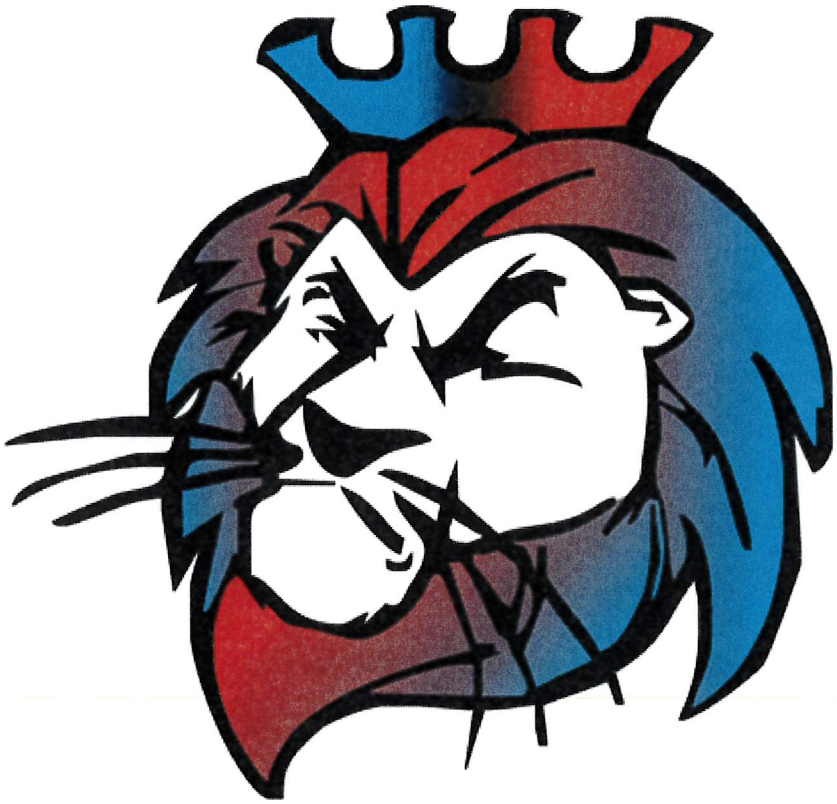
COACH'S HANDBOOK



R&L FUSION

Revised June, 2025

"If Coaches are determined to stay in the coaching profession, they will develop from year to year. This much is true, no coach has a monopoly on the knowledge of their game. There are no secrets in the game. The only secrets, if there are any, are good teaching of sound fundamentals, intelligent handling of players, a sound system of play, and the ability to instill in their players a desire to win." -- Adolph Rupp

Welcome to the R&L Fusion Coaching Staff Handbook. It is our hope that you are excited to be part of our extra-curricular school experience and believe you have much to offer those involved in your program, as well as the other programs our school supports.

This handbook offers guidelines to assist you in beginning, supporting, and/or maintaining a quality program. Directly below this introduction, you will find our schools' mission statements, along with our athletic mission statement. With those driving forces in mind, policies have come into effect based on the needs of coaches, along with administrative concerns. Please use it frequently, adhering to the policies in place and enforcing those policies with your participants, as well. Feel free to make as many copies of the forms attached to the back as you need. Best wishes for a great season and on continuing to create a solid, successful program!

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The R&L Fusion co-op (Richey and Lambert Public Schools) will make equal educational opportunities available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious belief, physical or mental handicap or disability, economic or social condition, or actual or potential marital or parental status. Richey Policy 3210 Lambert Policy 3210

Lambert High School Mission Statement

Lambert Public Schools will provide a safe nurturing environment in which teachers challenge students to reach their potential. Teachers expect students to become competent readers able to conduct research to acquire the skills necessary to contribute to society. Students will be challenged academically and socially in order to learn those skills necessary to lead a productive life.

Richey High School Mission Statement

The mission of Richey Public Schools is "Challenging students today to succeed in a changing world tomorrow."

Fusion Athletic Mission Statement

An important value of sports is the realization that life is reflected in the athletic endeavor.

Success is facilitated by

1) being well-prepared.

2) maintaining a positive attitude.

3) developing a dedication to a cause.

4) establishing high standards of conduct and attitude.

Furthermore, the fundamental purpose of athletic programs are to facilitate development of

1) Sportsmanship

2) Pride of accomplishment of a job done to the best of one's ability

3) A sense of belonging to a group

4) Social values derived from contact with students and adults from other communities

5) Healthy behaviors of participants.

Athletics prepare our young people for the challenges of adult life, but a great tradition for excellence in athletics is not built overnight. It takes the hard work of many people over a period of time. To participate in such a way that honor and respect come to our athletes, our schools, and our communities is a tradition. As a member of an interscholastic team, a student has responsibilities, as do the administration, coaches, parents, and community. The role of contributing to our athletic tradition will be a source of satisfaction to the students and to the school.

Section 1: COACHES CODE OF ETHICS:

The R&L Fusion Co-op supports their coaches and holds their position in high esteem, as we know coaches/advisors play a significant role in the overall success of activities programs.

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect, and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

- The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

- The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco abuse.

- The coach shall avoid the use of drug, alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco products when in contact with players.

- The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.

- The coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

- The coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship and professionalism at all times, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, other departments within the district, and administrators.

- The coach shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.

- The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.

- The coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give students special consideration.

- The coach shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.

- The coach shall follow the policies and procedures set forth by the R&L Fusion Co-op and the Richey and Lambert School Districts.

- I understand that my responsibilities as a coach are of great importance and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the young athletes whom I coach.

- I understand that many students participate in sports for numerous reasons, and that their number one reason is to have fun!

- I understand that as a coach I am obligated to honor the rules of the District, games, opponents, officials, teammates, staff, and myself, and to teach players to do the same.

Therefore, by participating as a Coach, I willingly agree to adhere to the following Codes of Conduct.

I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

Expected Behavior:

- Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators.

- Include all players in team activities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, economic or social condition, marital status, or any other legally protected classification.

- Conduct myself with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism during and off season.

- Treat all players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators with dignity and respect.

- Encourage players to participate in other sports and activities to promote all aspects of their development.

- Allow reasonable, excused absences from practice.

I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

Expected Behavior:

- Recognize the differences of each student and treat each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well-being.

- Encourage all players, regardless of skill level, to be included as a member of the team and to remain involved in sports.

- Recognize that some physical tasks, drills and demands are not appropriate for all players.

- Recognize that players may vary greatly in physical, social and emotional maturation and considering these factors when setting up competitions and when interacting with players.

I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintain a high level of awareness in order to avoid potentially unsafe conditions.

- Protect players from sex based harassment and other forms of bullying, hazing, intimidation, assault and physical or emotional abuse.

- Correct and avoid unsafe practice or playing conditions.

- Using appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.

- See that the players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Keeping basic first aid supplies available in all practice and game situations.

- Recognize and administer proper first aid to an injured player.

- Demonstrate concern for an injured player, notifying parents and cooperating with medical authorities.

- Protect the players' well-being by adhering to the concussion protocol, removing them from activity when injured and not returning them to activity if they are compromised by injury.

I will do my best to organize practices that are skill-based and properly prepare my team for competition, fun, and challenging for all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Establish practice plans that are interesting, varied and productive. Practices need to be aimed at improving all players' skills and individual abilities.

- Devote appropriate time to the individual improvement of each player, while also being mindful of development of the team(s) as a whole.

- Conduct practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Adopt the position, teaching and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others, as we would like to be treated.

- Abide by and support the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.

- Provide an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.

- Using the influential position of coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.

I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all Co-op sports events.

Expected Behavior:

- Be alcohol and drug free at all team activities or in the presence of players.
- Refrain from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of players.
- Refrain from providing any type of alcohol, drug, marijuana, or tobacco products to any of the players.
- Encourage parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol at team activities.

I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Become knowledgeable, understanding and supportive of all applicable game rules, league rules,regulations and policies.
- Teaching and requiring compliance of these rules among players.

I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.

Expected Behavior:

- Teaching techniques that reduce the risk of injury to both the coach's own players and their opponents.
- Discouraging illegal contact or intentional dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

I will remember that I am a sports coach and that the game is for children and not adults.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintain a positive, helpful and supportive attitude.
- Exercise authority/influence to control the behavior of the fans and spectators.
- Exhibit gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- Accept and adhere to all league rules and policies related to the participation of adults and youth.
- Allow and encourage the players to listen, learn and play hard within the rules.

The R&L Fusion Co—op and the Richey and Lambert School Districts reserve the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, up to termination of the contract, involving any coach in violation of this code of conduct.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS (HEAD, ASSISTANT, and VOLUNTEER COACHES):

Title: High School Head Coach (Program Director) Qualifications:

1) Possess current NFHS & MHSA coaching certifications. (National Federation of State High School Association Coaches Education Program, Coaches Rules Clinic)

2) Successful coaching experience.

3) Specialized preparation emphasizing the coaching of the respective sport.

4) Knowledge of the care and preparation of athletic injuries and current first aid card.

5) Such alternatives to the above as the Co-op deems necessary and appropriate.

6) Pending hire will be determined by passing a background check.

7) All hiring will be done by the Co-op Committee and School Boards on an annual basis.

Reports to: Activities Director Supervises: Assistant coaches, players and managers

Job Goal: To develop a comprehensive program that will provide an opportunity for students to participate in wholesome and rewarding athletic experiences.

Performance Responsibilities:

1) To work closely with the Activities Director in program development and implementation.

2) To enforce MHSA and district administrative policies relating to athletics.

3) To work closely with the Activities Director in the recruitment, assignment, supervision and evaluation of the other coaches in your program.

4) To monitor athletes academic progress and check on the eligibility of your players as per MHSA and local eligibility requirements.

5) To hold regular staff meetings during the season to assure program coordination.

6) To work closely with the Activities Director in scheduling contests and practices.

7) To secure a completed Parental Approval/Physical Form from each player before they are allowed to participate. Secure an emergency treatment form to be available at all events.

8) To inform players of training rules and to enforce them consistently and uniformly. Notify the Activities Director of any violation immediately.

9) To inform players of the accident insurance coverage and file an Accident Report with the Activities Director immediately following an injury.

10) To request Purchase Orders from the Co-op Clerk of AD, properly complete PO's, and return them with an itemized receipt in a timely manner.

11) Submit a written evaluation of program, personnel and recommendations for program improvement at the conclusion of each sports season as part of the end-of-season report.

12) Plan and implement a program to assist athletes in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to successfully compete in interscholastic athletics.

13) Coordinate and supervise the total program.

14) Assist in preparing physical facilities for games and practices.

15) Be responsible for care and security of all equipment and submit an inventory to the Activities Director at the conclusion of the season.

16) Work closely with the Activities Director to minimize lost school time.

17) Assist college-bound athletes in securing information about post secondary opportunities.

18) Instruct and supervise athletes/students during practices, games and trips.

19) Assist in supervising Co-op functions including Homecoming, etc

20) Develop, issue, and collect safety guidelines signed by athletes and their parents.

21) Secure and train student managers

22) Promote your sport and sportsmanship at pep rallies and through the news media.

23) Develop an itinerary for all overnight trips and give a copy to athletes and the Activities Director.

24) Improve professional development through reading, attending clinics, etc.

25) Notify instructional staff well in advance of taking students out of school.

26) Complete MHSA on-line rules clinic.

27) Review assistant coaches' job responsibilities with assistant coaches annually. Complete evaluation of assistant coaches for both high school and middle school staff.

28) To make sure all student-athletes adhere to all the expectations and rules in the high school handbook.

JOB DESCRIPTION Title: Assistant Coaches, Volunteer Coaches

Qualifications:

1) The ability to work with young athletes.

2) Knowledge of the fundamentals of the sport.

3) Dedication to the program and loyalty to the head coach.

4) Current first aid card.

5) Completion of NFHS & MHSA coaches' certification programs. (National Federation of State High School Association Coaches Education Program, Coaches Rules Clinic)

6) Pending hire will be determined by passing a background check.

7) All hiring will be done by the co-op committee, and Richey and Lambert School Boards, on an annual basis.

Reports to: Head Coach and Activities Director

Supervises: Student athletes

Job Goal: To assist the Head Coach in developing a viable program.

Performance Responsibilities:

1. Assume full responsibility for the team you are to coach.

2. Instruct, prompt, and supervise student-athletes/students for whom you are responsible during practices, games and trips.

3. Inform student-athletes of scheduled practices and games.

4. Assume responsibility for the care of equipment issued to your team members.

5. File a completed Accident Report with the Activities Director for any injury to your team members.

6. Assume any additional responsibilities assigned by the head coach.

NUMBER OF COACHES PER SPORT.

Use the following as a guideline for coaches hired (in some circumstances, common sense may warrant additional coaching positions, as recommended by the Co-op Board, especially in consideration of sports when 12 or more athletes have committed to participating). Volunteer coaches may be involved in a program should the Head Coach of that particular sport/season find a need for additional assistance and then pending approval from the Co-op Committee (IE: the Head JH Football Coach needs additional help at practice to do a more complete job teaching fundamentals and has found a qualified and willing candidate who would prefer to volunteer):

High School Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Track- 2 coaches

Head High School Golf, Cross Country, Cheer (fall and winter, if offered)-1 coach

Head JH/Elem Football- 2 coaches (safety)

Head JH/Elem XC, VB, BB, Track- 1 coach unless the number of participants exceeds 12 players; one coach for every 12 participants, when necessary

3rd HS Track Assistant- depends on number of participants

All High School sports must have a minimum of 6 participants to have that sport for the year. Co-Ed sports of cross country, golf and track need a combined number of 6 or more. The co-op board may make exceptions to the number of participants.

Section 2: PROGRAM POLICIES FOR COACHES

1. Working for the Co-op and School Districts:

A. TITLE IX AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION: The Co-op will provide equal employment opportunities to all persons, regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, age, ancestry, marital status, military status, citizenship status, use of lawful products while not at work physical or mental disability, if otherwise able to perform essential functions of a other legally protected categories. The employment procedures of the Co-op and School Districts are in compliance with all appropriate State and Federal law. LEGAL REF: Constitution of State of Montana; 1972 Education Amendments, Title IX; 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VI; 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Section 503 and 504; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Vocational Education Guidelines Richey Policy 5010 Lambert Policy 5010

B. CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS/FINGERPRINTING (PRIOR TO HIRE): It is the policy of the Co-op that potential employees shall submit to a finger-print and background check investigation conducted prior to final hire. Richey Policy 5122 Lambert Policy 5122

Any requirement of an applicant to submit to a fingerprint background check shall be in compliance with the Volunteers for Children Act of 1998 and applicable federal regulations. If an applicant has any prior record of arrest or conviction by any local, state, or federal law enforcement agency for an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the facts must be reviewed by the Co-op, who shall decide whether the applicant shall be declared eligible for appointment or employment in a manner consistent with the expectations and standards set by the board. The District will pay costs associated with fingerprinting, and/or background investigations.

C. DRUG FREE WORKPLACE: Because of the dangers of drug and alcohol in the workplace, all employees (including volunteers) of the Co-op are prohibited from:

1. Unlawfully manufacturing, dispensing, distributing, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a controlled substance while on District premises or while performing work for the District, including employees possessing a "medical marijuana" card. Recreational marijuana is included in these restrictions.

2. Distributing, consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while on District premises or while performing work for the District.

Reporting of the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by employees is mandatory. Law enforcement officials will be notified. Violation of these standards of conduct will be considered grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination action. Employees seeking assistance may contact their family physician, a local hospital, or a social service agency. A list of resources may be found in the telephone directory under "drug abuse information and treatment."

Employment will be terminated for employees convicted of a drug-related crime. **Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C.S. 3172 Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act** Richey Policy 5226 Lambert Policy 5226

D. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: As circumstances allow, the District will attempt to provide the best working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question is answered quickly and accurately by District supervisors or administration. The District will endeavor to promote fair and honest treatment of all employees. Administrators and employees are all expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Each employee has the right to express his or her views concerning policies or practices to the administration in a businesslike manner, without fear of retaliation. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. Each employee is expected to follow established rules of conduct, policies, and practices.

Should an employee disagree with a policy or practice, the employee can express his or her disagreement through the District's grievance procedure. No employee shall be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a disagreement with the District in a reasonable, businesslike manner or for using the grievance procedure. An employee filing a grievance is required to follow the grievance procedure. Richey Policy 1700 Lambert Policy 1700

2. CO-OP COACHING CERTIFICATION/REQUIREMENTS:

A. MHSA CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- NHSF Coach Education Program: All coaches must be certified through the National High School Federation. All coaches (paid or volunteer) must complete the program prior to contact with students. Certification for the NFHS Program is completed one time in the lifetime of a coach, and the cost is $35, paid by the Co-op. The test is found at www.nhsflearn.com

- NHSF Concussion Education: (Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act) All coaches (paid or volunteer) must complete the program prior to contact with students. Again, the program may be found at www.nhsflearn.com and is free

- MHSA Cultural Diversity: Coaches must view the Cultural Diversity training clinic found on www.mhsa.org. This is free.

- MHSA Sport Specific Rules clinic: All Head coaches must view the rules clinic specific to their sport. The clinic is found at www.mhsa.orgRules Clinic and this is free.

B. FIRST AID/ CPR/COACHES CERTIFICATION: All coaches, paid and volunteer, are required to be certified in the following: CPR and First Aid Certification (renewed every 2 years). Coaches must also complete, by the third week of their season, other necessary paperwork, to include **FORM U,** as tracked by the Co-op Clerk.

**According to contracted language and unless otherwise arranged with the AD, coaches must be properly certified by the third week of their season or will forfeit 3% of their coaching stipend, which will be held out of their final paycheck.

C. MANDATORY MEETINGS: All mandatory meetings for coaches (all-conference, etc) are to be attended by the head coach, or, in the event the head coach is unable to attend, his/her assistant. Use **FORM G** for proper reimbursement and submit to the Co-op clerk ASAP.

D. COACHING STIPENDS: Coaches, other than those who are volunteers, are paid a stipend agreed upon by the School Boards. You will find a salary schedule at the back of this Handbook. You may choose to be paid after your season is completed and all necessary paperwork is turned in, or you may choose to be paid twice (mid-season and end-of-season). Please note, the Co-op Committee and School Boards reserve the right to fairly pro-rate stipends should the season be canceled due to unforeseen circumstances.

3. OTHER COACHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

A. ACCIDENT REPORT FORM AND PROCEDURE: All injuries are to be reported immediately to the coach/advisor/activity director regardless of the nature of the injury. The coach/advisor/director will fill out an accident report form and file it in the principal's office within one (1) school day of the accident. Richey Policy 3431F Lambert Policy 3431F

B. ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS: (SB Policy # 2151 and #3416) The Co-op recommends that medication be given at home whenever possible. Students requiring medication shall be identified by parents and/or physician and will be encouraged to notify coach/sponsor or Activities Director. Under no circumstances will school personnel provide aspirin or other patient's medication to students. Richey Policy 2151 and 3416 and 3416F Lambert Policy 2151 and 3416

C. AWARDS/LETTERING CRITERIA: Each High School program, to include Pep Band, will be allowed 4 awards at the annual Awards Banquet to be held in the spring. Each head coach will decide WHAT the award is for and how the recipient is chosen. Elem/JH programs distribute participation certificates, with the exception of JH football, which will award the Ryan Evenson Memorial award. Coaches will determine participation awards, letters, bars, etc. and submit info to the Co-op Clerk no later than three weeks after their season ends. At that time, award submission is final **FORM I**

Unless Varsity coaches determine other lettering criteria prior to the season beginning and then clarify that with their players, the following shall be used:

- BOYS FOOTBALL: Participation in at least one down in one varsity game.
- GIRLS VOLLEYBALL: Must represent the Fusion at the District Tourney
- GIRLS BASKETBALL: Must represent the Fusion at the District Tourney
- BOYS BASKETBALL: Must represent the Fusion at the District Tourney
- GIRLS/BOYS TRACK: Must qualify for the Divisional meet
- GIRLS/BOYS GOLF: GIRLS/BOYS GOLF: And athlete may qualify if they accomplish one of the three things: 1) Place in the top 10 at a meet 2) Come within 10 strokes of qualifying for state: boys 110 (state is 100), girls 130 (state is 120) 3) Play in all sanctioned golf meets (excused for other sanctioned school related activities ie: music festival, BPA, etc)
- CHEERLEADING: Must be a Varsity cheerleader
- BOYS AND GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY: Must compete at the State Cross Country Meet
- PEP BAND: TBD by the Pep Band Instructors prior to the first day of school

D. BUILDING SECURITY: Coaches are to ensure that the school building/gym/locker rooms are secure and lights are off when they leave the building at the end for the day and when returning from away games. Richey Policy 8300 Lambert Policy 8300

E. CELL PHONES/EMPLOYEE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES: There is an inherent risk of using any mobile device while driving. The Co-op recognizes that the use of mobile devices may be appropriate to help ensure the safety and security of District property, students, staff, and others while on District property or engaged in Districts sponsored activities. District employees are prohibited from using mobile devices while driving or otherwise operating District-owned motor vehicles, or while driving or otherwise operating personally-owned vehicles for school district purposes. If an employee needs to use their mobile device for an emergency, the

employee should pull over to a secure area and park the vehicle. Absolutely NO texting is allowed while operating a District owned vehicle.

Staff is encouraged to use any available mobile device in the event of an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff, or other individuals. A school bus driver is prohibited from operating a school bus while using a cellular phone, including hands free cellular phone devices, except: during an emergency situation; to call for assistance if there is a mechanical breakdown or other mechanical problem; and/or when the school bus is parked. [Board Policy 8123] Failure to comply with the conditions set forth may result in disciplinary action. Richey Policy 5630 and 8123 Lambert Policy 5630 and 8123

F. CHILD ABUSE (MCA 41-3-201): Abused and Neglected Child Reporting (B.P. 5232) Recognizing the potential harmful effects of child abuse and neglect, The Co-op hereby supports those sections within the Montana Criminal Act, which are concerned with the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. A Co-op employee who has reasonable cause to suspect, as a result of information they receive in their professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected by anyone regardless of whether the person suspected of causing the abuse or neglect is a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare, they shall report the matter promptly to the department of public health and human services 11 through the Child Abuse Hotline 1.866.820.5437.

An employee does not discharge the obligation to personally report by notifying the Superintendent or principal. Any District employee who fails to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, or who prevents another person from doing so, may be civilly liable for damages proximately caused by such failure or prevention and is guilty of a misdemeanor. The employee will also be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The law provides for all records concerning reporting of child abuse or neglect to be confidential and immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, unless the person acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose. (MCA 41-3-203)

Confidentiality: The school does not investigate suspected abuse; therefore, discussion of such matters is strictly prohibited. Student information should be kept in confidence and only discussed on a need to know basis. Staff should refrain from any discussion of student confidential information publicly. (MCA 41-3-205)

G. COLLEGE RECRUITING: Coaches are encouraged to promote their athletes for scholarships whenever possible, however this should be done after consultation with parents. Documentation of all contacts with representatives of secondary institutions should be forwarded to the Activities Director. When counseling athletes or their parents, coaches should inform them of NCAA, NAIA, or applicable governing authority, student-athlete eligibility requirements.

H. COMMENT PERIOD Form T: In an effort to provide continual improvement to the Richey/Lambert athletic cooperative, the Co-op board has developed a policy and form for parents and/or student athletes to comment on the athletic program. The procedure of completing the form and submitting are as follows.

1. Comment period ends 5 days after the last game played by the Fusion for that sport.

2. Concerns must be discussed with the coach and Athletic Director before submitting a comment form, and before the comment form will be considered by the Administrators.

3. Comment form will not contain any derogatory language about any individuals and should provide constructive information.

4. Comment form must be signed and dated. Unsigned forms will not be considered.

5. Comments may or may not be utilized by the Co-op staff and Boards.

I. COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Procedure Concerns or problems within the program should follow the steps outlined below. R&L Grievance/Conflict Procedure Involving Coaching Staff, Players, and/or Parents-

R&L supports voluntary resolution of conflicts, problems, and concerns between two parties regardless of their positions or roles. R&L firmly believes most issues can be handled quickly and appropriately to everyone's satisfaction. We encourage athletes who are facing difficulties with a supervising coach to deal directly with the coach. If they are not comfortable or lack the confidence to deal with the situation without a parent present they are encouraged to meet with the coach with the parent present. Underlying assumptions:

1. Coach's decisions regarding athletic play time, game management, practice time and management are issues that will not be dealt with beyond a conversation with the coach.

2. Coaches are to provide a safe environment for the athlete.

3. Consistent communication between the coaches and athletes is expected. If this is not happening, this concern should be shared with the coach as soon as possible.

4. Coaches are not to be approached with concerns immediately following an athletic contest. We believe that time and space allows for better communication if difficulties have arisen.

The following grievance process should be followed in situations in which immediate resolution cannot be achieved:

1. After meeting with the coach and assuming a resolution cannot be achieved, the athlete or parents should request a meeting with the coach and the schools designated Athletic Director(s). The meeting should take place within a reasonable amount of time (10 business days)

2. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved in a meeting outlined in #1, the athlete or parent may request a meeting with the appropriate Principal and/or Superintendent.

3. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved in a meeting with the administration, the athlete or parent may complete and submit a grievance form and appeal to the Co-op Committee. The complaint will be heard at the next available meeting. Grievance forms are available at the school offices and in the handbook.

4. The decision of the Co-op Committee will be final.

Conflict Resolution

In resolving conflict with coaches, the following steps of communication will be followed by the administration, board, parent and athletes:

1. Player and Coach

2. Player & Parent - Coach

3. Player & Parent - Coach & Athletic Director

4. Player & Parent - Coach, Athletic Director & Principal

5. Player & Parent - Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Superintendent, and Co-op Board

If any of the following situations occur, an athlete should contact the Athletic Director or Administration immediately and report the event in as much detail as possible:

1. Physical or emotional intimidation

2. Inappropriate sexual advances

3. Physical or verbal abuse

J. CLINIC OR STATE TOURNAMENT ATTENDANCE: Any coach/AD may elect to attend the Montana Coaches Association Clinic OR other administrative approved clinics. State Tournament attendance is encouraged as well.

A coach electing to attend the MCA Clinic (submit **FORM H)** will have

- conference registration paid by the districts:
- three nights single occupancy lodging paid by the districts
- 4 days per diem @ the state approved rate paid by the schools.
- use of the school vehicle to attend with fuel paid by the districts

The co-op secretary will organize accommodations prior to the clinic, and the co-op clerk will take care of purchase orders and/or the credit card, etc.

K. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: No District employee or person engaged by the District may inflict or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force District personnel are permitted to use as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons or for the purpose of self-defense Richey Policy 3310 Lambert Policy 3310

Discipline and Discharge: Failure of a coach to abide by the expectations and guidelines outlined in this handbook could result in disciplinary action ranging from a letter of reprimand to dismissal from the coaching staff.

L. DRESS AND GROOMING: Dress for Activities Coaches/sponsors is hereby encouraged and authorized to establish exemplary standards and practices in fashion, grooming and taste that will tend to enhance the appearance of the group as a whole. Such standards and/or practices must be of a reasonable nature, appropriate to the group's activity and reflect positively on the image of the group and school. Further, these standards and/or practices must be made known to all potential members at the beginning of the activity season for that group (or sooner if possible)

Athletes'/Participant's Dress Code - While also following our School Handbook Dress Code Policies, all participants (coaches, managers, cheerleaders, players) need to dress appropriately for all day on game days: No blue jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, tank tops etc., are allowed.

-Dressier attire is preferred.

After the competition for the day is complete, athletes are allowed to dress back in their travel gear.

Those athletes attending all day tournaments/meets are allowed to wear their uniforms and travel gear.

Football Jerseys are allowed for football game day.

Clarification of acceptable dress may be obtained by contacting the Administration. Athletes who violate dress code on game days will need to change prior to getting on the bus to travel to away games, or prior to entering the competition area. If an athlete does not have a proper change of clothes at that time, they will change into their uniform/warmup until their competition is completed for the day/evening. Coaches will then further address this violation at the next practice, with possible reasonable consequences to follow. Continued violation of dress code may result in loss of playing time and possible release from the team.

M. EQUIPMENT: equipment for each sport will be stored in the respective gym storage areas. Coaches will maintain an inventory of equipment for each program to be turned in 3 weeks following that season's conclusion, during the end-of-season checkout with AD. **FORM N**

N. EVALUATIONS: Each head coach, pep band advisor, and drill team coach will have an opportunity to be evaluated formally and informally by the AD's and potentially a Principal or Superintendent, depending on the AD's qualifications. Assistant coaches will be evaluated by their head coach, with informal evaluations done by the AD's. Full payment for all coaching positions will not be made until this procedure is complete. Elementary and Junior High coaches will be evaluated by the athletic directors and head coaches. A formal evaluation time will be scheduled by the AD's and advisor/coach(es) involved. A written evaluation will be available in a timely fashion following the formal evaluation. **FORM P**

No head coach may be terminated mid-contract without cause. If a mid-contract termination is performance related, the coach must have been notified of the specific deficiencies in his/her performance and given reasonable time to remedy the deficiencies. In the case of a serious breach of ethics, morale or professional conduct, no notice or opportunity for remediation is necessary.

Head coaches will be subject to yearly hire by the Co-op Committee and School Boards. The Co-op Committee and School Boards may consider the evaluation and input from the public prior to hiring. Public input may be accepted by the Committee and Boards on properly signed official forms (see Comment Form) and/or oral presentation to the Board.

If the ADs make a recommendation for the non-hire of a head coach, the Committee and Boards will act upon this recommendation prior to the position being posted as a vacancy. Nothing in this policy creates any right or expectation of continued employment for coaches past the term of their yearly individual coaching contracts.

Procedures and policies within this document will be reflected on evaluations of Head Coaches (Varsity, Junior High and Elementary). Use an End-of-season checklist to ensure you've completed responsibilities of your job. **FORM Q**

Superintendents will jointly evaluate Athletic Directors, Co-op Activity Clerk, and Co-op Secretary, Drill Team Coach, and Pep Band Directors, by May 15th of each year. In the event the AD is also the Superintendent, other arrangements may be made. **ALL Co-op positions will be evaluated.**

O. GIFTS: Gifts for athletes from any organization in all sports are prohibited in accordance with MHSA eligibility.

P. HELMET POLICY: Football helmets must be numbered and checked out as recommended by MHSA in the event of a head and neck injury for proper documentation. Refer to **Form L.**

Q. KEYS, FOBS. AND ACCESS CARDS Keys will be issued upon hire. Staff must sign for your keys and a record is kept. Upon termination of employment, the keys are to be returned. If coaches/sponsors/advisors are returning for another year of employment with the Co-op, they may keep their keys over the summer months. Should the keys become lost or stolen, it must be reported to the office immediately.

Staff allowing unauthorized individuals access and/or use of their keys could be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Keys are not to be loaned to anyone, particularly students. Should anyone other than authorized personnel desire a key, he/she should be sent to the principal.

R. LOCKER ROOMS: Locker rooms are to be left in a neat, orderly manner after each practice and game. Coaches are to closely supervise the locker rooms to ensure that this is done. Coaches will verify that the Fusion locker room is clean and damage free after all games. Student athletes who have cell phones must turn them off prior to entering any locker room. The phones are to stay that way until the activity is over. Please be sure to tell your athletes about this at your first practice.

S. MANAGERS: Managers for high school are encouraged to be in at least 7th grade. Eligibility, training rules, and dress code apply to managers, also. Managers must attend all practices and cannot participate in a sport and be a manager for another at the same time. Managers must be approved by the Head Coach of the sport.

T. ORDERING, PURCHASING, REQUISITIONS, PURCHASE ORDERS: All orders must be placed through the Activities Director on Purchase Orders, unless the AD/Admin/Co-op Clerk authorizes use of the co-op credit card. Itemized receipts are a MUST HAVE. Failure to follow procedures may result in the party placing the order being personally responsible.

U. PARTICIPANT AND PARENT MEETING: During the first week of the fall, winter, and spring sports beginning, the AD and Varsity coaches for sports falling within that time frame will have a meeting with participants and parents. The AD portion of the meeting need only to be attended one time throughout the year, but for each sport, the coaching portion of the meeting must be attended (ie: your daughter participates in volleyball and basketball for the 2024-25 school year. You attend the 2024 AD portion of the fall parent meeting, as well as the volleyball coach's portion. For the winter, you will only need to attend the 2024-25 basketball coach's portion).

A parent or adult representative from each family participating must be in attendance or will be sent documentation about what occurred at the meeting they missed. Administration from one of the co-op schools must be present at the meeting.

Elem/JH coaches, if unable to facilitate a parent meeting, shall send out a parent letter covering important rules/procedures set for their teams.

Items to be covered shall include the following:

1. The inherent risk of injury for the activity, to include concussion education.

2. Helmet disclaimer for signature and return to the coach and AD (football)

3. Insurance for athletes injured in activities is not covered by the school

4. Injuries/illness must be disclosed to the head coach ASAP and concussion protocol followed. Explanation of IMPACT testing and responsibilities/protocol in the event of a suspected or diagnosed concussion

6. Training Rules

7. Hazing Policy

8. Chain-of-command procedure for concerns about the program: parents discuss concerns with the head coach; then head coach and the ADs; the head coach, ADs and Supts; then head coach, ADs, Supts, and the Boards. Resolution of the issue may take place at any step in the process. It is recommended to document meetings which take place.

9. Co-op issues and/or changes new this year; general practice/game schedules

10. Coach/sport specific rules, guidelines, and suggestions

11. Time for parental/participant questions

V. PRACTICES: One of the most important components to a successful program is carefully planned and executed practices. Coaches, then, should prepare practices in advance and with care, including a logical sequence of drills and activities, an area to record absences/injuries/illnesses, documentation of any other pertinent events, and anything else a coach may find helpful at practice.

Past and present practice plans should be available to the AD upon request, as well as for record-keeping purposes. Use **FORM C** or develop one of your own to use for these purposes.

Structured/Scheduled practices will NOT be held when bus routes have to depart early or don't run due to road conditions.

W. PRACTICE LOGS: All HEAD coaches must turn in a practice log at the end of the season before receiving their final check. Safety of student athletes must be addressed and documented in practices, especially football.

X. SCHEDULING PRACTICE TIMES AND CONTESTS:

1. The Athletic Director shall work with the coach/sponsor/advisor in scheduling all practice times and M.H.S.A. contests. Every effort shall be made to keep prime time varsity scheduling for female and male activities equal. Under no circumstances is a coach/sponsor/advisor to schedule an event without prior knowledge and consent of the Athletic Director. This includes summer camps.

2. Facilities Use: When there is conflict in prime-time use of a facility, the AD/s will have those parties involved work out an equitable schedule for facility use. If this cannot be done, the Athletic Director will present the parties involved with an equitable schedule, which will be strictly adhered to. M.H.S.A. scheduled events take precedence over practice times.

3. Open Gym: Coaches/sponsors/advisors are to be cognizant of MHSA rules governing "practices", "contests", "open gyms", and "student eligibility" when promoting their activity, conducting off season programs for training and conditioning, or when holding open gyms to assure that violations do not occur.

Y. SEASON WRAP-UP AND COACH PAYMENT: Within three weeks of the end of each season, the head coach must close-out their season Refer to **FORM Q** for this process. Full coaching stipends will be paid when this process has been properly completed and signed off on. The AD's will work with the Head Coach to complete this process and will alert the Co-op Clerk when this process has been completed.

Z. SEASON SUMMARY: Each head coach, including JH and elementary positions, will complete the three sheet Season Summary Report **FORM I,** and submit it to their AD no later than three weeks after their season ends. Each head coach is encouraged to have a post-season meeting with their team, as well. Each program will determine its equipment and supply needs for the next season. Coach's requests for Supplies/Equipment **FORM K** will be submitted to their AD within 3 weeks of the season's end. Their AD will submit bid forms to suppliers for equipment and supplies, when necessary for bids, etc, and then when ordering/supply needs have been determined, will submit the order to the administration for approval. Occasionally, coaches may find they need emergency supplies or equipment. Keep in mind, all requests for purchasing must be directed to their AD first, in any case.

AA. SOCIAL MEDIA: School district staff (including volunteers) shall not socialize with students on social networking websites (during school or out-of-school) in a manner contrary to the language below. Staff are reminded that the same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium, is unacceptable when done through the use of technology. In fact, due to the vastly increased potential audience digital dissemination presents, extra caution must be

exercised by staff to ensure they don't cross the line of acceptability. Specifically, the following forms of technology based interactivity or connectivity are expressly forbidden when used in a manner not related to the delivery of school athletic/activity services or district operations.

Sharing personal landline or cell phone numbers with students for athletic/activity purposes;

- Text messaging students for non- athletic/activity purposes;

- Emailing students other than through and to school controlled and monitored accounts;

- Soliciting students as friends or contacts on social networking sites for non- athletic/activity purposes;

- Accepting the solicitation of students as friends or contacts on social networking sites for nonathletic/activity purposes;

- **Coaches shall use caution and responsible, professional practices when communicating digitally with players and parents.** Richey Policy 5460 Lambert Policy 5460

- Sharing student's access information to personal websites or other media through which the staff member would share personal information and occurrences.

All school district employees who participate in social networking websites, shall not post any school district data, documents, photographs, logos, or other district owned or created information on any website. Further, the posting of any private or confidential school district material, including student academic or disciplinary records, on such websites is strictly prohibited in accordance with state and federal law and regulations and school district policy. Staff should contact the athletic director or administration if they would like to establish an athletic/activity related social media presence.

BB. SUPERVISION OF STUDENT-ATHLETES: Coaches/sponsors/advisors are responsible for the supervision of their student-athletes while engaged in school-sponsored practices, workouts and contests. This is particularly true of high-risk areas such as the weight room, whirlpool, etc. The coach/supervisor/advisor may be held liable for financial damages should an unsupervised student-athlete suffer an injury.

No coach/sponsor/advisor may leave their team/group unsupervised except as when in the case of an emergency and appropriate supervision arrangements have been made. While engaged in school-sponsored activities, students may be released only into the custody of parents or other authorized persons. Coaches/sponsors/advisors should always be the last person to leave the facility after practice and when returning from away contests and competitions. Coaches/sponsors/advisors should never leave a student-athlete waiting for a ride after returning home from a contest or competition. Coaches/sponsors/advisors are responsible for assuring their area is locked and secured before leaving.

CC. TEAM MEALS: will be provided by the School Districts at all away games and postseason competitions. All meals will be purchased according to prudent decision making by the Coaches, along with assistance from an Administrator, when there is a question by the Coach.

DD. TOURNAMENTS/PLAY-OFFS/MEETS:

1. The AD's from both schools shall develop a plan and arrange for transportation and lodging for the team during the tournament season.

- All athletes who are out for a sport and have legitimately practiced and participated during the pre- and regular season will be allowed to travel to the District tournament as part of the tournament team. If a team advances to the

Divisional and State competitions, only those athletes who are eligible to compete at those postseason events will be allowed to travel as part of the tournament team. Upon the Head Coach's discretion, up to two eligible alternates may also attend as part of the team.

- Cheerleaders MAY accompany teams on tournament trips at school expense.
- Bands DO NOT accompany teams on tournament trips.
- The band will play at the District Tournament at the schools' expense as determined by the administrators.
- The band may play at the Divisional Tournament, as determined by the Administrators, as well as the Championship session, if the team plays, at the school expense.
- The band will play at home football playoff games.
- Band members are invited to take their instruments and play at the State Tournament at their own expense.

2. The AD's, in cooperation with the appropriate Head Coach and Superintendents, shall create a written plan considering the potential playing times for the team and "what if" scenarios, which will be published in each school's Weekly Bulletin and on-line as soon as possible.

3. The AD of the head coach's school will create a Tournament Packet for the head coach containing pertinent tournament information from the tournament manager, player passes, purchase orders as necessary, room assignments, etc.

4. The head coach will return all itemized receipts, attached to the white copy of each purchase order used, to the Co-op Clerk following the tournament/play-off game/meet. **See sample Form R**

5. Meals and lodging: It is the policy of the Co-op to provide meals for teams participating in tournaments. Athletic directors will assist coaches in determining meals and expenses. If a team must stay overnight to participate, the school shall provide lodging, as well. If at all possible, rooms will be secured where a continental breakfast is included in the room rate.

6. For each week a coach's respective team advances beyond the first round (ie: district tournament/1st round playoffs), each coach will receive an additional stipend as per the Co-op salary schedule.

EE. TRACKING OF HOURS WORKED: All coaches must keep track of their hours worked as a coach, and turn their hours on the attached calendars to the co-op clerk, when they check out at the end of their season.

FF. TRANSPORTATION:

1. Practice: The co-op will provide school-issued transportation to and from practice when it is out of town. Coaches must ride, unless prior permission has been obtained with the AD of your home school.

Any Volunteer that is transporting students must be cleared through policy. At no time are students to transport themselves to/from practice. All practice trips will be equalized as close as practical between the two schools.

2. Each school will be responsible for all costs for transporting the students to and from practice.

3. All additional transportation costs will be split 50/50.

4. All participants must travel to and return from all out of town activities with the team unless prior written permission is asked by their parents and granted by the administration. Participants will be released to travel with their parent/guardian only, after signing out with their coach/sponsor.

5. Use of private vehicles for District business: The use of private vehicles for district business, including the transportation of students, is generally discouraged. Staff members should use district-owned vehicles whenever possible, scheduling activities and other transportation far enough in advance to avoid any non-emergency use of private vehicles. No staff members may use a private vehicle for district business without permission from the Administration. Before transporting any students, the owner of any private vehicle must provide proof of sufficient liability insurance, current registration and a current Montana driver's license. A driver may only transport the number of students as there are seat belts in his/her vehicle

GG. TRAVEL POLICIES: The AD's will arrange all travel for athletic events to include practice and games. Leave times will be scheduled, along with tentative return time. Numbers involved and availability will dictate use of bus transportation or school van(s). Coaches must provide their AD with information regarding the need for travel for any other purposes in a timely fashion, so arrangements may be made. Please email AD's with the necessary information, so AD's may approve and, if necessary, plan. Athletes are expected to travel using transportation arranged by the Co-op with their team. Participants not returning with the school must have a Parent/Guardian sign the Passenger Manifest **Form S**

In special situations, where participants must arrive at an event by other means than school transportation, that participant and their parent/guardian must obtain special permission by their Superintendent, at least 24 hours in advance (unless there are emergency circumstances) who, in turn, will alert the AD and proper advisor/coach of this situation.

Meals for those involved with the day activity will be provided at the schools' expense. Purchase orders must have all required information (See Sample PO), or the bill will be the financial responsibility of the coach. Please stay within the limit established by the athletic directors.

Coaches are to be sure transportation vehicle(s) are in good shape immediately upon return. Be sure all equipment, etc. is removed from the vehicle and properly and safely stored. Also, be sure all garbage is disposed of. If a coach is driving to a Fusion event, please adhere to the information in the Rules and Procedures Manual

A reminder: Athletes/Parents must sign off when not returning from an activity with school transportation Form S

HH. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL: The Coach/Advisor will create a travel itinerary with their AD at least 1 week prior to the trip, if at all possible. If approved by the Administration, a coach/advisor's immediate family may come on the trip. One room per family, however. **FORM E**

- The final itinerary will be available to all parents.
- A list of persons, including adults, involved in the activity will be given to their AD immediately prior to departure
- Cell phone numbers shall be included on the itinerary.
- Meals will be provided for those traveling.
- A room Occupancy List will be prepared prior to departure. A copy will be given to the Co-op secretary and also sent to the motel.

· Rooms will be picked up and left in a neat, orderly fashion upon checkout. Coaches will inspect each room at that time. ANY DAMAGE requiring repair will be the responsibility of the students who shared the room.

· Students are participating in a school-sponsored activity, so all disciplinary rules of the Student Handbook and Board Policy are in effect. Advisors/coaches will have a copy of the student handbooks with them and enforce the rules as if in school.

Richey Policy 8132 Lambert Policy 8132

II. TRAVEL TO AND FROM GAMES: Only coaches, players, managers, cheerleaders, and preapproved passengers (by permission of the Administration) are allowed to ride the bus to and from games. The Head Coach must complete a passenger list of those they are accountable to, for each trip, and who are traveling with the team. In the event parents take their athletes after the event or allow another adult to take them, the parent must sign their athlete out in the space provided on the Passenger Manifest. Coaches must keep those manifests on file through the conclusion of their season, in the event that information is needed.

On travel events that are co-ed the students must be separated by gender. (Example, boys in front, girls in the back of the bus and coaches in the middle) **Use Manifest and Release to Parents Form S**

JJ. UNIFORMS: Coaches will retain a written record of uniforms checked out to players. **FORM M**

Coaches will "check in" clean uniforms at the end of the season, and store them neatly and safely in the appropriate storage facility as determined by the athletic directors. Coaches will maintain an inventory of uniforms to be turned in 3 weeks following the season's conclusion **FORM N**

Uniforms are on a rotating replacement plan of 5 years, or as determined by the Co-op Board. Football uniforms will be replaced as determined to be necessary.

KK. UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN AT PRACTICES: The coach has a demanding job of monitoring and teaching the student athletes, and the distraction of having children present at practices is a detriment to the job at hand and can be a liability to both the school and the coach.

LL. VOLUNTEER/CHAPERONE POLICY: Volunteer coaches in your program must be cleared by the Athletic Director. contingent upon successful completion of a background check per School Board Policy. Volunteer Coaches must abide by the same policies as paid coaches. Volunteer coaches are required to complete the coach's certification program just as paid coaches are. The Montana High School Association (MHSA) has indicated that any post graduate participants that come in to help must be considered a volunteer coach. They will be expected to complete a coach's certification in order to instruct or compete with participants in practice, and must complete the NFHS concussion course at their own expense. Individuals who volunteer to assist the School District during meets, tournaments, etc. will not be subjected to a background check with the understanding these volunteers would never be in a one on one situation with a student in an isolated environment. The District will provide volunteers with an Athletic Handbook, go over the expectations and require acknowledgement of the handbook. Richey Policies 5122 and 5430 Lambert Policies 5122 and 5430