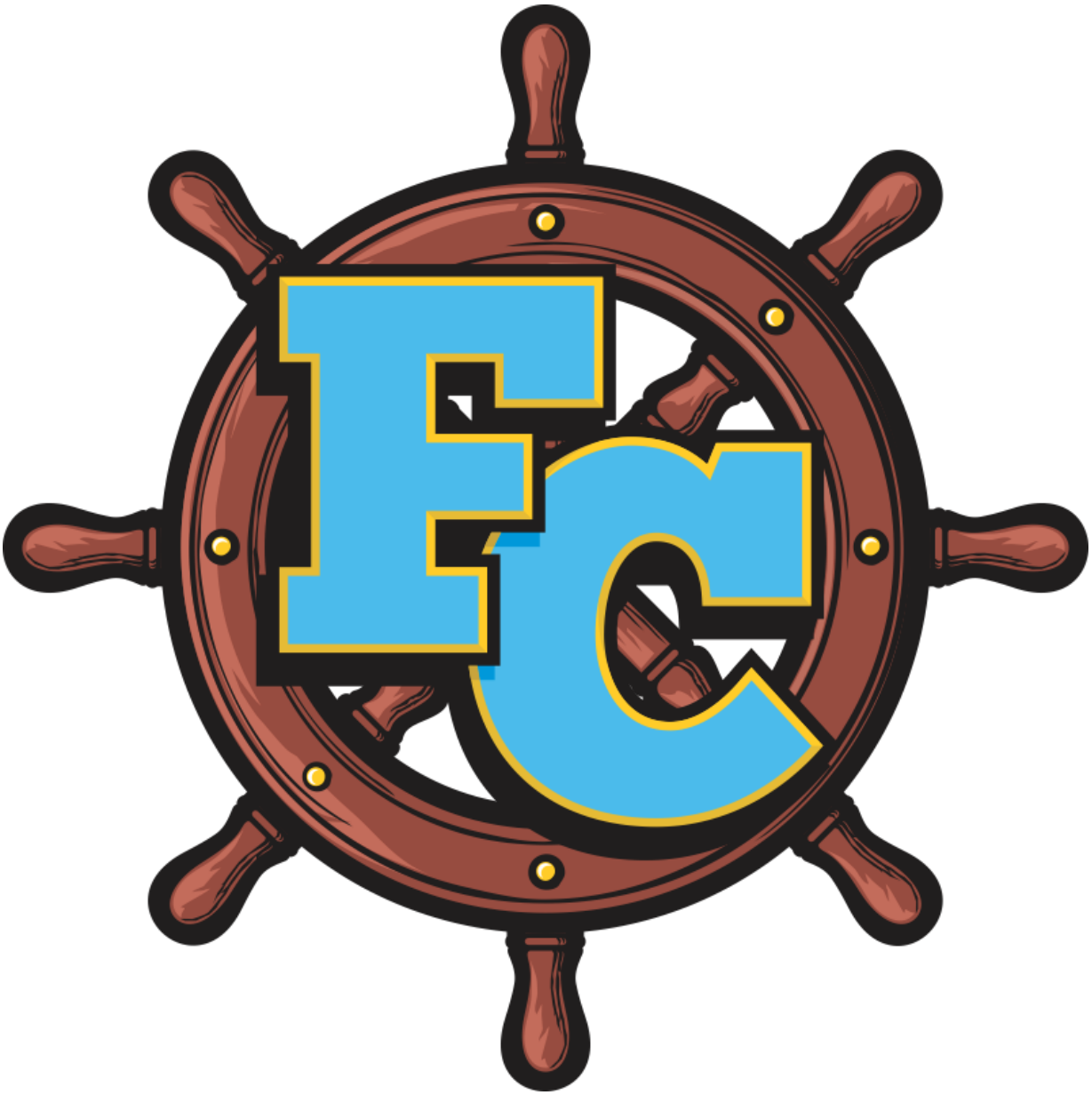
Fulton County School District



2024-2025 Athletic Handbook

FULTON COUNTY STUDENT/PARENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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The Athletic Handbook was reviewed June 2024 and was approved by the school board.

Athletic Philosophy

The Fulton County School District believes that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunity and experience that assists students in personal growth, self-expression, mental alertness, and physical growth. The Fulton County Athletic Department strives to provide a positive environment dedicated to achieving excellence in athletic and academic performance and inspiring personal development which prepares student-athletes to benefit society in a lasting and meaningful way.

Athletics play an important part in the life of Fulton County Schools. Young people learn a great deal from their participation in interscholastic athletics. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, competition and how to win and lose gracefully are an integral part of each team in our athletic program. Athletics also play an important part in helping the individual student develop a healthy self-concept, as well as, a healthy body. Athletic competition adds to our school spirit and helps all students, spectators, and participants develop pride in our school.

Information in this handbook is designed as a set of guidelines, rules and responsibilities for Fulton County Students in grades 5-12. Values such as good sportsmanship, integrity, character education, a winning attitude and the complete development of the individual in team and individual settings shall be promoted. We believe athletics truly are a major part of well-rounded educational experience. We are intentionally making efforts to foster a family atmosphere in our athletic programs. By "family" we mean student athletes, parents, coaches and school administration and staff working together to develop responsibility and accountability. Let us work together to make athletics at Fulton County a meaningful educational experience.

KHSAA Member School

Fulton County adheres to and abides by the rules set forth by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA). Students will abide by the rules and regulations of the KHSAA Constitution and Rules handbook. Copies of the handbook are available on the district website.

Middle School Athletics

The Middle School interscholastic athletics program addresses the physical, social, and emotional needs of early adolescence. The approach to athletics is less competitive, with opportunities to participate in recognition of the physical, mental, and social changes middle school students are experiencing. Students in grades 7th and 8th may participate at the high school level in a sport that is not offered in the middle school. If a sport is offered at the middle school level, 8th grade students may not participate at the JV or Varsity level until the completion of the Middle School Season and only with Parent, Coach, Athletic Director and Principal approval. In doing so, the total number of contests for that player (middle school and high school) may not exceed the Limitation of Seasons set by the KHSAA.

High School Athletics
Athletic participation at the Varsity level is more competitive than the Middle School program, and the Junior Varsity (JV) program functions as a transition between the two. Varsity competition is based on ability, and participation in this program requires a significant commitment of time, as well as, adherence to more stringent team and Athletic Department rules. Parents and athletes are advised to take this into consideration when deciding to participate at the JV or Varsity level. In order to fully appreciate a family's commitment to JV/Varsity competition and to avoid miscommunication and unrealistic expectations, parents and students must understand that practices/contests can be scheduled on Saturdays and during vacation periods with prior approval from a principal/athletic director.

Eligibility
No student shall be kept from participation in athletics at Fulton County due to his or her race, religious beliefs, gender or socioeconomic status. Students are required to meet certain academic requirements as set forth by the school site based decision making council (SBDM), district board of education (BOE), and the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA). Examples of these policies include:

- <u>Physical Examination, Parental Consent</u>
  Each student who is trying out for a place as a participant on an athletic team or cheerleading squad must present a KHSAA physical form signed by a physician which shall state that he or she is physically fit to participate without undue risk to be eligible to participate in the team's tryouts. The parent's consent for the child's participation and acknowledgment of receipt of the eligibility rules as promulgated by the Association and Kentucky Board of Education regulations in writing shall also be required on KHSAA Form GE04.

- <u>Age</u>
  A student who becomes nineteen (19) years old before August 1 shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition. A student who becomes nineteen (19) on or after August 1 shall remain eligible for the entire school year.

- <u>Enrollment</u>
  A student shall be enrolled as a full-time student with passing grades if he or she desires to participate in athletics at Fulton County.

- <u>Academic Eligibility</u>
  Adequate Yearly Progress - On the first day of each school year, a student shall be at his or her proper grade level. To be considered to be at the proper grade level, a student shall have been enrolled as a full-time student during the previous grading period, and shall be on schedule to graduate with his or her class on the first day of school. For a student to be considered on schedule to graduate, that student shall have received the following school/district credits towards graduation prior to the first day of school:

Grade 6-9=Promotion from the previous grade to the next consecutive grade.

10th Grade = 6 Credits
11th Grade = 12 Credits
12th Grade = 19 Credits

- Weekly Athletic Grade Checks –On a weekly basis, a student shall be making continual progress during the school year by passing their academic classes in which he or she is currently enrolled to be eligible to participate in athletics for that week. This weekly check of cumulative grades shall be conducted on each Monday by noon. A cumulative grade is calculated by adding up all of the posted nine weeks grades and dividing by the number of nine weeks.

  Example: 1st Nine Weeks Grade = 70 C
  2nd Nine Weeks Grade = 60 F
  Overall Cumulative Grade = 70 + 60 = 130 divided by 2 = 65 D

  Although the student athlete may have a failing grade for the current nine weeks, their overall cumulative grade is a 65 D. This athlete would still be eligible to participate.

  A student found to be failing 1 subject is deemed eligible, but must have the F removed from a grade check within two weeks of the initial grade. If the F is not improved to a passing grade within two weeks, the student will be ineligible until grade is passing on the day of grade check. (The students may participate in practice.) Students found to be failing 2 or more subjects are deemed ineligible immediately and grades will be checked at next grade check. If a student is failing, the student must attend a study hall during the practice time. If a student works diligently to improve his/her grade during the week of ineligibility then student may request an updated grade check prior to an athletic contest and if the reported grades have improved the ineligibility shall be lifted.

- Domestic & Non-Domestic Transfer
  Students transferring to Fulton County from another school district after starting 9th grade must request a Domestic Transfer of Eligibility ruling from the KHSAA prior to participating in athletics. A Non-Domestic Transfer of Eligibility ruling is required for participation by Foreign Exchange Students. This process can be initiated through the Athletic Director and should be done as soon as possible upon enrollment as the process can take anywhere from 3 days to 3 months to complete.

- Daily Attendance
  Students involved in after school extra-curricular activities, including athletic contests and practices, must be in attendance to participate. For this purpose, students must be in attendance for a minimum of 4 full class periods to be counted present. Student/Athletes not in attendance according to these requirements shall not be eligible to participate that day. The principal and/or athletic director, according to the situation, may make exceptions. Students not following these guidelines are also subject to disciplinary action under the district's attendance policy. Students considered truant due to excessive absences or tardies to school may be excluded from participation in extracurricular activities including athletics.

Making the Team/Cut Policy
In order to try out for a team, an athlete must be present during the designated try-out period. Players shall be notified as soon as possible whether or not there will be cuts. Squad selection is made at the discretion of the coach based on ability, effort, attitude and teacher input using a rubric with criteria made known to students prior to tryouts. Rubrics and scoresheets will not be shared with parents due to confidentiality. Parents should NOT purchase expensive clothing or equipment until they are certain that their son or daughter has made the team. An athlete is not placed on the active roster and may not compete in a contest until he or she has completed a minimum of 10 Practices.

Once regular season competitions begin, decisions regarding playing time (including starting lineups and in-game substitutions) are made at the discretion of the coach. A player cut from a squad or team is eligible for other sports immediately. Upon the start of the competition schedule, a player that is suspended or quits one sport is ineligible to participate in other sports during that season.

Transfer Students
Two options for transfer students to participate in sports at Fulton County:

- If a student transfers to Fulton County after tryouts have been conducted, they must submit a video of their athletic abilities to be scored. The video will be scored using the scoring rubric prepared by Fulton County coaches. The scoring will take place by outside judges. The students must obtain a letter of recommendation from a former coach, teacher, or principal. This letter of recommendation will be included in the scoring of the athlete.

- If the student has already participated in tryouts at a previous school and made the team, Fulton County Schools will honor that tryout if a position is available. The principal or athletic director will contact the former school system to affirm that he/she made the team.

Multiple Sports & Extracurricular Activities
Playing multiple sports during the same season can be done with a written agreement between coaches of the various sports and the player/parent before the sport season begins. The player must designate one sport as their "primary activity." Coaches will work together with the student and parent in designating which practices/games the student will attend. In a case of conflict, the "primary activity" will take precedence.

The Athletic Department recognizes that students should have an opportunity to engage in a broad range of learning experiences. However, a student who attempts to participate in too many extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of conflicting responsibilities. Students are cautioned not to overextend themselves. Participation on athletic teams requires a demanding commitment of time to a rigorous schedule of practice and competition. Parents and student-athletes have the responsibility to notify a coach immediately whenever a conflict arises, and they should attempt to resolve the conflict. If it becomes apparent that conflicts will continue on a regular basis and a student cannot fulfill his/her obligation, he/she should withdraw from one of those activities.

Practices & Contests
Athletes are required to participate in all in-season practices/contests unless excused by the coach. Excessive unexcused absences will result in disciplinary action, which might include dismissal from the team. Excused absences must be approved in advance between the student, parent and head coach. Students who miss events without prior arrangements may be assigned extra conditioning, face reduction in playing time, or be cut from the team. Consequences are at the discretion of the coaches and will be covered in the parent meeting. The AD will also have a copy of each coaches' consequences. For all sports, if the student is placed in ISS, the student is eligible to practice but ineligible to play until the final day of ISS.

Students who are absent from practice due to Detention or Suspension are required to make-up the same conditioning as assigned the team from the days missed. Student athletes who repeatedly arrive late to or leave early from practice are subject to these penalties at the recommendation of the Head Coach.

If a student athlete is injured during their season, the student is still required to attend practices and to sit on the bench or sidelines to be a part of the team. Students must attend practices in order to receive playing time.

Student Athlete Code of Conduct
Participation on a Fulton County athletic team is a privilege and the participants must earn the right to represent the school by conducting themselves is such a way that the image of Fulton County would not be tarnished in any manner. Any participant whose conduct is judged to reflect a discredit upon him/her, the team, or the school will be subject to the disciplinary action as determined by the coach, and/or school Principal. It does not matter whether the conduct in question takes place during or outside school hours and sessions of sport seasons.

- <u>Sportsmanship</u>
  Because the players are respected and admired, they exert a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of the spectators. Their display of sportsmanship is to be expected, encouraged, and rewarded. The following sportsmanlike behavior is to be adhered to by our players as they accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing the school and the community:
  a. Shake hands with opponents before (captains) and after the game.
  b. Respect the official's judgment in interpretation of the rules. Never argue or indicate a dislike for a decision.
  c. Accept both victory and defeat without being boastful or bitter. Be gracious whether the team wins or loses.
  d. Cooperate with the coach and fellow players in promoting good sportsmanship.
  e. Players are expected to refrain from the use of profanity, vulgar language, and rude gestures.

Coaches will establish rules and regulations for their athletes that fall under the umbrella of these guidelines and have the authority to assign consequences to players who violate

them which may include, but not be limited to: running, push ups or other exercises, benching, or suspension from the team depending on the severity of the situation and the number of times the issue has been addressed. They shall have the full support of the Athletic Director and building Principals in making decisions regarding these issues. The intent of this policy is to create a reasonable set of minimum standards for athletes to promote the ideals of class and integrity throughout the athletic program.

- <u>Relationship with Teachers</u>
  Athletes are expected to be examples of good behavior in all aspects of their school life. If a faculty member reports an incident of unacceptable behavior or negative classroom attitude, the act will be discussed with the player and disciplinary action, if necessary, will be determined by the principal, athletic director and coach.

- <u>Dress Code</u>
  Student-athletes represent the school to their peers, parents, and members of this and other communities. It is therefore important that they look, act, and play like athletes. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that the players do so in a manner that represents the individuals, the team, the school and the community in a positive light. Players who fail to abide by these rules are subject to disciplinary action and may have their participation withheld until they comply with the coaches' rules. Below is a list of expectations.

  - Uniforms, both game and practice uniforms, should be regularly washed and properly cared for by the athlete.
  - Coaches have the authority to make decisions regarding policies for game day appearance such as wearing jerseys or dressing up to school. Players are expected to dress according to a coach's specifications and should dress in a way that reflects the unity of the team. Each athlete is responsible to dress and groom appropriately while attending away competitions. The wearing of inappropriate attire could result in the removal from team competition on the specific day the infraction occurs. See your coach or athletic director if you are concerned about specific attire. **Please take pride in your appearance and your team.**
  - During contests players' uniforms are to be worn as specified by the coaches according to what is appropriate for that sport and that uniform. For example: jerseys tucked in or matching undergarments. These determinations are expressed by the coach at the beginning of the season, and will be included in a coach's team rules and regulations.
  - Players may not wear earrings or other jewelry while competing in their sport. Visible tattoos, which are determined to be objectionable or offensive, are to be covered during interscholastic contests.
  - During practices students are to wear proper attire. If a practice uniform is provided they are to wear the practice uniform. Coaches may make rules and establish consequences for those athletes who do not bring their practice clothes. Players are not to take shirts off during practice (no "shirts vs. skins") and female athletes must wear appropriate tops over sports bras. While shirts and shorts do not have to adhere to the policies specified in the student dress

code for school, a degree of modesty is expected and clothing shall not be excessively revealing or worn inappropriately.

- Stealing
  One purpose of the athletic program is to develop respect for the rights and property of others. If an athlete takes the property of another person or of the school or becomes knowingly involved in theft by receiving stolen property, he/she shall be denied participation for one week of all athletic activity (practice and competition). If a student has a second violation, he/she will be dismissed from the team.

- Hazing
  Hazing is defined as any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. A charge of "hazing" does not require serious or substantial physical or mental harm, but only the substantial risk of mental or physical harm. Therefore, in theory, any fear, embarrassment or pain caused by an act of hazing is not acceptable. Under law, schools MUST take action to prevent such hazing, actively enforcing policies against hazing, including reasonable discipline when appropriate. Hazing may result in criminal sanctions against the participants.

- Tobacco, Alcohol & Drugs
  The use and or possession of tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs are prohibited and any student who violates this rule is subject to the provisions of the Student Discipline Code. The rules apply to all students during school hours and at all school activities including while being transported by any school vehicle. As has been stated in this handbook, participation in extra-curricular activities is a privilege not a right. It is a voluntary act on the part of the participants, and is therefore subject to more stringent requirements than are placed upon students not involved in extra-curricular activities. The United States Supreme Court has upheld that schools may drug test students that choose to participate in extra-curricular activities. The primary purpose of such a test is for the protection of each student-athlete. An athlete that uses illicit drugs or alcohol is vulnerable to added risk of injury to themselves or others. It is the belief of the administration that student-athletes that use drugs or alcohol may be in need of help. The established testing policy is meant to provide a way to detect drug-abuse among student-athletes and has been established by the Board of Education. Student athletes must comply with all the provisions of the drug and alcohol policy described herein . . .

  Procedure:
  a. School administration will be contacted and student will be given due process
  b. Law officials will be called if necessary
  c. Parents or guardians of the student will be called
  d. The student will be suspended (ISS for tobacco) immediately for a minimum of 3 days, or more.
  e. For alcohol or drugs, the incident will be reported to the Superintendent and the Board of Education to arrange a student discipline hearing

Uniforms & Equipment

Athletes are responsible for the proper care of any school issued uniforms or equipment assigned by their coaches. All uniforms and equipment must be turned in to the coach within one week of the completion of the season. It is the athlete's responsibility to return equipment to the coach on the appointed days during this seven day period. Any lost or damaged uniform or equipment must be paid for by the student in order to be replaced. An athlete is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic competition until the athlete has turned in all equipment and uniforms from the preceding sport. For senior athletes, exclusion from participation in activities such as prom, senior trip, graduation, or project graduation may be enforced if uniforms, equipment, or payment are not received by the school.

Transportation

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that his/her athletes behave responsibly while on the bus. The following rules apply to all bus trips:

a. No food or beverages on the bus.
b. Athletes shall clean off their cleats before boarding, and not wear their cleats on the bus.
c. All trash (paper, tape, wrapping, bandages, etc.) shall be picked up before getting off.
d. Heads, arms, and hands shall remain inside the bus.
e. Athletes shall remain seated, refrain from throwing objects, and keep their hands to themselves.
f. Students will refrain from loud conversation, yelling, or making abrupt noises such as clapping that may distract the driver.
g. All equipment (bags, pads, and equipment) shall be placed so all emergency exits are clear.
h. Male and female athletes are not to sit together in on the bus.

Students unable to follow these rules may receive punishment from the coach and/or principal, including being suspended from bus travel. Students are not permitted to drive their own vehicles to away contests. Parents are permitted to drive their own children to or from contests with the Coach's permission. In those instances, parents must speak to the coach prior to the contest and put their request in writing.

Athletes will ride to each contest as a team. Athletes will only be released to an adult that is on the Approved Transportation List after each game/match. In an emergency situation, a parent/guardian may contact a coach or game administrator by text message or phone to make transportation arrangements for an athlete, provided that an athletic contract has been completed for the athlete.

Injuries & Insurance

All students of Fulton County Schools are insured through a school policy intended to provide supplemental health insurance when accidental bodily injury is sustained by a student while participating in school sponsored activity. The school insurance is a supplemental policy designed to assist families by reimbursing them for out of pocket expenses only after claims have been processed by the family's primary health insurance. Claims must first be filed with the family's private health insurance carrier. After settlement of that claim, you may file a claim with the district's carrier, which will

reimburse a family for a portion of the unpaid balance. Information and forms regarding claims can be obtained from the High School or Middle School front desks.

In the event that an athlete sustains an injury (fracture, sprain, concussion, laceration, bruise), serious enough to require a physician's examination and treatment, the athlete must obtain written permission from a physician and his/her parent/guardian before being allowed to resume practice/competition. All such injuries must be reported to the office by the athlete, parent, or coach as soon after the injury as possible. All doctors' notes regarding the injury and the athlete's fitness regarding ability to resume participation including rehabilitation steps and physical restrictions must be submitted to the office/athletic director to be noted and kept on file in the student's health record. In the event that a question arises regarding an injury/illness, the office should be contacted immediately.

Spectators

It is expected that all individuals involved with interscholastic athletics will display behavior that reflects the ideals of sportsmanship at all times and actions which tend to diminish those values should be discouraged. Courtesy should be shown toward opponents, officials, supervisors, spectators and administrators. Efforts must be made to achieve a thorough understanding of the game, as well as, respect the integrity and judgment of the sports officials. It is important for all to recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players. Most of all, it is the duty of all concerned with school athletics to remember that each athletic contest is only a game and should be kept in that perspective. Spectators are expected to:

a. conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior,
b. respect officials, coaches, and players and extend all courtesies to them,
c. refrain from disrespectful remarks and the use of noisemakers,
d. be quiet when players need total concentration such as a serve in volleyball or free throw in basketball,
e. obey regulations of the school. Those who do not conform will be brought to the attention of the school authorities,
f. understand that schools are responsible for the conduct of their respective spectators, whether at home or away,
g. refrain from the use of tobacco products within athletic complexes or on any area on the Fulton County Campus.

Communication

While it is hoped that all athletes, parents and staff members work for the common good of the individual and the school, disagreements are a part of high school athletics. For the purpose of improving relations between all parties involved, the following guidelines shall be followed.

If a parent has a complaint about a coach, they shall refrain from confronting the coach in public before or immediately after a contest or practice. A parent may contact the coach to establish a meeting to discuss their complaint. If, after this meeting, the matter is not

resolved, the parent shall contact the Athletic Director to establish a meeting. If the matter is not resolved at this second meeting, the parent shall then contact the Principal for a third meeting. If the matter is not resolved at this third meeting, the Superintendent will be contacted to intervene, and the Superintendent's decision shall be final. Coaches, parents and the administration shall not discuss other players or family members. Conferences shall focus on the complaint and a remedy to the problem that is most agreeable to all the parties involved. Part of established policy is that coaches are not obligated to play all players equally. The determination of who plays and who does not, or their assigned positions are determined by the coach at his or her discretion based on criteria including, but not limited to: ability level, experience, work ethic, attitude and past performance. A coach's system, strategy or play calling ability are not subjects up for discussion or debate in meetings.

If board members or administrators are contacted by parents about a concern regarding a player or coach, they shall inquire as to whether or not the issue has been addressed with the coach first. When appropriate, these parties shall direct the inquiring person to contact the Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, or Superintendent (in order). Any written correspondence should be passed on to the appropriate personnel, giving them the opportunity to respond. Anonymous notes, letters, and phone calls will receive no attention or official action. If school officials believe that the safety or well-being of student athletes may be in jeopardy, an investigation may be undertaken.

Coaches will establish their own rules and practice schedules (supported by the athletic director) within guidelines that have been established by the KHSAA. It shall be up to the coach when to have practice, how long to practice and what to practice. Both players and their parents should be given important information at the beginning of the season. Preseason parent meetings are where questions regarding a coach and his or her rules should first be addressed.

Athlete Recognition

Varsity Letters are awarded to:

- An athlete who has had participation in one half of the varsity quarters, matches, meets, or innings for the season.
- Any senior that has participation in at least two preceding high school years in that sport.
- Injured athletes that would have accomplished either of the first two requirements.
- Coaches' discretion, i.e. to an athlete that made a significant contribution on the varsity program but doesn't meet the first three requirements.
  (Ex. Reserve athlete that improves and moves up to varsity at the end of the season, late transfer, etc.)
- Managers that regularly attend practices and competitions will receive the athletic award that the members of the team he/she is serving as manager will receive.

Coaches will determine which end-of-season awards are given and methods whereby recipients are elected. Athletes must attend the awards program to be eligible to receive their athletic awards. Otherwise, athletes must be excused by their coach or athletic director.

Booster Club

The Fulton County Booster Club is composed of parents of students and other members of the community who are concerned with the promotion of properly supervised athletics in the Fulton County Schools. All teams in the Fulton County Athletic Program have benefited in the past from the club's sponsorship of the following activities:

- Athletic Banquet
- Booster Club "All-Around Pilot" Scholarships
- Financial assistance for team trips and activities
- Purchase of uniform and equipment needs
- Team meals
- Concessions at home ballgames

Parents are encouraged to support its activities by becoming members of the Booster Club.

Fulton County Athletics Contract

As a student athlete, I understand my responsibilities for participating in the Fulton County athletic program. I also understand the consequences for violating any of the expectations outlined in this Athletic Handbook.

As a student athlete, I, _____ pledge to:

- Communicate my sports schedule well in advance to my parents and teachers.
- Schedule my personal life so that it does not conflict with team expectations.
- Give my coach notice well in advance of any commitments I have that conflict with the team schedule.
- Discuss issues of concern with my coach and parents before they become problems.
- Maintain academic eligibility.
- Abide by all the training rules set forth by my coach, the athletic department, and school district.
- Make a commitment to my team mates and coaches to continually strive to contribute to the program and exercise responsible sportsmanship.

_____ _____

Signature of Student Athlete Date

As a parent/guardian, I, _____ pledge to:

- Grant permission for my daughter/son to participate in the program.
- Stay informed about my daughter/son's athletic schedule to minimize conflicts between our family schedule and the athletic schedule.
- Support my daughter's/son's decision to commit to the team by attending as many team meetings, contests and special events as my schedule will permit.
- Work cooperatively with all coaches, other parents, and school personnel to assure a wholesome and successful academic/athletic experience throughout my child's school career.
- Discuss issues of concern with my daughter/son and the coach before they become problems.
- Assure that my daughter/son attends all practices, contests, special events and follows all training rules.
- Affirm that it is the responsibility of the coach to determine strategy and player selection.
- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other sports event.

In addition to parents/guardians, the following people can pick up my child from an away athletic event:

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6. _____

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Fulton County Parent Code of Conduct Contract

When kids are surveyed about the reasons why they play sports, the #1 response kids consistently report is to have fun. In addition to the fun kids experience while playing sports, additional benefits from sport participation include physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and development. Unfortunately, all these great things do not happen automatically, but instead occur as a direct result of your positive efforts as a parent. It is in this spirit that we have created the following Parent Code of Conduct Contract to remind parents of a few important tips designed to help your child maximize his or her athletic experience.

As a parent, it is important that you . . .

Respect the game, including your child, his or her teammates, and opponents. This means ensuring that your child attends and comes prepared for all practices and games, and treats both teammates and opponents with dignity and respect. Good sportsmanship means playing fair and safe, controlling negative emotions, and keeping the spirit of competition a healthy endeavor.

Respect the officials. Remember, officials, (a.k.a. referees), are an important part of sports and add to the overall experience for your child. It is important that you distinguish between bad calls (human error) and wrong calls (when an official doesn't know the rule). In either case, it is important that you respect all officials and develop tolerance skills for when bad calls are made (which will happen – officials are human and like all of us, will occasionally make a mistake!).

Refrain from coarse and threatening language, as well as all forms of physical aggression. There is never a place in youth sports to use vulgarities, threaten, intimidate, or use physical aggression. Let the coaches coach. While it may be easy to second-guess your child's coach from the sidelines, most parents forget or overlook how challenging it is for coaches to both win games and at the same time make sure that all of the players have an opportunity to develop. The job of being a coach is an incredibly challenging task, so be sure to support your child's coach as much as possible.

Watch for the safety of all players at all times, including physical and emotional dangers. Be sure to pay attention to injuries, including concussions, and respond to them in a timely manner. Additionally, pay attention to signs of sport burnout and be sure to respond to your child if he or she needs help.

Cheer whenever possible, and stay away from booing and other negative fan behavior. Middle and High school sports provide a great opportunity for positive fan support, including cheering. Booing and other negative gestures and language from the sidelines are never appropriate, so be sure to stay focused on positively supporting your child's team at all times.

****

As the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the following athletes:

_____,

I agree to follow the above listed principles and understand that by signing this document,

if behaving inappropriately, I may be asked to leave the game site.

Guardian Signature/Date: _____

Guardian Signature/Date: _____