has a concussion, remove the student-athlete from play and seek medical attention. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the student-athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a physician (MD/DO), experienced in evaluating for concussion, has cleared the student-athlete to begin the CIF Concussion Return to Play Protocol.

Rest is the key to helping a student-athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a healthcare professional.

REMEMBER - Concussions affect people differently. While most student-athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some people will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

It's better to miss a game(s). For more information on concussions, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA is not a heart attack. It's an abnormality in the heart's electrical system or structure that abruptly stops the heartbeat. It's fatal in 92% of cases, if not properly treated within minutes. Abnormalities may be genetic or congenital, and may become more pronounced as children grow.

How Common is Sudden Cardiac Arrest in the United States?

There are 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. About 7,000 patients under the age of 25 die of SCA each year. In general, SCA affects males 4 times more than females and occurs during exercise 60% of the time, putting student-athletes at a higher risk. The following factors increase the risk of SCA:

- Family history of known heart abnormalities, heart conditions, or sudden death before age 50
- Family members with unexpected fainting, seizures, drowning, near drowning or car accidents
- Known structural heart abnormalities, repaired or unrepaired
- Use of drugs, such as cocaine, inhalants, or excessive energy drinks

Warning Signs of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)

SCA often has no warning signs; the first symptom could be death. Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have the following signs or symptoms:

- Racing heart, palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fainting or seizure especially during or right after exercise
- Fainting repeatedly or with excitement or startle
- Chest pain or discomfort with exercise
- Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise
- Excessive shortness of breath during exercise

What are the Risks of Playing or Practicing After Experiencing These Symptoms?

The risk associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing these symptoms may lead to SCA. When the heart stops, so does the blood flow to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage may occur in just a few minutes. Student-athletes and parents often don't want to jeopardize their playing time so they may avoid telling the coach of their symptoms in hopes that they will just disappear on their own. Some may think that they are out of shape and just need to train harder. Student-athletes need to know that if they experience any of the noted warning signs, it is important to get medical attention immediately.

Removal from Play/Return to Play

Any student-athlete who experiences warning signs of SCA must be removed from play. The symptoms may happen before, during or after activity. Play includes all athletic activity. Before returning to play, the student-athlete must be evaluated and receive medical clearance from a licensed physician or cardiologist. A licensed physician's assistant or registered nurse practitioner may consult with a licensed physician.

Steroid Warning

Use of steroids to increase strength or growth can cause serious health problems. Steroids can keep teenagers from growing to their full height. Steroids can also cause heart disease, stroke, and damage liver function. Men and women using steroids may develop fertility problems, personality changes, and acne. Men can also experience premature balding and development of breast tissue. These health hazards are in addition to the civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized sale, use, or exchange of anabolic steroids.

As a requirement for participating in athletics, student-athletes must pledge not to use androgenic/anabolic steroids and dietary supplements banned by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and the substance synephrine, unless with a written prescription from a licensed health care practitioner to treat a medical condition.

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