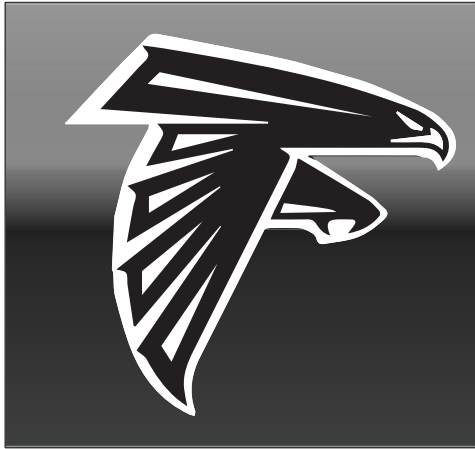


FAUQUIER COUNTY

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



***FAUQUIER HIGH SCHOOL
KETTLE RUN HIGH SCHOOL
LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL***

FAUQUIER COUNTY ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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FAUQUIER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC MISSION STATEMENT

Fauquier County Public Schools (FCPS), an innovative learning community, is committed to developing creative, confident, knowledgeable, and responsible world citizens by cultivating the potential of each learner. Our mission in the athletic departments of Fauquier County Public Schools is to provide a rigorous athletic program which complements and supports the Fauquier County Public Schools mission by teaching our student-athletes to challenge themselves, to be positive emissaries of Fauquier County, and to make positive contributions to their school and community, on and off the playing field. The Fauquier County Public Schools athletic department and Fauquier County Public Schools administrators are mindful that the education and welfare of each student-athlete is their primary responsibility and transcends all other responsibilities.

Requirements for Participation

1. Physical Examination: A yearly physical examination is required. The Virginia High School League (VHSL) physical form must be completed by a physician and submitted to the athletic department prior to participation. The physical covers all sports for the entire school year provided the examination occurred after May 1 of the current school year through June 30 of the following school year. This form will be kept on file in the athletic training office.
2. FCPS Concussion Guidelines for Parents and Athletes (Signatures required): An information sheet regarding concussions, their long-term and short-term effects, and permission to use the Impact Test will be provided by FCPS athletic training department. The student-athlete and a parent/guardian shall read this material and sign the form, stating that they understand the danger of concussions and the treatment plan that will be followed by our athletic trainers. This signature on this document also indicates that you have read and understand the rules stated in this handbook. This form will be kept on file in the athletic training office.
3. Impact Testing: Impact testing will be required for all freshman and junior class athletes, all student-athletes new to interscholastic athletic programs, and all student-athletes who transfer to Fauquier County Public Schools.
4. Athletic Fees: Each student-athlete will be required to pay a fee of \$60.00 for each high school team of which he/she is a member. The fee must be paid prior to the first official contest in order for the student to participate. Those students who have qualified for free/reduced lunch will be exempt from this fee.

Individual Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to represent any Fauquier County Public School in any VHSL-sponsored interscholastic contest, a student shall meet the following VHSL requirements:

1. **28A-1-1 Age Rule** – The student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.

2. 28A-2-1 Bona Fide Student Rule – The student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents.
3. 28A-3-1 Enrollment Rule – The student shall have been regularly enrolled in the school which he/she represents not later than the fifteenth school day of the semester.
4. 28A-4-1 Grade Rule – The student shall be enrolled in the last four years of high school.
5. 28A-5-1 Scholarship Rule – When a school offers four classes each semester (block scheduling), students must pass three of four classes to be eligible for the following semester. There is no yearly eligibility option since the block scheduling is on a “stand alone” semester grade basis.
6. 28A-6-1 Semester Rule – The student shall not have been enrolled in the last four years of high school for a period of more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the semester in which he/she was enrolled for the first time in the ninth grade. The eight consecutive semesters shall be counted continuously from that point, regardless of whether he/she remains continuously enrolled in school.
7. 28A-7-1 Transfer Rule – The student shall not have enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parents, parent, or guardian. Home instruction does not constitute enrollment in a public school.
8. 28A-7-3 (7) - Interpretations (Residency) - Residence is defined as the domicile of an individual, meaning that the individual lives in a locality with the intent to make it a fixed and permanent home. Domicile requires more than bodily presence as an inhabitant in a given place; it requires bodily presence and an intention to make such a place a fixed and permanent home. Other indicia of domicile include automobile registration, voter registration and the reporting of a mailing address change to the appropriate agencies, such as the post office, utility companies, creditors and employers. Under no circumstances can a family or student participant have two residences for eligibility purposes. It is the obligation of the school to know the complete residence status of each student participant and to see that all comply with these requirements. Any change in residence must be bona fide. Determination of what constitutes a bona fide change of residence depends upon the facts of each case, but in order for a change of residence to be considered bona fide at least the following facts must exist: (1) The original residence must be abandoned as a residence; that is sold, rented or disposed of as a residence and must not be used as a residence by any member of the family; (2) the entire family must make the change and take with them the household goods and furniture appropriate to the circumstances, and (3) the change must be made with the intent that it is permanent.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

General Conduct of Athletes

The Fauquier County Public Schools athletic department, the coaching staff, school administration and the community believe strongly that high standards of conduct, sportsmanship and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics. A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the Fauquier County Public Schools athletic department. Each student-athlete must remember that participating and competing for Fauquier County Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes represent their high school and Fauquier County, and therefore, they are expected to portray themselves, their team, and their high school in a positive manner at all times. All Fauquier County Public Schools athletic teams are governed by and are required to abide by the rules of the Virginia High School League (VHSL), the Fauquier County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct and the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook. Violations of VHSL rules, FCPS policies, and the Code of Student Conduct and school rules may result in removal from the team or activity and disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Prohibited Behaviors

The following prohibited behaviors are not meant to be all inclusive, but represent the primary types of behavior that may be of concern in FCPS athletic programs.

Harassment

Harassment is generally defined as conduct which annoys, threatens, intimidates, alarms, or puts a person in fear of his/her safety. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim. Harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs and lewd propositions, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters, photos or cartoons.

Hazing

Hazing means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or to inflict bodily injury on a student in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of the continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student so endangered or injured participates voluntarily in the relevant activity. Section 18.2-56 of the Code of Virginia prohibits hazing and imposes a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for anyone found guilty of this violation.

Hazing can take many forms. For example:

1. Subtle Hazing includes initiations and the like which manipulate, coerce, or in other respects seek to deny the rights of individuals. Typically, this involves psychological pressures on an individual to agree to certain action in order to be more fully accepted, whether or not performance of this action has any bearing on the actual membership status.

2. Harassment Hazing involves actions which cause mental anguish or physical discomfort. Typically, this involves persistent physical or verbal actions which threaten, irritate, demean, or inflict pain.
3. Hazardous Hazing includes action which endangers life or mental health, which have the potential of causing bodily injury or which subjects a person to severe mental stress.

All student-athletes shall understand the definition of hazing, refrain from involvement in hazing, and report any incidents to the coach and athletic department.

Physical Violence/Aggression

Fighting (physical confrontation between two or more persons) and assault and battery (offensive and intentional touching or striking of an individual against his or her will) are prohibited by the Code of Student Conduct. Participation in violent or aggressive behavior may result in removal from a team or activity and consequences as described in the Code of Student Conduct.

Social Media

Using social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) in an inappropriate manner can have negative consequences, especially if unkind words or threats are used with intent to hurt others. Sections 18.2069, 18.2-152.7, and 18.2-152.7:1 of the Code of Virginia directly relate to social media.

Fauquier County Public Schools recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks as outlined in FCPS Policy 7-4.3 (Student Publications/Freedom of Expression.) Any online postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as team, school, school division and Fauquier County rules and regulations. Specifically prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal, or defamatory language/actions
- Derogatory language regarding school personnel or other students
- Comments designed to harass or bully students and/or school personnel
- Nude, sexually-oriented, or indecent photos, images or altered pictures

Also prohibited are all violations of the Acceptable Use Policy which each student is required to agree to and sign each school year.

Substance Abuse

Use, possession of, or distribution of illegal substances, controlled substances or alcohol are prohibited by law and the Code of Student Conduct. In addition to the consequences described in the Code of Student Conduct, student-athletes are subject to the following consequences for substance abuse infractions:

- 45-day suspension from participation in or attendance at extracurricular activities

- Possible removal from the team or activity
- In the case of anabolic steroid use, ineligibility to compete in interscholastic competition for two years, unless the steroid was prescribed by a licensed physician for a medical condition.

EXPECTATIONS, RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES GOVERNING SCHOOL ATHLETICS

STUDENTS

Participation

Athletes may participate in only one school-sponsored sport per season.

Equipment

School equipment issued to the student-athlete by the school is his/her responsibility. He/she is expected to keep it clean and in good condition. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation.

Attendance in School

The student-athlete must be present for the school day in order to participate in games and practice. Exceptions may be granted by the coach, athletic director or principal if the request is made prior to the game or practice. Failure to receive approval may result in disciplinary action.

Games and Practice Attendance

Athletes must be present for all practices, school competitive events, regular season, post-season, and make-up games. Exceptions are not made for vacations, Saturdays, or other sports activities.

There are no consequences for athletes who miss a practice or game to attend school-sponsored trips or other required academic activities. For optional trips, the coach may determine if a consequence is appropriate.

For all other missed games or practices, the consequence is at the discretion of the coach. In such cases, consequences may include dismissal from the team.

Individual Coach's Rule

Coaches may establish additional rules and regulations with the approval of the athletic director and principal for their respective sports. These rules pertaining to a particular sport must be given by the coach in writing to all team members and explained fully before the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will also be in writing and shall be administered by the coach.

Travel for Athletic Events

Student-athletes must use school-provided transportation to athletic events. At no time will student-athletes be transported to or from athletic events in private cars unless prior arrangements have been made. If the coach does not have a rule that the student-athlete must ride the provided transportation back from the event, he/she may ride home with a parent or guardian. The parent/guardian must sign the student-athlete out with a coach. Written documentation with prior approval is required for a student-athlete to be transported from away games by someone other than the parent/guardian.

Reporting an Injury

All injuries which occur while participating in athletics must be reported by the student-athlete to the athletic trainer and coach. If the injury requires medical attention by a physician or treatment center, an injury report must be completed by the athletic trainer or coach. Copies of the injury report will be given to the school nurse and the principal. Once a physician treats a student-athlete, the student-athlete must obtain the physician's written permission to return to the activity.

Lettering Requirements

1. Lettering requirements will be established and communicated by each varsity coach. Lower level (junior varsity, freshman) teams will receive certificates of participation.
2. An athlete who moves from one level of competition to another will letter at the level of highest competition, provided the athlete has met lettering requirements.
3. Any athlete who was a starter or played regularly and was thereafter injured may be awarded a letter, if in the coach's judgment he/she would have met lettering requirements.
4. The athlete must complete the season in good standing with the school and coach.
5. Athletes are required to attend all practices unless there is an excused absence approved by the coach.
6. Athletes should realize that they are representing Fauquier County Public Schools and their community and shall meet the conduct requirements outlined in this handbook.

Sportsmanship

Those who earn the privilege to participate in athletics are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, fair and respectful manner. Student-athletes are expected to do the best they can to excel while exhibiting self-control and respectful behavior toward their team mates, competitors and community. Student-athletes are expected to be respectful of officials and accept their decisions.

FANS AND SPECTATORS

Fans and spectators are expected to:

1. Stand and remove headgear during the National Anthem.
2. Cheer for their team rather than against their opponents.
3. Maintain self-control and conduct themselves as responsible citizens.
4. Show respect for opponents in every way possible.
5. Always be positive in support of their team.
6. Recognize and acknowledge good performances made by both teams.
7. Respect officials and accept their decisions.
8. Be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
9. Leave the site of an activity, including the parking lot, as soon as possible after the activity is completed.

Spectators may be asked to leave the contest, or may be barred from future contests, if these expectations are not met.

PARENTS

Parent-Coach Relationship

The critical factor in determining whether your student-athlete has a positive experience is the quality of his/her adult leaders and role models, including parent(s) and coaches. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are better able to accept the actions of each other and provide a greater benefit to our student-athletes. Parents, when your student-athlete becomes involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations will be placed on your student-athlete. This begins with clear communications from the coach of your program.

Communications to Expect from your Student-Athlete's Coach

1. Team requirements, special equipment, strength and conditioning programs
2. Procedure if your student-athlete is injured during participation
3. Game/practices schedule and updates
4. Team rules, guidelines and consequences for infractions
5. Team selection process

Communication Coaches Expect from Parents

1. Any concerns related to your student-athlete's participation on the team should be expressed directly to the coach. (Please follow the procedure outlined below.)
2. Advance notification of any schedule conflicts
3. Prompt notification in the event of illness or injury and advance notification of scheduled medical procedures

It is the goal of coaches, school staff and parents that each student-athlete has richly rewarding experiences participating in school athletics. It is important to understand that there will be disappointments as well as successes. When parents have concerns, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding, resolution, and a positive outcome.

It may be difficult to accept that your student-athlete is not playing as much as you expect. Coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for the team and for all student-athletes involved. Parents should understand that the decision on playing time, team strategy and play selection are at the sole discretion of the head coach and his staff.

Examples of Concerns to Discuss with the Coaching Staff

1. Treatment of your student-athlete
2. Ways to help your student-athlete improve
3. Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior

Procedures for Communicating with Your Student-Athlete's Coach

1. Call or e-mail the coach to set up an appointment.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call or e-mail the athletic director. He/she will set up the meeting for you and the coach.
3. Please do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These are often emotional times for both the parent and the coach and meetings of this nature rarely promote a positive resolution. Because competition often evokes strong emotions, please use the "24-hour rule" and wait 24 hours before meeting with the coach to ensure a positive and productive conversation.

If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution:

1. Call or e-mail the athletic director and set up an appointment to discuss the situation.
2. If necessary, at this meeting the appropriate next step will be determined.