



Media Sideline Access Guidelines



HCS Athletic Events

Please note that the information provided below does not substitute for actual media credentials. If you have any questions on how to obtain media access to varsity sporting events, please contact the HCS Athletic Department or Communications Department.

For the purpose of these guidelines, the phrase "**Recognized Vetted Media Organizations**" refers to media outlets that produce and broadcast news programming and/or newspapers in traditional print and digital form to a mass audience, such as:

- 11 Alive [NBC]
- WSB TV Ch. 2 [ABC]
- Atlanta News First [CBS]
- Fox 5 [Fox]
- Georgia Public Broadcasting [GPB]
- ESPN
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- Henry Herald
- MaxPreps

The list above is not exhaustive. It is an example of the media organizations that fit in the "Recognized Vetted Media Organizations" category.

For the purpose of this document, the phrase "**Not Established Media**" refers to promoters, solicitors, marketers, individual athlete agents, boutiques,

or independent bloggers, photographers and videographers whose work primarily features individuals and appears on the internet or social media platforms such as:

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Tik Tok
- Snapchat
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Hudl

The list above is not exhaustive. It is an example of the media organizations that fit in the "Not Established Media" category.

To ensure the safety of student-athletes, coaches, referees/game officials as well as all qualified media agencies, and to ensure that all qualified media agencies have the appropriate access and working space, the following guidelines and procedures have been developed for all Henry County Schools (HCS) high school varsity athletic events (excluding Region Tournaments and GHSA State Playoff events).

- Media Passes are granted at the discretion of the "home" school. Priority will be given to media outlets that have covered the majority of the school's home games/matches/contests. Meeting this threshold, however, does not guarantee access to Media Passes.
- Due to capacity limitations, credentialed **Not Established Media members/organizations must pre-register for games of interest at least 48 hours before the game/match.** Media Passes will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis with consideration to priority access given to those who consistently provide coverage. All Non-Established

media members are expected to adhere to HCS Clear Bag Guidelines, including camera bags.

– A maximum of **ten (10)** Media Passes will be issued for indoor sporting events (Boys & Girls Basketball, Cheer, Volleyball, Gymnastics and Wrestling). Media Passes will be allocated in the following manner on a first-come, first-served basis:

- 4 - Broadcast media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Print (AJC & Henry Herald) media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Not Established Media outlets
- 2 - Visiting teams from schools located more than 100 miles from the host school shall be granted two media passes.

– A maximum of **eleven (11)** Media Passes will be issued for outdoor sporting events (Varsity Football, Boys and Girls Soccer, Track & Field, Lacrosse, and Baseball). Media Passes will be allocated in the following manner on a first-come, first-served basis:

- 4 - Broadcast media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Print (AJC & Henry Herald) media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 3 - Not Established Media outlets
- 2 - Visiting teams from schools located more than 100 miles from the host school shall be granted two media passes.

HCS reserves the right to reduce the number of available Media Passes at its discretion.

– Media Passes **must be displayed by the authorized holder at all times** during the applicable HCS athletic event. Credentialed media

members must carry a government-issued photo ID (driver's license, Georgia ID Card, passport) with them **at all times**.

- Media Passes must be returned to the designated representative of the home school at the conclusion of the athletic event. Individuals, and their affiliated media organizations, will be denied entry into future HCS athletic contests if assigned Media Passes are not returned to the appropriate person at the conclusion of the athletic contest.

- Media Passes do not grant the authorized holder access to team locker rooms or any other areas not open to the public before, during, or after games, matches, or events.

- HCS reserves the right to deny or revoke credentials for any media outlet that violates the provisions of this document or any legal directives issued by authorized HCS staff at any game, match, event or contest. Despite the foregoing, HCS staff may not engage in viewpoint discrimination in the denial or revocation of credentials. Individuals and their affiliated media organizations who have been denied Media Passes or had their Media Passes revoked shall have the right to appeal the decision to the District Athletic Director. Any individual or their affiliated media organization must file their appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the denial or revocation.

- Coaches and players may be available for interviews directly outside the locker rooms following the conditions below:

- a. Coaches and/or athletic directors shall determine the availability of coaches and players and the time and length of all interviews.

- b. Coaches and/or athletic directors shall reserve the right to be present during student-athlete interviews.

- Any media member intoxicated, under the influence of/in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, using tobacco or nicotine products, or abusing prescription drugs or acting unprofessionally will have their

Media Pass revoked and will be escorted off HCS property. Individuals who engage in the behavior mentioned above and their affiliated media organization will be denied future Media Passes at all HCS schools. Individuals and their affiliated media organization who have been denied future Media Passes shall have the right to appeal the decision to the District Athletic Director. Any individual or their affiliated media organization must file their appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the event from which the media member was removed.

– Individuals and/or media organizations that violate the HCS Media Access Policy and lose access to Media Passes at one school lose access to Media Passes at all HCS schools.

**Getting credentialed and obtaining a Media Pass is not required for HCS student journalists (i.e., members of the home and visiting schools' student newspaper, yearbook, etc.) Student journalists who wish to cover athletic contests are strongly encouraged to connect with their school's athletic director to arrange access to the above-mentioned sporting events as well as opportunities to interview players and/or coaches. A maximum of two student journalists per visiting school shall be granted the same access as student journalists from the home school. Any student journalists representing the yearbook or school newspaper should obtain a media pass/credential from their teacher/sponsor and must be verified by the Athletic Director.*

Applying for Media Credentials

- Requests for Media Passes shall be directed to the athletic director of the host school in writing via online application at least 48 hours before the event.
- A valid government-issued photo ID (driver's license, Georgia ID Card, passport) is required to pick up a Media Pass and must match the name on the application..
- HCS does not grant Media Passes to individuals under 18 years of age.
- Each Media Pass request will stand on its own merits.
- Membership in a 'writers' or 'broadcasters' association does not automatically qualify a media outlet or individual for a Media Pass.
- Being credentialed and granted a Media Pass for non-HCS athletic events does not automatically qualify individuals or media outlets for HCS athletic events.
- Requests for Media Passes will only be approved for those assigned to cover the game/athletic event.
- Media Passes are not transferable and may not be given or loaned to anyone else.
- Media Passes may not be duplicated or reproduced in any manner.
- Failure to adhere to the requirements of these guidelines may result in the revocation of credentials and access to Media Passes for the representative and their media outlet.
- Media outlets will be held accountable for the actions, conduct, and professionalism of all their credentialed personnel.
- Availability of Media Passes is subject to space availability restrictions in working media areas at various facilities.
- After submitting the application, those seeking access should then email the school athletic director for notification of submission.

- Only those approved for a media pass will be provided communication regarding pass pickup and game day procedures.

Media Passes shall not be issued to:

- Individuals gathering video and/or taking pictures for books, documentaries, short films, or movies.
- Representatives of syndicated television, cable, or streaming services who are not producing programs for immediate news coverage (i.e., to air within 24 hours or to report on subsequent games or contests or other current events).
- Individuals who intend to broadcast, televise, webcast, tape, film or photograph the game, contest, or any description thereof for any commercial purpose beyond reporting on the game, match, event, or contest as permitted by the fair use doctrine.

Risks:

By getting credentialed and receiving Media Passes, outlets and their representatives acknowledge and assume the risks that come from viewing athletic events, including being struck or injured by participants and flying objects, such as balls, bats, and other sports equipment, or inclement weather (lightning, tornadoes, wind).

