



Desert Star Academy Athletics Handbook 25-26

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IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/STUDENTS

Desert Star Academy <https://www.desertstaracademy.org> (All school related information)

Arizona Interscholastic Association aiaonline.org (The AIA by-laws, rules, and regulations for all sports as well as power ratings, state tournament information, articles on high school sports, and AIA programs offered)

AZPreps365 www.azpreps365.com (One-stop shop for Arizona High School Sports – schedules, scores, rankings, brackets, videos and more.)

National Federation of State High School Association nfhs.org (Rules and information relating to high school athletics across the nation)

Register My Athlete <http://registermyathlete.com/schools>

Brainbook: Concussion Education <https://academy.azpreps365.com>

Opioid Education: The Game You Can't Win <https://academy.azpreps365.com>

NCAA Eligibility Center <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3>

NAIA Eligibility Center <https://www.naia.org/student-athletes/future-student-athletes/index>

Desert Star Mission Statement

Desert Star Academy is a college, career, and life preparatory academy embodying academics, citizenship, and leadership that will develop and empower scholars for a successful pathway post-graduation.

Purpose of Athlete/Parent Handbook

This handbook is intended to provide Desert Star Academy athletes and their parents with information that is essential to successful and fulfilling participation in the Desert Star Academy interscholastic athletic program. As a condition of participation, all scholar athletes and their parents will be required to sign an acknowledgement that they have completely read, and that they understand the contents of this handbook. It is the Desert Star Academy expectation that scholar athletes and their parents will be held responsible for adherence to the requirements and expectations set forth in this handbook. If you have any questions about any of the following information, please contact the Athletic Director at your school, who will be happy to discuss the matter with you.

Our Philosophy

We believe that Athletics offer valuable experiences to our scholars in which they can develop skills they will need to be successful in adult life. Personal traits such as sacrifice, dedication, commitment, and perseverance are key lessons learned through the challenges team and individual sports provide. It is the commitment of Desert Star Academy's Athletics program to foster this growth and experience, assisting in educating the whole scholar.

Athletic Department Student/Athlete Assumption of Risk Statement

An Important Safety Statement:

Safety for our scholar athletes during participation in the interscholastic athletic program is of utmost concern. We attempt to provide all scholar athletes with a safe practice and playing environment. Our coaching staff are carefully selected to ensure competence in conducting their sport. We provide high quality protective equipment and include proper facilities maintenance as an important aspect in injury prevention. Despite these efforts, injuries do occur.

Athletic competition by its very nature creates various situations where injuries cannot be avoided. As an athletic participant, there is always the possibility that you may sustain an injury. The injury sustained could range from a minor contusion to a severe spinal cord injury resulting in quadriplegia or death. Participation in athletic competition provides the individual with a positive educational experience that can add to the individual's development. The participant and participant's parents must realize, however, that there is a potential for serious injury. Individuals who cannot accept the injury risk should redirect their energies to either a non-athletic activity or select a sport with a reduced injury potential.

*Each sport and facility may have unique kinds of injury risks.

Scholar Athlete Code of Conduct

The interscholastic athletic program at Desert Star Academy facilitates the personal growth and education of scholars through their participation in a comprehensive program of AIA sports. As an integral part of the school, the Athletic program actively promotes fair equity and diversity. To this end, the Athletics Department has adopted a standard of ethical conduct and behavioral expectations for all athletes at Desert Star Academy.

Standards of Conduct:

1. It is a privilege and not a right to be a student-athlete at Desert Star Academy.
2. Scholar athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exhibits honor and respect to our school, scholars, teachers, and staff, both on and off campus and within all social media platforms.
3. As a scholar-athlete, you are expected to conform to all local, state, and federal laws as well as school policies.
4. The athletics department and respective coaches reserve the right to implement additional sanctions/penalties for breaking school policies as well as public laws.
5. Desert Star Academy expects its scholar athletes to demonstrate academic integrity and accomplishment, and to strive for their highest degree of athletic excellence and sportsmanship.
6. Sportsmanship is respect for oneself, teammates, coaches, officials, opponents, and property.
7. Sportsmanship also requires maintaining self-control and refusing to be drawn into or encourage physical conflict outside of what is required for the proper execution of the sport.
8. Hazing - behavior that endangers the physical or mental health of any person – or damages property will not be tolerated.

Hazing Prevention Procedures

The Arizona legislature has issued a mandate (A.R.S. 15-2301) to “every public educational institution in this state.” This law:

- Requires school districts to “adopt, post, and enforce a hazing prevention policy;”
- Directs that “the hazing prevention policy shall be printed in every handbook for distribution to parents and students;” and
- Sets forth specific provisions which must be included in the “hazing prevention policy.”

“Hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a student whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

- The act was committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with Desert Star Academy.

- The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm, or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm, or bodily exploitation.

It is the responsibility of all Desert Star Academy personnel (including principals, athletic directors, coaches, teachers, and staff) and students to be aware of and strictly adhere to the following policy: Hazing is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes:

- Any solicitation to engage in hazing.
- Aiding and abetting another person that is engaged in hazing
- The fact that a person consents to being “hazed” does not constitute a defense to violation of this policy.

All students, teachers and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority/ability to prevent violations of this policy.

The following procedures are to be employed by students, teachers and staff in reporting violations of this policy, or for filing complaints for violations of this policy:

- Standard administrative procedures will apply to all teachers and staff, as directed by the administration and include the appropriate due process provided and implemented by school administration for investigation of reports of violations of this policy.
- The principal/athletic director will be responsible for remediation.
- Penalties and sanctions for violation of this policy shall be imposed in accordance with standard Desert Star Academy due process procedures.
- The appeals process for those who are subjected to disciplinary action under this policy shall follow current network disciplinary guidelines.
- Violations of these hazing procedures may result in notification to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Bullying

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying includes any repeated, intentional act (physical, verbal, emotional, or cyber) meant to intimidate, harm, or humiliate another student-athlete. This includes but is not limited to:

- Name-calling, teasing, or threats
- Spreading rumors
- Excluding others from team activities
- Physical aggression or intimidation
- Cyberbullying via texts, social media, or other platforms

Reporting:

Any student-athlete who feels they are being bullied or witnesses bullying should report the

behavior immediately to a coach, athletic director, or school counselor. All reports will be taken seriously and handled with confidentiality.

Consequences:

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, consequences may include:

1. **First Offense:** Verbal warning and a meeting with coach and athletic director
2. **Second Offense:** Suspension from practices and/or games for up to one week
3. **Third Offense:** Removal from the team for the remainder of the season and possible referral for school disciplinary action

Note: Severe incidents (e.g., threats of violence, physical assault, or harassment based on race, gender, or identity) may result in immediate removal from the team and referral to school administration.

Commitment:

All athletes are expected to uphold the values of respect, sportsmanship, and teamwork both on and off the field.

Illegal Substance Use by Athletes

The use of unlawful substances is a “safety issue” that is of major concern in high school athletics. Such usage has serious short-and-long-term consequences to the health and well-being of all high school scholars, but particularly to athletes. Combining substances which are deemed unlawful for minors, with the rigors of competitive athletics, creates significant risk of health consequences that can be very serious, and even life threatening. The “substances” includes alcohol; tobacco; unlawfully obtained, or improperly used, prescription medications; recreational drugs such as marijuana, cocaine (in all forms), methamphetamines (in all forms) and heroin; anabolic/androgenic steroids, and all other performance enhancing substances.

Desert Star Academy has a zero-tolerance policy relating to the use of any of these substances. Violation of this policy by athletes will lead to immediate imposition of penalties. The use of any of these substances is of concern to the district as a matter of student health and safety as well as the integrity of the interscholastic athletic program.

Regarding performance enhancement, it is the position of Desert Star Academy that this is effectively achieved through dedicated and disciplined compliance with guidelines provided by coaches for fitness, strength and skill development. The Academy does not approve of or condone, the use of any type of performance enhancing substances for increased muscle development or enhanced athletic ability. Such usage is a direct attack upon the integrity of athletics and is cheating. Desert Star is strongly opposed to the use of any performance enhancing substances by athletes and members of the student body because of health and ethical concerns.

Disciplinary Process and Penalties

Sanctions levied by Athletics may occur over and above those levied by the school. Sanctions will vary depending on the type and circumstances of the violation. When the Department of Athletics becomes aware of an alleged violation of this Code of Conduct, the director of athletics or his/her designee (“the AD”) will take reasonable steps to verify the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the report. These steps may include interviews of scholars and employees, or of all people who have knowledge of relevant facts; examination of documents; and other steps necessary for the AD to determine the merits of the report. A meeting with the scholar-athlete will ordinarily occur before any discipline is imposed; however, in extenuating circumstances, the AD may suspend the scholar-athlete before the meeting. Determination of responsibility will be based on a preponderance of evidence and information available. A first-time offense may be serious enough to warrant any of the possible sanctions listed below. A scholar-athlete’s refusal to participate and cooperate in an Athletic Department investigation of possible violation of this Code of Conduct or AIA rules may itself constitute a basis for disciplinary action.

Possible Sanctions include but are not limited to:

1. Warning
2. Probation – Special status with conditions imposed for a limited time
3. Restitution – i.e., payment for damaged property
4. Suspension – Removal of a scholar-athlete from all athletic department activities for a limited period
5. Expulsion – Permanent removal from a team and/or department activity

Violations of Team Rules

Each student-athlete is responsible for following his/her specific team policies. These policies shall be in writing and distributed to team members at the beginning of the playing season. The Head Coach and the Athletic Director all have authority to impose sanctions

Athletic Eligibility Rules & Procedures for Athletic Participation

All scholars must meet the minimum requirements set forth by the Arizona Interscholastic Association and receive participation clearance from the site athletic director before they will be issued any equipment, allowed to practice, or be eligible to participate in interscholastic competition. The procedure for receiving athletic participation clearance is as follows:

Scholar athletes should complete all registration information online through RegisterMyAthlete.com. Completed registration will contain the following information:

- Athletic handbook acknowledgment form
- Proof of insurance form
- Physical examination forms. All physicals must be signed by a physician who is legally authorized to prescribe all levels of controlled medications. Physicals must be completed after March 1st for the following school year.
- Risk warning and informed consent form
- BrainBook Concussion and Opioid certificates

When all materials have been filled out in the proper manner, your Activate account will be set to “Complete for Tryouts.” It is the responsibility of the entire athletic department to ensure that all scholars who participate in athletics have met all eligibility requirements set forth by the Arizona Interscholastic Association or Canyon Athletic Association. If any scholar or parent has a question regarding athletic eligibility, please contact the site athletic director.

Attendance:

The AIA mandates consistent attendance to maintain eligibility. In addition, to be eligible to participate in an athletic contest, a scholar-athlete must attend school on the day of the contest for a minimum of two periods. Thursday’s attendance determines Saturday’s participation. The principal or athletic director must approve any exception to this rule.

Academic Eligibility:

- Scholars with adequate credits earned, based on their grade level, are eligible at the start of each season of sport as determined by the AIA.
- Scholars who have made satisfactory progress toward promotion or graduation but failed a class(s) at the end of the previous semester, begin the new semester/season of sport under “advisement”. This “Advisement” period is 4 weeks and scholar athletes must be passing all classes weekly, with a 70% (C) or better, during this period. Regular athletic eligibility procedures will resume for these students at the end of this 4 week “Advisement” period.
- Grade checks will be conducted every Monday at the start of the school day.
- Any scholar **failing to meet the grade requirement of 70% or higher in one or more of his/her classes** will be put on “academic probation”, meaning they will be allowed to participate in any games and practices for that week as long as they are attending lunch and after school tutoring sessions, attending Friday school (when available), and turning in any missing/incomplete assignments.
- If a scholar on “academic probation” is passing all classes with a 70% or higher the next week (*as per the grade checks done every Monday*) they will no longer be on “academic probation” and will return to being on good academic standing.
- If a scholar on “academic probation” fails to meet the grade requirement of 70% or higher in one or more of his/her classes for second week in a row (*as per the grade*

checks done every Monday) they will be ineligible to participate in any games, activities, or tournaments that week. The scholar will need to continue to attend tutoring sessions and try to improve his/her grade to that of a passing score.

- If a scholar on “academic probation” fails to meet the grade requirement of 70% or higher in one or more of his/her classes for a third week in a row (*as per the grade checks done every Monday*) they may be dismissed from the team.

Adequate yearly progress toward promotion/graduation to be eligible.

- Sophomores must have earned 66% of 6 credits or 4 credits
- Juniors must have earned 75% of 13 credits or 10 credits
- Seniors must have earned 88% of 18 credits or 16 credits
- Freshmen are automatically eligible to start their first sport here at Desert Star. Once they are out for a sport the eligibility policy kicks in.

Transfer Scholars Eligibility

- Scholars who transfer to Desert Star Academy after their freshman year will have their satisfactory progress toward promotion or graduation determined by an administrative committee made up of the principal, athletic director, counselor, or their designees. All other AIA transfer requirements must be met. For more information on student transfer rule see AIA Bylaws 15.10.
- Transfer students and the parents/guardians must complete AIA 520 transfer form and turn it into Athletic Director.

Sports Participation/ Off Season Training

We encourage all scholars to participate in as many sports as possible. However, scholars will not be allowed to participate in more than one sport during a season unless agreed by all head coaches involved. Athletes must also be aware of the AIA rule which limits a high school scholar athlete to competition only on a school team. “A student who is a member of a school team shall not practice or compete with any other group, club, organization, association, etc., in that same sport during the interscholastic season of competition.” This rule applies to team sports only. Any scholar violating this rule shall forfeit his/her eligibility for a minimum of the balance of the season for that sport or up to a maximum of one calendar year.

As scholar-athletes you are also expected to maintain and develop higher levels of physical fitness necessary for optimal performance and injury prevention. In order to do this, you are expected to participate in Desert Star Academy’s off-season weight training and conditioning program offered throughout the year. Along with the off-season conditioning program you are encouraged to participate in each sport’s summer program.

Guidelines for Team Selection

Participation in Interscholastic Activities is not a right. However, the process may be challenged in the broad scope of the Office of Civil Rights. The following guidelines apply:

- An athlete will be offered ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.
- A tryout period of a minimum of two days is a guideline, which may be subject to change by the coach in consultation with the athletic director.
- The coach is responsible to establish a criterion system for team selection.
- The coach will review the selection process with the athletic director prior to tryouts.
- The coach will notify players of tryout results in a timely and sensitive manner.
- Coaches will be proactive with regard to the sensitive process of non-selection of all athletes, especially seniors.
- The coach may discuss tryouts with the athlete or parent but may not discuss with other athletes or parents.
- The coach may not use any off-season program participation as a basis for team selection.
- Multiple sport players must be allowed to try out. Processes and considerations will be afforded scholars whose seasons overlap. Their selections to the team shall not result in cutting previously selected players, although it may involve changes in the level of team on which those players will participate.
- Academic standing may play a factor in team selection and current grade status reports will be provided to coaches upon request.
- There will be no public commentary regarding the selection process.

Note: In all instances, the final decision for team selection will reside with the Head Coach with the process only subject to review by the Athletic Director.

Guidelines for Students Participating in Two Concurrent Sports

If it is deemed to be in the best interest of the scholar and the athletic program, athletes may participate in two concurrent sports with the following conditions:

- Both coaches must personally meet with the athlete and his/her parents to review the demands of each sport.
- It must be mutually agreeable with both coaches with consideration given to practice schedules and games.
- The student athlete must identify the primary sport. This sport has priority, when necessary, over the second sport.

Guidelines for Athletes With Disabilities

Federal law prohibits any discrimination against scholars with disabilities and requires reasonable accommodation of such scholars to allow them to be included as broadly as is

reasonably possible in all school programs, including extracurricular activities. The following guidelines will be applicable to participation of students with disabilities in the Desert Star Academy athletic program:

- ● If they are cleared to participate through the pre-participation screening process, reasonable accommodation must be made for the participation of athletes with disabilities. For example, an athlete with hearing loss must be allowed to have a qualified “interpreter” available during practices, games, and team meetings to assure effective communication with that athlete.
- ● Other than making reasonable accommodations for their participation, athletes with disabilities must not be treated differently than any other athlete out of concern for their well-being. For example: In wrestling, an athlete with a disability cannot be continuously matched against smaller, younger, less mature participants out of a concern that the athlete will be at greater risk working against participants of similar size, age, and maturity. In baseball or softball, an athlete with hearing loss cannot be required to wear protective equipment that is not required of other athletes out of concern that he/she is at greater risk of being struck by a ball or bat.
- ● Athletes with disabilities and their parents/guardians will not be subject to more stringent requirements pertaining to risk warning and informed consent than is the case with all other scholar athletes.

Athletic Participation Fee

A participation fee will not be required for participation in scholastic sports at Desert Star starting Fall 2025.

Transportation Release

Scholars may be transported to or from events so long as they complete the travel release form, and it is signed and dated by the parent or guardian. Whomever the scholar is to be released with must provide valid identification at the time of release. Forms can be requested from the front office.

Injury Evaluation and Care

While Desert Star Academy coaches are trained to administer first aid care, there are instances in which athletes and their parents need to make decisions on their own. Most commonly, this need will arise when the athlete begins experiencing symptoms at home which were not apparent during, or immediately following, the activity session. Since injuries and other adverse health conditions are inevitable in athletics, and the severity of the problem may not be recognized immediately, it is important for athletes and parents to be continually alert to the development of symptoms. The following guidelines are provided by Desert Star Academy for use as a resource for parents/guardians and/or athletes to assist in determining the need for

initial care and treatment of injuries or conditions while at home, or in other instances when an athletic trainer or coach is not immediately available.

- How badly am I hurt? Should I see a doctor?
 - Consider the degree of pain
 - Debilitating pain – stops performance; can't move the injured part
 - Limiting pain – hinders performance; able to complete the activity
 - Temporary pain – discomfort resolves within a week
 - Chronic pain – interferes with performance for longer than seven days
 - Examine for deformity
 - Swelling – amount is generally related to the severity of the injury; swelling within the first two hours indicates a significant injury
 - Discoloration – amount is related to the severity of the injury
 - Comparison – Does it look like the other one? In any of these cases, see a doctor immediately.

- How should I care for my injury until I see a doctor? Your goals are to (A) control pain, (B) control swelling, and (C) prevent further injury.

Follow the R.I.C.E Principle:

- Rest – Do not use the injured part if it is painful; immobilize if necessary.
- Ice – Apply ice to the injured part immediately; 20 minutes on, one hour off, repeat; ice will limit swelling and reduce the pain
- Compression – Use an elastic bandage (which can be soaked in cold water to aid the cooling process) to add firm pressure.
- Elevation – Where practical, keep the injured part elevated higher than the heart for the first 24 hours.

If you sustain an injury when the athletic trainer is not available, and you are in doubt about how to treat the injury or whether or not you should see a doctor, discuss it with your coach or call your family physician. Do not underestimate injuries.

Return to Activity Following Injury or Illness

One of the most critical concerns in athlete safety is the avoidance of unnecessary recurrence of injury or illness after return to activity. This requires that the athlete be fully recovered and properly reconditioned before returning to the rigors of practice and competition. The following principles apply to any situation requiring return to activity:

- If the injury or illness has required advanced medical care, written clearance from the treating physician (or team physician, if appropriate) shall be required for the athlete's return to activity. This written clearance shall reference the specific injury/illness and any limitations to be imposed upon the athlete.

- Following receipt of the physician's clearance, the athletic trainer/coach shall evaluate the athlete and provide any necessary reconditioning for the athlete's safe return to full participation.
- Following completion of reconditioning, the athletic trainer/coach shall notify the site athletic director that the athlete is ready to return to full activity.
- Based upon the recommendations of the athletic trainer/coach, the athletic director shall then determine whether to approve the athlete for return to full activity.