

STUDENT, PARENT/GUARDIAN, COACH AND SPONSOR

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES CODE OF CONDUCT



**Stafford County
Public Schools**

Inspire | Empower | Excel



GREG MARGHEIM
Coordinator of Health, Physical
Education, Athletics and Wellness



STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

31 Stafford Avenue
Stafford, Virginia 22554-7246
Phone: 540-658-6000
www.staffordschools.net

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Literacy and Humanities
Mathematics and Science
Career and Technical Education
Libraries and Elective Programs
English as a Second Language
Gifted & Accelerated Programs

Department of Academic Programs

Dear Students, Parents, Sponsors, and Coaches:

Welcome to another exciting year of Stafford County Public Schools (SCPS) athletic competition!

Sports and extracurricular programs are an essential part of a young person's educational and social development. Participation in athletics and extracurricular activities allows students to apply what they have learned of effective communication, collaboration, and leadership beyond the classroom. Students and coaches must exercise these classroom skills, along with good judgment, and conduct themselves with honesty and integrity at all times.

We are very proud of the hard work and talent of our student athletes, and we are excited to watch our students compete this year. The dedication of these young people to excel in both the academic and extracurricular arenas is something for which the entire Stafford community can be proud. Thanks also belong to the many coaches and others who have put in endless hours to ensure that our SCPS students have a rewarding and fun experience as they participate in our first-class athletic and extracurricular programs.

Finally, I would like to extend a "Thank You" to the boosters, parents, and all of the volunteers for their endless support and commitment to our sports program and students. Moreover, we thank you for demonstrating positive sportsmanship through your conduct and adherence to stadium rules.

As an athletic community, we strive for winning on the field; however, being respectful to the officials, opposing team members, coaches, and fans is the true mark of an excellent student athlete. To all our students and supporters, thank you and good luck! Enjoy this year's athletic seasons - we are rooting for you!

Sincerely,

Greg Margheim

Contact Information

Greg Margheim - Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics, and Student Wellness

540-658-6000

margheimga@staffordschools.net

Dr. Marcie Robertson – Executive Director of High School Leadership

540-658-6000

robertsonmd@staffordschools.net

Stacy Johnson – Executive Director of Middle School Leadership

540-658-6000

johnsonsb@staffordschools.net

High Schools



Brooke Point High School

Danny Tryon, Director of Athletics and Activities

tryondw@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6080



Colonial Forge High School

Jeff Berry, Director of Athletics and Activities

berryyjk@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6115



Mountain View High School

Chris Denno, Director of Athletics and Activities

dennocj@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6840



North Stafford High School

Mark Coleman, Director of Athletics and Activities

colemanmd@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6150



Stafford Senior High School

Nick Leeson, Director of Athletics and Activities

leesonnb@staffordschools.net; (540) 371-7200

Middle Schools



A.G. Wright Middle School

Jason Brown, Athletic Director

brownjv@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6240



Dixon-Smith Middle School

Shawn Thurston, Athletic Director

thurstonse@staffordschools.net; (540) 899-0860



Edward E. Drew Middle School

Kristi Proudfoot and Corey Brooks, Athletic Directors

proudfootkm@staffordschools.net;

brookscs@staffordschools.net; (540) 371-1415



T. Benton Gayle Middle School

Shelly Jones and Dustin Ludolph, Athletic Directors

jonessl@staffordschools.net;

ludolphdd@staffordschools.net; (540) 373-0383



H.H. Poole Middle School

Sarah Dovel, Athletic Director

dovelse@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6190



Rodney Thompson Middle School

Angie Harding, Athletic Director

hardingab@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6420



Shirley C. Heim Middle School

Kim Lewis, Athletic Director

lewiskj@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-5910



Stafford Middle School

Paul McFarland, Athletic Director

mcfarlandps@staffordschools.net; (540) 658-6210

Major Job Responsibilities Athletics and Activities

(as pertaining to athletics and activities)

Coordinator of Health, Physical Education, Athletics, and Student Wellness

- Concussion Management Protocols
- XLNTbrain Concussion Management System
- Title IX
- Football Helmet Management
- Athletic Equipment Reconditioning and Replacement
- Sports Medicine
- Intramurals/Extra-curricular Activities
- Stafford County Public Schools Budget Development
- Athletic Code of Conduct
- CPR/AED/First Aid Certification/Training
- Management of the following: VHSL Online Class, Concussion Training, Heat and Hydration, County Athletics Web Page, Local Component Training, Hazing Prevention, CPR Certification, Schedule Development, Protocol and Procedure Changes/Updates, Equipment Requirements

Director of Athletics and Activities – High School

- Supervise athletic program high school
- Oversee all extra-curricular activities
- Complete coaches evaluation
- Provide coaches education
- Schedule practice times
- Schedule facility use by teams and community
- Student/Athlete eligibility compliance
- Coordinate travel
- VHSL responsibilities
- Event supervision
- Attend district/regional/state contests
- Coordinate ticket sales, security, supervision at home events
- Coordinate with officials
- Work with parent booster organizations

Athletic Director – Middle School

- Reschedule any postponed athletic events
- Reschedule referees
- Complete trip forms
- Review eligibility forms
- Prepare fields for events (in conjunction with coaches)
- Order equipment

- Review Athletic Manual with coaches
- Meet with all Athletic Directors at the beginning and conclusion of each year (end of semester and end of year)
- Check and review grades per nine-weeks
- Liaison between the coaches and the principals
- Check VHSL physicals
- Train students and parents/guardians on concussion management

Athletic Trainer

- AED Checklists
- XLNTbrain Concussion Testing
- Documentation of injuries to be sent to central office
- Diabetes training with Epi-pen and medical administration training
- Complete/monitor VHSL Heat and Hydration Regulations
- Support team practices
- Support all home competitions
- Work with team doctors
- Assist with athletic injury case and rehabilitation
- Injury communication with parents
- Order and Stock First Aid kits for all athletic teams
- Teacher Sports Medicine I and II courses

Sportsmanship Statement

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) is an alliance of Virginia's public high schools that promotes education, leadership, sportsmanship, character, and citizenship for students by establishing and maintaining high standards for school activities and competitions.

Our high schools are members of the state high school athletic association and abide by all the rules and regulations as established by the association, especially with regard to CONDUCT, COMPETITION, and SPORTSMANSHIP.

The officials for our activities and competitions have been selected and assigned according to procedures adopted by the state high school athletic association. Their experience and integrity qualify them to ensure fair play, accurate scoring, and proper conduct during today's contest.

Stafford County Public Schools Statement

Welcome to Stafford County Public Schools where sportsmanship is an expectation.

So, please let the PLAYERS play.

Let the COACHES coach.

Let the OFFICIALS officiate.

Let the SPECTATORS be positive.

Stafford County Public Schools promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches, and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting participants and officials in a positive manner. Negative comments, profanity, racist, sexist, or other abusive comments and/or actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches, other spectators, or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the facility. SCPS thanks you for your support and cooperation.

Athletics and Activities Middle and High School

Our middle and high schools offer a wide range of extracurricular and co-curricular experiences for your child.

Playing sports at any level, club, intramural, or interscholastic, can be a key part of a child's educational experience and can have an immense and lasting impact on their life. Among its many benefits, participation in sports promotes socialization, the development of leadership skills, focus, and physical fitness.

Each middle school also offers a variety of intramural and club activities, in addition to competitive sports.

Clubs and intramural activities may differ from school to school. Opportunities are communicated by the Stafford County Public Schools' building administration.



Middle School Athletic Sports (Grades 6-8)

Female

- Field Hockey (F)
- Volleyball (F)
- Basketball (W)
- Softball (S)
- Track & Field (S)

Male

- Football (F)
- Basketball (W)
- Wrestling (W)
- Track & Field (S)

*Key – Season: F=Fall, W=Winter, S=Spring

Note: 6th grade boys will not be able to try out for football due to the nature of that sport.

Middle School Intramurals (Grades 6-8)

Each middle school offers a variety of intramural activities throughout the year. These activities vary from building to building based on student interest, available equipment, and faculty sponsors. Each middle school creates their own intramural plan in the fall and provides information via the school's website and newsletters.



High School Athletic Sports (Grades 9-12)

Co-Ed

- Cheerleading (F/W) (Fr/JV/V)
- Golf (F) (V)

Female

- Cross Country (F) (V)
- Field Hockey (F) (JV/V)
- Volleyball (F) (F/JV/V)
- Basketball (W) (Fr/JV/V)
- Gymnastics (W) (V)
- Indoor Track (W) (V)
- Swimming (W) (V)
- Lacrosse (S) (JV/V)
- Outdoor Track (S) (V)
- Soccer (S) (JV/V)
- Softball (S) (JV/V)
- Tennis (S) (V)



Male

- Cross Country (F) (V)
- Football (F) (Fr/JV/V)
- Basketball (W) (Fr/JV/V)
- Indoor Track (W) (V)
- Swimming (W) (V)
- Baseball (S) (JV/V)
- Wrestling (W) (JV/V)
- Lacrosse (S) (JV/V)
- Outdoor Track (S) (V)
- Soccer (S) (JV/V)
- Tennis (S) (V)



*Key – Season: F=Fall, W=Winter, S=Spring

Available Teams: Fr=Freshman, JV=Junior Varsity, V=Varsity

High School Clubs and Activities (9-12)

A variety of curricular and co-curricular clubs and activities are offered at each high school. Student clubs are generated by student interest and are led by the students themselves. Curricular clubs have faculty sponsors and may include special events and competitions. Included in the high school extra-curricular offerings are several VHSL

sanctioned organizations, such as debate, forensics, e-sports and theatre arts, as well as non VHSL sanctioned teams such as: Dance (F/W) (JV/V) and Step team.

To The Student

According to Virginia High School League (VHSL), in order to participate in athletics and activities in SCPS, a student must meet the following criteria:

- The Virginia High School League, Stafford County School Board, and the individual schools are responsible to ensure all student athletes remain a “student in good standing,” as defined below to continue participation in all activities.
- The Virginia High School League (VHSL) Regulation 28-1-1, Bona Fide Student Rule, requires that “the student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents.”
- As with all privileges, there are responsibilities a student accepts when he/she agrees to become a member of an athletic team or participate in an extracurricular activity including:
 - Being a good citizen;
 - Abiding and comply by all school and team rules, school division policies and regulations, and with state and federal laws;
 - Maintaining expected levels of excellence in behavior both in and out of school;
 - Meeting all VHSL eligibility requirements as defined.

Student Requirements

Participation in the long and proud tradition of athletics and activities in Stafford County Public Schools is an honor and privilege, not a right. It is our hope that all participants experience personal growth, academic achievement, and success in their chosen sport or activity.

As a Stafford County Public Schools student-athlete and/or activity member, you have significant responsibilities. You are among the most visible students in your school and in the wider community. You are expected to behave as a respectful member of your school team in a manner that is consistent with the values of Stafford County Public Schools. You have made a commitment to the principles of self-discipline, fair play, self-control, collaborative effort, team building. You are to be an ambassador for SCPS both on and off the field. You are expected to exercise good judgment and conduct yourself with honesty, integrity, and respect for others at all times. By signing the following

agreement, you accept this responsibility, as well as any consequences associated with not meeting these expectations.

Social Media Precautions

The most popular forms of social media were originally intended to provide a platform for the following:

- Sharing ideas
- Connecting a face to a name
- Communicating about an event quickly
- Creating awareness about a social issue
- Providing short, efficient exchanges of information with the people in your social circle

When social media sites are used in the manner for which they are intended, they can be a beneficial communication tool that brings people together.

With the increase in popularity of these sites, we have seen a variety of misuses and disadvantages when not used in the manner in which they were designed. Unintended and inappropriate use of social media sites include the following:

- Loss of privacy
- Sexual predators
- Cyber-bullying
- Harassment
- New mental disorders such as “Internet Addiction Disorder”

The misuse of social media sites has led to the creation of new laws and the enforcement of consequences connected to cyber-threats, cyber-bullying, sexting, and harassing behaviors.

Stafford County Public Schools encourages the appropriate use of social media sites. The inappropriate use of social media sites associated with any extracurricular program offered by SCPS that is deemed to be hurtful, inappropriate, derogatory, or harassing will not be tolerated. In addition, threats, inappropriate pictures, teasing, and racist or sexist comments will not be tolerated.

Students, parents/guardians, and other spectators associated with this type of negative behavior are subject to warning, suspension, or dismissal from that activity. Parents engaging in this type of behavior will be asked to cease; if the behavior continues, their attendance and participation as a spectator will be revoked.

Attendance/Missing Practices or Games

In order for a student-athlete to participate in a practice or a game, athletes and managers must report to school (MS/HS) halfway through 1st block (HS – 8:15 a.m., MS – 10:15 a.m.), and remain in school all day.

Exceptions may be made for medical appointments or other reasons excused by the building principal or designee.

- Excused absences are defined as medical appointments, illness, family emergencies (such as death in the family), court dates, etc.

Athletes must notify the coach or the Director of Athletics and Activities prior to missing the practice or game.

When athletes choose to participate on an athletic team, they have made a commitment to that team. Athletes are expected to attend all practices and games.

- Unexcused absences may include but are not limited to: skipping practice or a game, vacations, missing practice or a game due to disciplinary reasons, or out-of-school suspensions.
- Vacations by team members during a sport season are discouraged and each day missed may be considered an unexcused absence.

Three unexcused absences in one season may result in loss of playing time or dismissal from the team.

Designated Non-Practice and/or Non-Play Date

Designated non-practice/play dates for 2025-2026:

(this includes any off-season practices, conditioning, weight lifting, or team meetings, etc.)

September 22 (practices must conclude by 5:30pm)
October 1 (practices must conclude 5:30pm)
November 4
November 27
December 25
March 20

September 23
October 2
November 11
December 24
January 1
April 3

With the exception of post-season play

Tryouts will not be held on non-school days once the school year begins.

Athlete in Good Standing Guidelines

Academic Eligibility

Student athletes must be enrolled in no less than five credits per semester.

High school student athletes must pass a minimum of five subjects/credits in the previous semester which can be used for graduation credit.

Middle school student athletes must pass a minimum of five subjects the previous 9-weeks grading period to be eligible to participate in athletics.

All High school athletic teams follow the VHSL academic eligibility standards.

Please refer to the VHSL handbook for any more information.

Behavior Eligibility

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) Regulation 28-1-1, Bona Fide Student Rule, requires that “the student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents.”

As with all privileges, there are responsibilities a student accepts when he/she agrees to become a member of an athletic team or participate in an extracurricular activity including:

- Being a good citizen;
- Abiding and comply by all school and team rules, school division policies and regulations, and with state and federal laws;
- Maintaining expected levels of excellence in behavior both in and out of school;
- Meeting all VHSL eligibility requirements as defined.

Penalties for On and Off-School Premises Policy Violations

a. First Violation for Athletics:

The student shall be suspended from play for a period equivalent to that number of games representing not less than 30 percent of the total number of contests scheduled to be played during the regular season. (e.g., 3 games of a 10-game schedule, 4 games for an 11—15 game schedule, 5 games for an 18-20 game schedule). The penalty will be applied to the immediate next game(s) including playoffs, and/or to the next sport season in which the student-athlete participates within the current school year. During the suspension from play, the student will

be able to attend practices and contests; however, the student will not be permitted to dress in team uniform for games or competitive events.

First violation consequences do not run concurrently with an out-of-school suspension. Athletic consequences will begin when the student returns to school.

b. First Violation for Activities:

The student shall not participate in club and/or activities for a period of 30 calendar days or 30 percent of scheduled student activities, the lesser of which shall be the penalty.

First violation consequences do not run concurrently with an out-of-school suspension. Activity consequences will begin when the student returns to school.

c. Second Violation for Athletics and Activities

A second violation during the same school year, even if in another sport or activity, may permanently exclude the student from all extra/co-curricular activities for 365 days upon review.

Game suspensions connected to this policy are not to be confused or substituted for game suspensions levied by the VHSL for game ejections and unsportsmanlike behaviors.

Appeal Process

Prior to making a determination and imposing an exclusionary consequence, the coach/sponsor or school authorities shall give students the right to explain their conduct. The school administration shall record in writing the factors which led to the decision to exclude the student from extra/co-curricular activities and shall stipulate the consequence(s) to the student. Students and their parents/guardians may appeal decisions related to the Extra/Co-Curricular Participation Policy using the procedures outlined below:

Appeals of disciplinary actions taken for student violation of the Extra/Co-Curricular Participation Policy are as follows:

- Appeal- Director of Student Activities
- Final Appeal-Principal (The decision of the principal is final.)

Appeals of disciplinary actions taken for student violations of the division's Code of Student Conduct follow procedures as outlined in Policy and Regulation 2401, Code of

Student Conduct except that the student shall not participate in practices, activities, or events as described below.

Students appealing disciplinary action under the Extra/Co- Curricular Participation Policy 3502 that involve suspension from school or under the Code of Student Conduct shall not be allowed to participate in athletic events, practices, or student activities until after the appeal is heard by the appropriate authority. Students appealing disciplinary action under Policy 3502 that does not involve suspension from school are eligible to participate in practices but not attend or participate in games or competitive events until the appeal is heard by the appropriate authority.

Students appealing disciplinary action according to the due process procedures established in this policy will be permitted to attend practices; however, he/she will not be permitted to dress in team uniform and attend games or competitive events. In the event that the disciplinary action is overturned on appeal, absences from athletic events, practices, or student activities shall be considered excused, and shall not be considered by the coach or sponsor when determining awards or honors for which the student may be eligible.

STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
31 STAFFORD AVENUE
STAFFORD, VA 22554

**ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

STUDENT

Students should review the following, initialing each statement and signing at the bottom.

Statement

Initial

I have received and reviewed the Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct and the Stafford County Public Schools Code of Conduct (Policy 2401) and agree to meet expectations outlined within.

I accept that I have a responsibility to represent my school and community in a positive manner and will conduct myself with honesty, integrity, and respect for others at all times.

I understand that I must be in attendance at school in order to practice, compete, or participate in athletics or extracurricular activities and will provide written notice, signed by my parent/guardian, when I need to miss practice, meeting, or any event.

I agree to follow all expectations outlined in the Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct as well as the Stafford County Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct.

I will not engage in and will not be tolerant of violent acts, including assaults on persons or property, abusive language, harassment, hazing, stalking, sexual violence, or any other conduct prohibited by law. If I witness such acts perpetrated by others, I will report them to my coach, sponsor, or administrator.

I will not engage in any act, including via social media, that subjects another person, voluntarily or involuntarily, to abuse, mistreatment, humiliation, harassment, or intimidation. If I witness such acts perpetrated by others, I will report them to my coach, sponsor, or administrator.

I will not consume or use alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, tobacco, or illegal drugs.

I will follow all locker room rules and meet locker room behavioral expectations at all times.

If I observe a fellow student in distress of any kind, I will notify a coach or activity sponsor immediately.

I understand that failure to conduct myself responsibly, as stated and implied in the Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct, Stafford County Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct, and in the above statements, may result in sanctions, ranging from limited participation up to and including suspension or dismissal from the team, and suspension or expulsion from Stafford County Public Schools.

School

Grade

Sport/Activity

Student Name (print)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

To The Parent

Your child has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics and activities. Supporting policies that govern school competition and the conduct and training of school athletes enables our community to create programs with positive opportunities and experiences for all students.

Participation in athletics and activities is an extension of a student's school experience and provides many valuable life lessons to young student-athletes. Stafford County Public Schools is committed to providing a challenging, meaningful, and positive extra-curricular experience for students, parents, and coaches.

For example:

- Athletics and extra-curricular activities compliment, support, and extend a student's overall academic experiences.
- Involvement in athletics and activities provides opportunities to develop character, discipline, leadership, responsibility, and skill.
- A successful athletics and activities program requires the cooperation and support of coaches, athletes, parents/guardians, students, community members, and school personnel.

Middle School Programs may have students in the 8th grade and those 7th and 6th grade students who are considered eligible to compete according to the requirements contained in the middle school athletic manual.

- Football will not be an option for participation for 6th grade students due to the physical nature of that particular sport; however, 6th grade students may serve as managers or help on game days.

We recognize that the revision of the middle school athletic participation guidelines will provide, at best, limited opportunity for inclusion of 6th graders on our athletic teams; as such this policy modification will not take the place of continued development, support and/or enhancement of a strong intramural program. An organized intramural program, which supports the interests of the entire student population is still the main avenue for athletic skill and fitness development for the majority of students.

As stated in the Middle School Athletic Manual – Rule 7:

- Middle school student-athletes will not be allowed to compete or practice in any high school sport, practice, or conditioning program except on a case-by-case basis where there is no middle school program or an equivalent community based program which makes the sport available to the middle school student-athlete.

- Each exception made to the high school participation rule must be reviewed and supported by the majority of the middle school principals. Exceptions will be made only to the 8th grade students (per VHSL rules) and students will only be allowed to participate for a one year period.
- Current exemptions include:
 - Cross Country
 - Cheerleading
 - Dance Team
 - For cheer and dance, a total of 10 conditioning days may occur between April 1st and May 1st with tryouts being held after May 1st.
- Middle school student-athletes cannot take the place of a high school student-athlete on the team.
- Middle school student-athletes will have the same Code of Conduct as high school athletes.
- Middle school student-athletes must provide their own transportation to and from the high school practice.
- Middle school student-athletes cannot arrive at the high school practice prior to middle school dismissal.
- Middle school student-athletes are allowed to use the same transportation to athletic events as the high school student-athletes provided they do not miss any class time.

Freshman and Junior Varsity Programs are developmental in nature. These experiences allow students to prepare for participation on the varsity teams by learning skill development, sportsmanship, advanced strategies, teamwork, competition, conditioning, and maturity which are necessary for athletes to advance to higher levels of competition.

- There are no guarantees that all athletes will participate in all games.
- Playing time is the sole decision of the head coach.
- Coaches are encouraged to give each student the opportunity to participate in as many competitions as possible.
- These programs are designed to prepare athletes for participation at the varsity level of competition.

Varsity Programs in Stafford County Public Schools encourage each team at each school to represent itself at the highest possible standard in every component of competition by teaching the importance of the following:

- Dedication
- Sports etiquette
- Sportsmanship
- Ethics
- Effort
- Academics

- Behavior on and off the field that is consistent with this Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct and that reflects honor upon the team
- Leadership skills

The varsity program is intended for the student who possesses a high degree of skill, talent, and commitment in the sport of their choice. It is through the athletic program that much of a school's spirit is generated. Student athletes who miss the beginning of the season or the tryout process due to being suspended for disciplinary actions may not be able to tryout or participate under the "athlete in good standing" eligibility requirement.

Parent Requirements

Expectations of Parents

- Provide an encouraging environment centered around a consistent routine and expectations concerning homework, behavior, open communication, proper nutrition, and proper rest.
- Enable your child to satisfy VHSL academic requirements for athletic participation which are as follows (28A-5-1):

The student shall:

(a) For the first semester be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation; and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding year or the immediately preceding semester for schools that certify credit on a semester basis; and

(b) For the second semester be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation; and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding semester.

Note:

Credit for courses must be recognized by the State Department of Education. Such credit is to be awarded for the semester in which the work is scheduled to be completed. Credit for summer school work must be applied on the immediately preceding semester or year.

In addition to the VHSL Scholarship rules, coaches may institute higher expectations connected to playing time as long as the Director of Athletics and Activities and Building Principal approve the practice and student-athletes and parents are reasonably informed of the higher standard.

High school grade eligibility is based on semester grades and middle school grade eligibility is based on 9-week grades.

- The VHSL Physical Form is used for both middle school and high school sports teams due to your child's coach.
- Parent/Coach Relationship
 - Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children.
 - As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.
- Expectations of Communication
 - Concerns expressed directly to the coach
 - **Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance**
 - Understanding of a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
 - As your children become involved in the programs with Stafford County Public Schools, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.
 - **Team concerns/questions should be communicated in the following order: Coach, School Director of Athletics and Activities, School Principal, then Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics, and Student Wellness at Central Office. If the Coordinator is contacted first, the parent will be redirected to the school.**
 - Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches include team strategy, play calling, and other student-athletes (except to report violation of the Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct).
 - These are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These interactions are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.
- Anonymous letters and phone calls will not be responded to at any level unless reported to the Tip Hotline provided by SCPS partnered with the Stafford County Sheriff's Department.
- Communication Timeframe Expectation
 - To ensure productive conversations, coaches may not be available to address individual concerns immediately following events or practices.

- Please allow 24 hours to receive return of all phone calls and 2 business days for returned emails from the coach/sponsor, middle school Athletic Director, and/or Director of Athletics and Activities.
- Transportation
 - Parents/guardians may only pick up their child after an away game with written communication provided to the head coach prior to the game. Parents may only transport their child home at the conclusion of the away competition.
 - Parents/guardians may not transport other students from an away event.
- NCAA Clearing House - A small percentage of high school athletes will have the opportunity to participate in college athletics. If this is a goal, consider the following:
 - Selection of classes
 - NCAA Eligibility Center
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Clean discipline record
 - Realistic outlook and expectations
- **Attend with your child the mandatory Parent Information Night to receive information from the Director of Athletics and Activities, the Athletic Trainer, and the Head Coach/Sponsor of your child's sport or activity.**
- Any questions or concerns should be addressed with the coach or sponsor first.
- If questions or concerns are not addressed by the coach or sponsor, contact the Director of Athletics and Activities for further assistance.
- Understand that if you are attending a high school outside of your attendance zone, athletic eligibility may not automatically transfer.
- **Negative comments and unsportsmanlike behavior toward other parents, athletes, coaches/sponsors, or officials will not be tolerated, and may result in removal from that event, possibly for the remainder of the season.**
 - If a parent is removed from an event, they may not return to a future event until meeting with the Director of Athletics and Activities and the building principal.
- Stafford County Public Schools maintains high expectations for parents/guardians and student-athlete behavior. Parents play a key role in the physical, emotional, and behavioral development of children participating in athletics and activities. Stafford County Public Schools assists in the positive development of these qualities. As with many other undertakings, it requires a team approach to reach one's life goals. By working as a team, we can assure the continued success of these program offerings.

- In order to practice or compete, students must be in school no later than half-way through 1st block (High School – 8:15 a.m., Middle School – 10:15 a.m.) unless approved by the building principal or designee (example: early morning dental appointment).
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to volunteer for special team events and fundraising activities.



High School Athletic/Activity Eligibility Appeals Guidelines

Overview

Student eligibility for Virginia High School League (VHSL) sponsored high school athletics and activities in Stafford County Public Schools is governed by the VHSL. Transfers between schools without a bona fide change in residence may result in ineligibility for VHSL athletics for 365 calendar days unless a waiver is granted. Identifying and evaluating all implications of changing schools by special permission is the responsibility of parents prior to submitting a request.

Special Permission is considered a transfer by the VHSL, and students must meet the criteria established by VHSL in order to be eligible for participation in athletics. Questions regarding the student eligibility under VHSL and school division rules or the general application of VHSL rules should be directed to the Coordinator of Athletics and Activities (Coordinator).

VHSL Transfer Rule (28A-7-1) Summary

- Students transferring schools without a full family change of residence are ineligible for VHSL sports for 365 days.
- A bona fide move must include relocation of the entire household and abandonment of the former residence.
- Eligibility begins when a student first enters 9th grade and lasts for 8 consecutive semesters if continuously enrolled.

**This section is a summary only. Complete eligibility rules are found in the VHSL Handbook. VHSL eligibility rules in effect during an appeal shall govern.*

Eligibility Appeal Process (In-County Transfer Requests)

**** Please note that this process may take up to as many as 20 business days. If additional time is needed, the Director of Student Activities (DSA), the Executive Director of High School Leadership, or the Superintendent or Designee shall notify the parent in writing. An extension shall not exceed seven (7) business days.**

1) Request for Special Permission:

- a) Initiate Appeal: Parents contact the principal and/or the DSA of the receiving school, and the Coordinator by email to notify them of the intent to appeal.
- b) Submit Documentation: Parents submit all required documentation to the school DSA.

Documentation must include:

- VHSL Principal Verification Form - [Link](#) - DSA will acquire and put in Documentation
- Appropriate VHSL appeal form (e.g., Transfer Rule) - [Link](#)
- A letter detailing the circumstances of the transfer
- School Transcript - DSA will acquire

- Attendance Record- DSA will acquire
- c) Supporting documents (medical, legal, custody, etc.)

2) DSA:

- a) Submits documentation to the Coordinator.
- b) The Coordinator reviews all documentation for completeness.
- c) If the submission of appeal is incomplete or missing documentation necessary to conduct an appeal, the Coordinator contacts parents in writing and provides an opportunity to submit any missing documentation. The parent must complete the packet within two (2) business days of being notified by the Coordinator.

3) Review by Principals' Council:

- a) The Coordinator establishes a Principals' Council consisting of three principals whose school is not involved in the appeal. The Coordinator will attempt to establish this council within five (5) business days of receipt of a completed appeal application.
- b) The Coordinator distributes the documentation to the Principals' Council and coordinates the hearing process with the council and the parent. The parent may opt to have the student present as well.
- c) The Coordinator will facilitate the appeal hearing process ensuring that parents have the opportunity to address the council if they so desire
- d) Following the hearing, the Principals' Council will review and make a recommendation to the Executive Director of High School Leadership by the next business day.

4) Executive Director of High School Review:

- a) The Executive Director of High School Leadership will review the recommendation of the Principals' Council and make a decision regarding eligibility of the student within three (3) business days of receipt of the recommendation. (Day one is the day after receipt of the recommendation).

5) Parent Notification:

- a) Parents are notified of the outcome of Step 4 by email within two (2) business days.

6) Appeal to the Superintendent or Designee:

If the Executive Director of High School Leadership denies the eligibility of the student, the parents may appeal to the Superintendent or Designee within three (3) business days of receiving the email.

- a) Parents must submit the appeal with rationale in writing to the Superintendent or Designee.
- b) The Superintendent' or Designee will review the case and make a decision within three (3) business days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Superintendent or Designee is final.

Eligibility Appeal Process (Out-of-County Transfer Requests)

If the transferring student from out of the school district is deemed ineligible by the DSA at the receiving high school in the division, then the parent may appeal the decision following [VHSL Eligibility Appeal Procedures](#).

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

In effect during all extracurricular activities are the Stafford County Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct (Policy 2403), Extra/Co-Curricular Participation (Policy 3502), and Related Notices, rules, expectations, and requirements.

Statement	Initial
I received a copy of the Stafford County Public Schools' Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct.	_____
I read and agree to the sections pertaining to my level of participation, including guidelines and expectations, in Stafford County athletics and activities.	_____
I will follow all protocols associated with my participation in SCPS athletics and activities.	_____
I acknowledge that Stafford County Public Schools has informed me that supplemental accident insurance is available from a third party carrier to cover my child.	_____
I understand my child must submit completed Student Statement of Understanding and Parent Statement of Understanding forms at least one day prior to the first contest in order to participate.	_____
I realize that by not following proper behavior requirements while attending an athletic/activity event, I may be removed from that activity and possibly the remainder of the events associated with that sport or activity.	_____
I agree to be a positive supporter of my child's participation in athletics/activities. I agree to allow coaches to coach and sponsors to lead.	_____
If I have a question or concern, I will communicate in the following sequence: coach or sponsor, director of athletics and activities or middle school athletic director, building principal, and lastly central office contacts listed in this document.	_____

School	Grade	Sport/Activity
--------	-------	----------------

Student Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date _____

**Please sign and return to your student's head coach, activity sponsor, or
Director of Athletics and Activities.**

To The Coach and Sponsor

Stafford County Public Schools offers a wide variety of extra-curricular and co-curricular program experiences for students to provide rich experiences for all of our students and families. By deciding to lead our students in these activities, there are various requirements that must be completed. By deciding to become involved in these activities, you have committed to deliver an educational experience that extends beyond the classroom. For many students, these activities may offer an opportunity for self-expression, development of team work, feeling of belonging, accomplishment, social development, discipline, time management and leadership. It is extremely important that our coaches and activity sponsors remain focused on the primary mission of these program opportunities: the enhancement of the school experience. Therefore, transparency of program requirements, expectations for involvement, open communication, organization, fairness, and being cognizant that you are there for the student and not yourself is paramount to program's success.

Coach and Sponsor Requirements

- Complete all Virginia High School League requirements to become a VHSL-certified coach (high school).
- Complete the National Federation of High Schools' concussion online class (middle/high school).
- Complete the Virginia High School League approved local component (high school).
- Attend the Coach's Education Meeting prior to each season (middle school).
- Create a parent information document outlining team rules, try-out expectations, consequences for rule violations, competition schedules, contact information, etc.
- Hold a parent/student information meeting approved by middle school athletic director or high school director of athletics and activities.
- Maintain an open line of communication at all times with building administration.
- Ensure athlete eligibility list is accurate (middle/high school).
- Maintain team website.
- Collect all physicals (middle/high school).
- Collect concussion information forms (middle/high school).

- Collect heat and hydration forms (high school).
- Communicate all injury reports to the athletic trainer and school nurse for proper care and documentation (middle/high school).
- Conduct annual equipment inventory to meet reconditioning requirements.
- Request and inform building administration and Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics, and Student Wellness of major equipment needs.
- Meet with athletes concerning locker room behavior, bullying and hazing policies, and report any infractions to Athletic Director or Director of Athletics and Activities as well as School Principal.
- Ensure proper locker room rule and behavior expectation (middle/high school).
- Middle school and high school head coaches are required to provide their Athletic Director or Director of Athletics and Activities a detailed before and after practice supervision plan prior to the first day of tryouts or practice.
- Have an organized, and meaningful, and proactive plan each day to develop the skill level of all athletes on the team to eliminate idle time.
- Respond within 24 hours to all phone calls and within 48 hours to all emails during normal operating days.
- Act as role models for your athletic teams.
- Build character and prepare students for competition, as appropriate
- Train scorers and timers for athletic contests.
- Work with administration and the athletic trainer to report and submit accident reports to the Department of Safety, Security, and Risk Management within 24 hours whenever athletes are sent to the Emergency Room or if 911 has been called to provide assistance.
- Report all incidents that may be criminal or have potential liability immediately to the Department of Safety and Security.
- If an athlete goes to see a physician for an injury or illness, a clearance note from the physician is required before the athlete is able to return to play or practice.

- Report inappropriate student behaviors during extracurricular activities to the Director of Athletics and Activities. If deemed necessary, the principal/designee may conduct a further investigation. Each offense shall be considered fully in determining reasonable corrective actions/disciplinary consequences. Recommendations regarding corrective actions/disciplinary consequences may be appealed to the principal. The decision of the building principal is final and not subject to appeal.
- No member school or group of individuals representing the school shall subject a student from another school to undue influence by encouraging him/her to transfer from one school to another for League activities.
- Questions concerning heat/cold, cancellations, transportation, and/or scheduling should be brought to your Middle School Athletic Director, High School Director of Athletics and Activities, or Building Principal.

Club and Activity Sponsor Guidelines

There are many opportunities for students to become involved in extracurricular activities. In addition to sport programs, there are other VHSL governed activities for students to explore.

These activities provide opportunities for students to work with faculty sponsors outside of the classroom setting, provide a deeper experience and may offer an opportunity for students to compete with other schools.

In addition to the VHSL sponsored activities, our schools also offer a variety of clubs that extend the curricular experience or may simply be a student led club for like-minded students.

Participation and membership in a club can be an extremely rewarding experience that will enhance time in high school and broaden education past the classroom. Involvement in these types of activities shows future employers and universities that students have made the most of time in high school by seeking out additional opportunities for personal growth, leadership, goal attainment, and teamwork.

Club offerings may differ between schools due to faculty expertise and student interest.

The majority of clubs exist at the high school level. Clubs in our high schools fall into two different categories: curriculum related clubs that are supported by school services and are publicly funded, and student led-organizations.

Curriculum-related clubs are led by faculty members. These clubs are permitted to use and access the various services, such as: school announcements, inclusion in the yearbook, announcements and information posted on the school website, access to the building for meetings and activities, and reduced rental rates for school buses for trips.

In addition, these clubs may receive additional funding through grants and/or business partnerships. School equipment shall not be used.

Any group seeking recognition as a student organization is required to submit a written application for approval by the principal or designee. A sample application is included in this section. There are several requirements that must be met which are detailed in the application process.

- Depending on whether the club is classified as having a curricular connection or a student-led organization, there will need to have a faculty sponsor or supervisor respectively.
- These activities must reapply each year to continue to exist.



STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
31 STAFFORD AVENUE
STAFFORD, VA 22554

**ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

COACH/SPONSOR

Initial

After reading and reviewing the section pertaining to your level of participation as a coach/sponsor of extracurricular activities offered by Stafford County Public Schools, please indicate your understanding by initialing the following statements:

I received, read, and will enforce the Stafford County Public Schools' Athletic and Activity Code of Conduct and all links/attachments contained within this document. _____

I agree to follow all protocols and contractual obligations associated with my participation in Stafford County Public Schools' Athletics and Activities. _____

I understand that failure to follow and enforce the requirements in this Code of Conduct may adversely affect my evaluation at the end of the season/school year. _____

I understand that I am expected to comply with all VHSL and SCPS coaching requirement. (ie. online concussion course, CPR/AED/First Aid certification, VHSL online coaches education class, VHSL local component requirement, Human Resources employment coaching requirements.) _____

I understand that no school shall subject a student from another school to undue Influence by encouraging him/her to transfer from one school to another for League activities. _____

I understand, at the conclusion of each season, high school coaches are expected to meet with their director of athletics and activities to review their coach's evaluation.

School

Grade

Sport/Activity

Coach/Sponsor's Name (printed)

Coach/Sponsor's Signature

Date

Please sign and return to your director of athletics and activities.

Stafford County Public Schools

Student Club and School Organization

Application Process

Purpose: Any group seeking initial recognition as a student organization shall submit a written application. Activities beginning in first semester are due June 1; second semester activities are due October 31 to the Director of Athletics and Activities (SCPS Policy 2419 and Regulation 2419-R, Student Clubs and Organizations).

A written application for a proposed new student organization shall include:

- Name of Organization;
- Name of the faculty sponsor or supervisor;
- A general statement of the purpose of the organization;
- Proposed constitution and bylaws;
- A description of the qualifications for membership, if any;
- A statement of the relation of the organization to the regular school curriculum, if applicable;
- A list of proposed officers;
- A list of at least ten (10) students who wish to serve as members;
- A tentative meeting schedule, including dates and locations; and
- Name/grade level of student submitting application.

The application, including all components, should be submitted to the Director of Athletics and Activities.

**Stafford County Public Schools
Student Club and School Organization
Initial Application Form**

Club/Organization Name: _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____

Proposed Club Officers:

President: _____

Vice President: _____

Treasurer: _____

Secretary: _____

Other: (Name of Office and Officer) _____

Other: (Name of Office and Officer) _____

Meeting Date(s): (Day of the Week/Monthly) _____

Time: _____ **Location:** _____

Required Attachments:

- A general statement of the purposes of the organization;
- Proposed constitution and bylaws;
- A description of the qualifications for membership, if any;
- A statement of the relation of the organization to the regular school curriculum, if applicable;
- A list of at least ten (10) students who wish to serve as members;
- A tentative meeting schedule, including dates and locations; and
- Name/grade level of student submitting initial application.

Student Submitting Application: _____ **Grade:** _____

Date Submitted: _____ **School Year:** _____

Stafford County Public Schools

Student Club and School Organization

Application/Renewal Process

Renewal Process:

Any group seeking to extend its recognition as a student organization shall submit a written renewal form to the Director of Athletics and Activities prior to June 1 for activities beginning in the first semester; second semester activities are due October 31 of the preceding year. All information outlined in the application phase must be on file prior to submitting the renewal application to be eligible for consideration of renewal (SCPS Policy 2419 and Regulation 2419-R, Student Clubs and Organizations).

The **renewal form** shall include the following information:

- Name of Organization;
- Any proposed or actual changes in the initial application that was submitted for initial recognition as a student organization;
- Copies of any changes that have been made to constitution or bylaws;
- A list of proposed officers;
- A list of students members; and
- A tentative meeting schedule, including dates and locations.

Changes to the Organization's Information:

If any student organization has changes to its meeting schedules, officers, constitution, bylaws, or other changes from its original application or renewal form, such organizations are required to file such information with the Director of Athletics and Activities within **two weeks** of the beginning of the semester.

The application, including all components, should be submitted to the Director of Athletics and Activities.

**Stafford County Public Schools
Student Club and School Organization
Renewal Form**

Club/Organization Name: _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____

Proposed Club Officers:

President: _____

Vice President: _____

Treasurer: _____

Secretary: _____

Other: (Name of Office and Officer) _____

Other: (Name of Office and Officer) _____

Meeting Date(s): (Day of the Week/Monthly) _____

Time: _____ **Location:** _____

Required Attachments:

- Any proposed or actual changes in the initial application that was submitted for initial recognition as a student organization;
- Copies of any changes that have been made to constitution or bylaws;
- Current Constitution;
- A list of student members; and
- Name of Student Submitting Renewal Application and Grade.

Student Submitting Application: _____ **Grade:** _____

Date Submitted: _____ **School Year:** _____

Resource Summary

The following information describes national and state athletic guidelines and requirements.

VHSL Eligibility Rules

Define the requirements for participation in VHSL-sanctioned activities in public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These rules are non-negotiable. If you have questions regarding eligibility, you may contact your child's principal or athletic director.

VHSL Most Commonly Questions and Answers

Compiles the most frequently asked VHSL questions and answers.

NCAA College Eligibility Standards

Outlines the NCAA academic requirements for high school athletes who aspire to participate in athletics at the collegiate level, including: high school course requirements, scoring requirements for the SAT and ACT, and GPA requirements.

Virginia Code for Parental Responsibility and Involvement and Residency

Regulates parental responsibility, involvement, and residency requirements in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Stafford County Public Schools' Tip Hotline

The Tip Hotline is designed for crisis prevention and to provide a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning. If students know of an unsafe situation in school, they can anonymously pass the information through the Tip Hotline. The Tip Hotline is monitored by the Stafford County Sheriff's Office 911 center 24/7. Depending on the nature of the call, the 911 center notifies either the Sheriff's Office or the school division to initiate immediate and appropriate action.

VHSL Heat Guidelines and SCPS Policy and Regulations for Management of Concussions/Brain Injuries

Requires parental/guardianship and athlete signatures of understanding in order to participate in any athletic or extra-curricular activity.

Student Accident Insurance

Scholastic Insurors offers accident insurance at an annual premium. Even if families have insurance plans, this accident insurance plan may help pay co-payments and deductibles for medical and dental expenses. Enrollment information and forms may be found online at www.staffordschools.net.

Important Links

[Policies and Regulations](#)

From the Stafford County Public School Board and Document Site, enter the policy and regulation number to access the desired document.

2103-R Student Transfers

2401-R Code of Student Conduct

2404-R Anti-Bullying

2419-R Student Clubs and School Organizations

3501-R Interscholastic Athletic Programs

3502 Extra/Co-Curricular Participation

3503-R Extra and Co-curricular Concussion Management and Education

4104-R Filling of Vacancies Procedures for the Employment of an “Outside” Coach

Forms

[SCPS Student Accident Insurance \(RS-1995 C2\)](#)

District, State and National Links

[Employee/Student Tip Hotline](#)

[SCPS Athletic Page](#)

[Virginia High School League \(VHSL\)](#)

[VHSL Physical Form](#)

[NCAA Eligibility Presentation](#)

[National Federation of State High School Associations \(NFHS\)](#)

[National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\) Clearinghouse](#)

Locker Room Rules and Behavior Expectations

1. The locker room is for changing clothes only.
2. No food, gum or glass containers.
3. No running in the locker room.
4. **Zero tolerance** for the following behaviors: snapping of towels, touching, slapping, hitting and any other like behavior. These behaviors may be considered harassment, assault and/or battery.
5. Stafford County Public Schools' Bullying and Hazing actions will not be tolerated in the locker room or any other area on school grounds.
6. Do not touch any property that does not belong to you without permission.
7. Lock up all valuables in your locker.
8. Do not share your locker or locker combination with anyone.
9. Report all injuries to your physical education teacher or coach immediately.
10. If you notice someone who may need assistance, notify a teacher or coach immediately.
11. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
12. All clothing must be taken home on a regular basis to be cleaned.
13. Please help keep the locker room clean by picking up your litter.
14. To prevent loss, damage, or personal injury, store valuables in lockers during physical activity.
15. Defacement of locker room is subject to disciplinary action and financial restitution.
16. Any electronic device capable of capturing photography and/or videography must be powered off and secured in your locker. Such devices are only permissible for possession if staff has instructed use for class activity. Devices must remain powered off in locker room at all times.

Reporting Tips

Stafford County Public Schools in Partnership with Stafford County Sheriff's Department and Stafford Crime Solvers offers a Tip Hotline.

TIP HOTLINE

IN CASE OF
EMERGENCY
Call **911**

You can help keep our schools safe...

Our school district needs your help! Everyone is responsible for an orderly and safe school environment. Information you provide can help.

PREVENT



STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

BOMB THREATS

WEAPONS

BULLYING

GANG ACTIVITY

**540-658-2020**

STAFFORD
CRIME
SOLVERS

ONLINE

Text Tip (Stafford + Tip) to CRIMES (274637)

Stafford County Public Schools' Department of Safety, Security and Risk Management in partnership with the Stafford County Sheriff's Department and Stafford Crime Solvers offers this anonymous opportunity to ensure a safe school environment.
staffordschools.net

The Tip Hotline is designed for crisis prevention and to provide a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning. If students know of an unsafe situation in school, they can anonymously pass the information through the Tip Hotline. The Tip Hotline is monitored by the Stafford County Sheriff's Office 911 center 24/7. Depending on the nature of the call, the 911 center notifies either the Sheriff's Office or the school division to initiate immediate and appropriate action.

Stafford County Public Schools
Policy 3502
Teaching and Learning
Title: Extra/Co-Curricular Participation

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for student participation in extra/curricular activities

Introduction

Participation in before and after school extra/co-curricular activities is a privilege - not a right - extended to students and is dependent upon compliance with all applicable policies, rules, and regulations. A minimum requirement of all students for participation is good citizenship. Students are expected to abide by all school and team rules, policies, and regulations and to comply with state and federal laws. As with all privileges, there are responsibilities students accept when they agree to become members of an athletic team and/or club. The coaching staff and sponsors strive to continue the level of accomplishment and the reputation of excellence that the division now holds. Specific guidelines for students assist them in maintaining expected levels of excellence in behavior both in and out of school.

The information in this policy establishes the division's definition of a student in good standing. The Virginia High School League (VHSL), Regulation 28A-2-1, Bona Fide Student Rule, requires that "the student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents."

School Attendance

- Students must attend all classes on the day of a practice, competition or activity to be eligible to participate in extra/co-curricular activities on that day. Exceptions may be approved by the principal/designee.
- Classroom behavior is expected to be exemplary.
- A student who is suspended from school may not participate in practices, meetings, or other school sponsored activities during the suspension.

Signature Packet

Students participating in athletics and activities shall complete the Athletic and Activities Parent and Student Signature Packet prior to being allowed to complete.

Students and athletes may try out and make a team or participate in an activity but will not be allowed to compete until the signature packet is completed. This signature packet is to be completed once a year for the first activity or sport in which a student participates. It is available in hard copy and electronic form. The signature packet should contain state-required components.

Rules of Conduct

Court Disciplinary Action - School officials shall suspend a student from extra/co—curricular activity participation who has a felony charge by a law enforcement officer with an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult involving any of the following violations taken from the Code of Virginia:

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- a firearm offense;
- homicide;
- assault and bodily wounding;
- criminal sexual assault;
- manufacture, sale, gift, distribution or possession controlled drugs, other illegal substances, or drug paraphernalia;
- arson and related crimes;
- burglary and related offenses; and
- robbery.

The student or parent must report the incident to the coach/sponsor. The coach/sponsor will present the facts as known to the director of student activities who will determine participation eligibility. School officials shall suspend the student until disposition of charges not to exceed the current school year.

School officials shall deny participation in all extra/co—curricular activities to any student convicted or found “not innocent” of any of the offenses listed above. The student may appeal the decision of the director of student activities to the principal, whose decision is final. The term of suspension from extra/co-curricular activities would be a minimum of 180 days and be reviewed after that.

Substance Abuse - Participants who represent this school division should be alcohol, drug, tobacco, and vaping paraphernalia free at all times.

The school division’s Code of Student Conduct addresses the fact that the possession and consumption of performance—enhancing supplements is illegal and subject to disciplinary action. If the school administration determines that a student who is participating in extra/co-curricular activities is engaged in alcohol, drug, or tobacco products possession, use, or distribution, the student will be subject to consequences in accordance with the Extra/Co—Curricular Participation Policy and the Code of Student Conduct, if applicable.

Penalties for On- and Off-School Premises Policy Violations

Note: On-school premises is on school grounds, on a school bus, or while at the school bus stop, and includes all school-sponsored events and activities. Off-school premises applies to non—school hours and non-school events.

Penalties for violations are included in the *Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct*.

Other Violations

Other violations of the school division's *Code of Student Conduct* or rules and regulations specific to each extra/co-curricular activity not covered under the Rules of Conduct will result in penalties. Disciplinary action taken by the coach/sponsor may range from a conference with the student for violating team/club rules to dismissal from the activity depending on the nature and severity of the violation. As defined in the *Code of Student Conduct*, *Athletics and Activities Code of Conduct*, or in Team/Activity Rules, incidents in which the consequence may result in suspension from the team/activity or school, must be referred to the director of student activities for appropriate disposition.

Communication Process

If there are concerns about a team or activity, communication to the school should be in the following order:

1. team/activity coach or sponsor;
2. director of student activities;
3. building principal;
4. coordinator of health/PE, athletics, and driver's education or coordinator of visual and performing arts (depending on activity);
5. executive director of constituent services; and
6. executive director of high school leadership.

Adopted: 06/24/08

Edited by Superintendent: 11/4/2013

Readopted: 12/12/13

Reviewed: 4/24/18

Amended: 11/14/23

Legal Refs: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §16.1—260,
Regulations of the Virginia High School League

Stafford County Public Schools**Policy and Regulation 3503-R****Teaching and Learning****Title: Extra and Co-Curricular Concussion Management and Education**

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines and procedures regarding the identification and care of concussion-related injuries.

The Board provides many opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular sports and activities. It is the desire of the Board to improve the education of parents, coaches, and student who participate in extra-curricular sports and activities where there is risk of concussion, by increasing participant awareness, the “how and why” of concussion injuries, recognition of the signs and symptoms of concussions, and the importance of reporting suspected injuries. To that end, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to implement such regulations and practices that shall educate all athletes, parents, and coaches as to the risks, symptoms, and care protocols of concussion-related injuries. Middle and high school athletes participating in high-risk concussion sports and activities shall be required to undergo baseline testing prior to participation. Protocols and procedures shall be developed to inform parents, ensure coaches have basic knowledge of concussion management, and establish a communication plan to help provide symptom information to the medical community.

Responsibilities of Parents

- In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity each student-athlete and the student-athlete’s parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by the school. After having reviewed materials describing the long- and short-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete’s parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information.
- Parents/guardians will be provided the opportunity to receive injury identification, care and prevention information by attending preseason athletic meetings at the middle and high school. (Mandatory for high school athletes and parents/guardians as required by state law.) (Code of Virginia – Student Athlete Protection Act)
- Parents will be provided a copy of “Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports” developed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFSHSA).
- Parent/guardians shall initial and sign the “Stafford County Public Schools Student-Athlete and Parent/Guardian Concussion Statement” and return to the coach in order for the student-athlete to participate.
- Middle school parents/guardians will be provided the opportunity to watch the “Play Smart” Understanding Sports Concussion video, read the National Federation Concussion Guidelines and initial and sign the Stafford County Public Schools’ Concussion Statement.
- Parents of middle and high school athletes shall be asked to complete an addendum to the VHSL physical stating whether their child plays on a non-school team (Parks and Recreation football, travel soccer, lacrosse, or field hockey, AAU football, club

wrestling, etc.) in addition to the school team. Parents shall also be required to divulge whether or not the athlete has sustained a concussion like injury within the past year.

Responsibilities of Student-Athletes

- In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity each student-athlete shall read, initial and sign the National Federation Concussion Guidelines.
- Middle and high School athletes participating in high-risk concussion sports and activities shall be tested every two years using XLNTbrain Concussion Management Program to determine a baseline for normal brain functioning. This test determines the individual's baseline cognitive performance without injury.
- Athletes shall communicate any/all concussion-related symptoms to the coaches or athletic trainers.
- Athletes shall be encouraged to communicate to their coach or athletic trainer if they notice a teammate displaying signs or symptoms of a concussion-related injury.

Responsibilities of Coaches

- Coaches shall complete the online National Federation High School Concussion Class, Concussion in Sport, on an annual basis.
- Read and understand Stafford County Public Schools' Concussion Management Plan.
- Provide students and parents with the Concussion Management Information and collect signed copies.
- Have a plan in place to report concussions to parents/guardians, the school nurse and athletic trainer or medical doctor.
- Coaches shall not "play" athletes suspected of a brain injury or who were not cleared for participation.
- The middle and high school athletic trainer has the "final say" when an athlete is ready to return to competition.
- Middle and high school coaches will work with the athletic trainers, medical community, school nurse, and parents to manage concussion-related injuries.
- Coaches will use the Stafford County Public School's Concussion Signs and Symptoms Evaluation Form (in the absence of an Athletic Trainer) to document suspected concussion related injuries.
- Coaches shall provide parents the Concussion Communication Form which contains a list of symptoms, "Do's & Don'ts" and recommendations to aid in the care and management of concussion-related injuries.
- Coaches shall always use, *Recognize, Remove, and Refer*, when working with suspected concussion injuries.

Responsibilities of the Middle and High School Certified Athletic Trainer

- The Athletic Trainer shall provide concussion education training to coaches.
- The Athletic Trainer shall provide concussion education training to parents and athletes.
- Manage the use of the XLNTbrain Concussion Management System.
- Administer the Post-Concussion XLNTbrain test for all suspected concussion related injuries.
- Review concussion-related test data with the athlete and the parent.
- Communicate with the athlete's physician, if needed.
- Educate teachers on classroom modifications that may be necessary for a student's return to learn protocol.
- Identify key individuals at their school that would play a role in a student-athlete's return to learn progress.
- Notify the school nurse, counselors, teachers, and administration of student-athletes that are being treated for a concussion.
- In coordination with the parent/guardian and or physician, the athletic trainer shall manage and determine when an athlete is able to return to play.
- The Athletic Trainer shall apply the standard of "When in doubt, hold them out."
- The Athletic Trainer shall follow the return to play guidelines in the Stafford County Public Schools' *Protocols and Procedures for Management of Sports-Related Concussion* based on recommendations published in the consensus statement on concussions in sport from The 4th International Conference on Concussions in Sports held in Zurich, fall 2012.

Responsibilities of the School Nurse

- The school nurse shall provide school day medical care of reported concussions and coordinate with athletic trainers if the injury occurred during evening sports.
- Coordinate any classroom modifications with parents/guardians, teachers and the athletic trainer that may be beneficial to the student-athlete's cognitive recovery.
- Perform primary assessment documentation (nature, location, time, mechanism of injury).
- Complete the *SCPS Health Services Head Injury* documentation form.
- Communicate with parents by phone and the "*SCPS Regional Head Injury Parent Letter*" as health services protocol requires.

Responsibilities of Directors of Athletics and Activities and the Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness

- The Director of Athletics and Activities and the middle school athletic directors shall work with the Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness to ensure that all football helmets are within the 10 year age limit or less. (High schools receive 15 new helmets and middle schools receive 5 new helmets annually to ensure compliance with the *Athletic Reconditioning* guidelines. Older helmets are removed from inventory and damaged helmets are rejected.)

- Coaches' education shall be delivered by the Director of Athletics & Activities and the Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness.
- The Facilitator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness shall ensure that high school athletic trainers have access to the XLNTbrain Concussion Management System to provide baseline cognitive data for athletes in high-risk concussion sports and activities; football, field hockey, cheerleading, gymnastics, lacrosse, baseball, softball, high jump, pole vault, wrestling, and basketball.
- Assistant Principals and middle school Athletic Directors shall ensure all football helmets are reconditioned and inspected annually by a licensed reconditioning company.
- Assistant Principals shall ensure all high school coaches annual participation in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFSHSA) concussion online class.
- Assistant Principals and the Facilitator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness shall meet with the Athletic Trainers on a regular basis to discuss concussion management and protocols and procedures. (Assistant Principals will meet with the Athletic Trainer located at their site. The Facilitator of Physical Education, Health, Athletics and Student Wellness shall meet with all Athletic Trainers.)

Responsibilities of Third Party User Groups Using SCPS Athletic Facilities

- Any third party user group including Stafford County Parks, Recreations and Community Facilities sponsored organizations, holding athletic practices and competitions on or at SCPS owned property/courts/fields shall provide documentation as part of their application process of an existing concussion management plan including an education component, procedures to identify suspected concussions, care and communication with parents/guardians/medical community and a return to play protocol.
- Any third party user group who does not have a concussion management plan may adopt the concussion procedures and protocols of SCPS provided they produce documentation of their implementation plan.
- The Assistant Superintendent of Operations shall ensure the existing Joint School Board/Board of Supervisors Facilities Use Agreement and the SCPS Community Use of Facilities/Equipment Policy and Regulation has similar supporting concussion management plan requirements.

Adopted: 12/09/14
Legal Reference: Appropriate legal reference

Stafford County Public Schools
Statement of Participation in Outside of School Athletics
and Concussion/Brain Injury History

In order to provide the safest possible environment for your child to participate in extracurricular activities in Stafford County Public Schools, please answer the following:

- Is your child currently participating on an athletic team outside of SCPS?

Yes or No

- If so, please indicate the sport.

- Has your child ever suffered a concussion like brain injury? **Yes or No**

- If so, what was the date of the latest concussion like injury?

Our coaches, nurses, and athletic trainers work diligently to provide the proper care for any concussion/brain injury, whether it occurs on a Stafford County Public Schools athletic team, or non-school activity/sports team.

It is extremely important that if an injury occurs outside of SCPS activities that the school nurse, coach and/or athletic trainer is notified immediately.

School Name _____

School Sport _____

Non-School Activity/Sport _____

Student Name (print) _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Virginia Code

NOTICE OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Code of Virginia contains provisions addressing parental responsibility and involvement that are intended to promote proper student conduct. With this law, the General Assembly has asserted its position that parents do not relinquish their responsibility for disciplining or managing their children while they attend public schools. Rather, parents must work in partnership with school administrators to maintain a safe and orderly school environment. The Code of Virginia provides:

§ 22.1-279.3 Parental responsibility and involvement requirements.

A. Each parent of a student enrolled in a public school has a duty to assist the school in enforcing the standards of student conduct and compulsory school attendance in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property, and supportive of individual rights.

NOTICE: MISDEMEANOR TO MAKE FALSE STATEMENTS AS TO RESIDENCY

The Code of Virginia provides that under certain circumstances it shall be a misdemeanor for any person to knowingly make a false statement concerning residency.

§ 22.1-264.1. Misdemeanor to make false statements as to school division or attendance zone residency; penalty.

Any person who knowingly makes a false statement concerning the residency of a child, as determined by § [22.1-3](#), in a particular school division or school attendance zone, for the purposes of (i) avoiding the tuition charges authorized by § [22.1-5](#) or (ii) enrollment in a school outside the attendance zone in which the student resides, shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor and shall be liable to the school division in which the child was enrolled as a result of such false statements for tuition charges, pursuant to § [22.1-5](#), for the time the student was enrolled in such school division.

Virginia High School League (VHSL)

Individual Eligibility Rules

To be eligible to represent your school in any VHSL interscholastic athletic contest, you —

- must be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school you represent.
- must be enrolled in the last four years of high school (Eighth-grade students may be eligible for junior varsity).
- must have enrolled not later than the fifteenth day of the current semester.
- for the first semester must be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding year or the immediately preceding semester for schools that certify credits on a semester basis. (Check with your principal for equivalent requirements).
Athletes may not repeat courses for eligibility purposes for which credit has been previously awarded.
- for the second semester must be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding semester (Check with your principal for equivalent requirements).
- must sit out all VHSL competition for 365 consecutive calendar days following a school transfer unless the transfer corresponded with a family move. (Check with your principal for exceptions).
- must not have reached your nineteenth birthday on or before the first day of August of the current school year.
- must not, after entering the ninth grade for the first time, have been enrolled in or been eligible for enrollment in high school more than eight consecutive semesters.
- must have submitted to your principal before any kind of participation, including tryouts or practice as a member of any school athletic or cheerleading team, an Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form, completely filled in and properly signed attesting that you have been examined during this school year and found to be physically fit for athletic competition and that your parent's consent to your participation.
- must not be in violation of VHSL Amateur, Awards, All Star or College Team Rules (Check with your principal for clarification in regard to cheerleading).

Eligibility to participate in inter-scholastic athletics is a privilege you earn by meeting not only the above-listed minimum standards but also all other standards set by your League, district and school. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility or are in doubt about the effect an activity might have on your eligibility, **check with your principal for interpretations and exceptions provided under league rules.** Meeting the intent and spirit of league standards will prevent you, your team, school and community from being penalized.

LOCAL SCHOOL DIVISIONS AND VHSL DISTRICTS MAY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL STANDARDS TO THOSE LISTED ABOVE.

Special Permission and High School Athletic Eligibility FAQs on Virginia High School League (VHSL) Transfer Rule

1. *If I am a currently enrolled high school student and I voluntarily choose to attend a high school different from my home school, will I remain eligible for VHSL athletics?*

ANSWER: No. The VHSL Transfer rule (28-6-1) prohibits a current high school student from transferring without a corresponding change in his/her parents' residence. This period of ineligibility lasts for 365 consecutive calendar days.

2. *I heard that the school system can grant a "waiver" so I can remain eligible for VHSL athletics?*

ANSWER: A waiver may be considered for transfers that are **required or mandated** by the school system or are for the welfare of the student or school system **Stafford County Public Schools, but not for athletic/activity reasons.**

3. *I am a rising 9th grade student and I would like to apply for special permission to transfer to a high school other than my home high school for next year. If I file during the period for filing applications will I be eligible for VHSL athletics at the other high school?*

ANSWER: Yes. A student's eligibility for VHSL athletics/activities begins when they enter the 9th grade for the first time. A student remains eligible at the high school they enter as a 9th grader for 8 consecutive semesters as long as they remain continuously enrolled at the high school. If you did not like your transfer high school and wanted to return to your home high school the following year, then you would be ineligible for 365 consecutive days. If however, you were prevented from attending the transfer high school the following year because the high school no longer had capacity, then a waiver may be considered.

4. *What happens if a student is mistakenly allowed to play in VHSL athletics even though he or she is actually ineligible due to the Transfer Rule?*

ANSWER: The high school that allowed the student to play when he or she was ineligible will forfeit all of the games in which the student played. Other sanctions are possible against the school depending on the situation.

VHSL Heat Guidelines

Proper heat-acclimatization plans in secondary school athletic programs are essential to minimize the risk of exertional heat illness (EHI) during the preseason practice period. Gradually increasing athletes' exposure to the duration and intensity of physical activity and to the environment minimizes exertional heat illness risk while improving athletic performance. Progressive acclimatization is especially important during the initial three to five days of preseason practices,¹ and when an athlete progresses through a proper heat-acclimatization progression, physiological function, exercise heat tolerance, and exercise performance are all enhanced. In comparison, athletes who are not exposed to a proper heat acclimatization progression are at increased risk for EHI.¹

PREVENTION OF EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS

In conjunction with the pre-participation exam, student-athletes should be screened for risk factors or a history of EHI. Athletes should be acclimatized to heat gradually over a 7-14 day period.² Special considerations and/or modifications are needed for those wearing protective equipment during days of high heat and humidity. Athletes should remain well hydrated and replace fluids lost through sweat during activity, including conditioning/training sessions, practices and games. It should be emphasized that ***athletes should have free access to readily available fluids at any time***, not just during breaks. It is imperative that relevant personnel be trained in prevention, signs and symptoms, and treatment of EHI.²

When high temperatures and/or humidity is forecasted, those supervising practices and competitions should make accommodations based on these conditions, including:

- Increasing frequency and duration of water breaks
- Increasing frequency and duration of rest breaks
- Reducing the amount of equipment worn during activity
- Modifying total amount of time engaged in practice
- Changing activity location

Additional details on participation modifications can be found in the "Exercise in Hot and Humid Environments" section of this document. Forecasting tools, including online resources and/or mobile "apps" can be used to better anticipate if/when activity modifications may be required. Examples include:

- <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/index.shtml>
- https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/weatherfx/id539498084?mt=8>

While these services can provide guidance for planning purposes, they should never replace the "real time" evaluation of environmental conditions on-site at the activity location. Weather forecasts tend to be generalized over a large area, can and do change frequently, and ultimately may not be specific for the athletic venue.

TYPES OF EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS

Exertional heat illness range in severity from exercise associated muscle cramps to exertional heat stroke.

Exercise Associated Muscle Cramp²

Exercise associated muscle cramps are sudden or sometimes progressively and noticeably evolving, involuntary, painful contractions of skeletal muscle during or after exercise. These cramps are sometimes incorrectly termed heat cramps, as these cramps are not directly related to elevated body temperature and can present during exercise in warm, cool or temperature controlled environments, though excessive sweating is often present. Proposed contributing factors to exercise associated muscle cramps are as followed: dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, altered neuromuscular control, fatigue or any combination of these factors.

Signs and Symptoms

- Visible cramping in part or all of the muscle (group)
- Localized pain
- Dehydration
- Thirst
- Sweating
- Fatigue

Treatment

- Rest
- Passive Stretching
- Rehydration using a high sodium/carbohydrate beverage

Heat Syncope²

Heat syncope often occurs in unfit or heat-unacclimatized people who stand for a long period of time in the heat or during sudden changes in posture (moving from sitting to standing) in the heat. This condition is often attributed to dehydration, venous pooling of blood and low blood pressure. Heat syncope often occurs in the first five days of unaccustomed heat exposure, before blood volume expands and cardiovascular adaptations are complete, and in those with heart disease or taking diuretics.

Signs and Symptoms

- Dizziness
- Tunnel vision
- Pale or clammy skin
- Decreased pulse rate

Treatment

- Move athlete to shaded or cool, indoor area
- monitor vital signs
- allow athlete to rest lying on their back
- elevate legs above heart
- cool athlete

- rehydrate

Heat Exhaustion²

Heat exhaustion is the inability to effectively exercise in the heat, secondary to a combination of factors, including cardiovascular insufficiency, low blood pressure, energy depletion and central fatigue. This condition is manifested by an elevated core body temperature, usually less than 105 degrees F, and is often associated with a high rate or volume of skin blood flow, heavy sweating and dehydration. It often occurs in hot or humid (or both) conditions, but it can also occur in normal environmental conditions with intense physical activity. Heat exhaustion occurs most often in individuals who are heat unacclimatized or dehydrated.

Signs and Symptoms

- Excessive fatigue
- Syncope
- Collapse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Lightheadedness
- Low blood pressure

Treatment

- Remove equipment and clothing to facilitate cooling
- Move to a cool, shaded or indoor area.
- Cool with cold towels and fans as needed
- Monitor vital signs
- Have athlete rest lying on their back
- Elevate legs above heart
- Activate EMS if athlete does not show signs of improvement within 30 minutes

Exertional Heat Stroke^{2, 3}

Exertional heat stroke is the most severe heat illness and is characterized by neurological impairment combined with a core body temperature above 105 degrees. This condition is a product of the body's heat production due to exercise and or inhibited heat loss. While exertional heat illness most often occurs in hot, humid weather, it can also present due to intense physical activity in the absence of extreme environmental conditions. The risks of morbidity and mortality increase the longer that athletes body temperature remains elevated above 105 degrees, while risk of morbidity and mortality are greatly reduced if body temperature is lowered promptly after onset.

Signs and Symptoms

- Central nervous system dysfunction
- Core body temperature above 105 degrees
- Disorientation

- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Loss of balance
- Staggering
- Irritability
- Irrational or unusual behavior
- Apathy
- Aggressiveness
- Hysteria
- Delirium
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness
- Coma
- Hot, sweaty skin
- Hot, dry skin
- Dehydration
- Hypotension
- Hyperventilation

Treatment

- Medical emergency- activate EMS per emergency action plan
- Remove excess clothing and equipment
- Cold water immersion until core body temperature reaches 102 degrees or athlete begins to shiver

FLUID REPLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaporation of sweat is the primary source of heat dissipation during exercise. Athletes whose sweat loss exceeds rehydration during activity become dehydrated. Dehydration of one to two percent of body weight begins to negatively impact physiological function and athletic performance while dehydration of three percent or greater of body weight puts an athlete at risk for exertional heat illnesses.⁴

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

- Thirst
- Irritability
- General discomfort
- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Cramps
- Chills
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Decreased performance

Recommendations for Fluid Replacement

- Establish a fluid replacement protocol that meets the needs of the athlete and the sport.
- Supervised monitoring of pre and post practice weight
- Restrict or modify activity of those athletes who are not within 1% of their previous day's pre practice weight.
- During activity, 7-10 oz of fluid should be taken in every 10-20 minutes.⁴
- Water should be available at all times and access should never be denied to exercising individuals.
- Athletes should replace fluid at 24 oz per pound lost.

Educational Components

- Educate athletes on how dehydration affects physical performance.
- Educate athletes on how to monitor hydration status by monitoring urine color.
- Educate athletes that maintaining hydration is a 24 hour a day process.
- Educate athletes that they should enter each practice session or game well hydrated with a focus on maintaining hydration.

EXERCISE IN HOT AND HUMID ENVIRONMENTS

Exercising in hot and humid environments can predispose a student-athlete to EHI. The higher the temperature, the more heat the body absorbs while higher humidity limits the body's ability to cool itself through evaporation (sweating). Gradually increasing the intensity and duration of activity in hot and humid environments (acclimatization) is an important step in preventing EHI as is assessing the environmental conditions during activity.

Activities, including practices and competitions, should be modified when environmental conditions are extreme. The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is the recommended method for assessing environmental conditions and should be used to determine the nature of any modifications.² The WBGT takes into account ambient air temperature, relative humidity, and radiant heating from the sun and is utilized extensively in athletics and the US military to modify activity when conditions warrant.² While WBGT is preferred, Heat Index can be utilized should WBGT be unavailable.³ Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBT) recommendations are also included as this assessment method may be more familiar to member schools.

The VHSL Heat Guidelines provides participation recommendations based on three assessment mechanisms: WBGT, WBT and Heat Index. While the specific mechanism utilized at the local school level will be determined by local policy and resources, the VHSL SMAC strongly encourages schools to utilize WBGT.

WET BULB TEMPERATURE (WBT) and WET BULB GLOBE TEMPERATURE (WBGT) PARTICIPATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Level	WBT	WBGT	Duration	Fluid Consumption	Practices
1	<66°	<80°	3 hours maximum	Insist that adequate fluid be ingested	Full gear; minimum of 2 water breaks per hour
2	66.0° - 74.9°	80.0° - 82.4°	3 hours maximum	Insist that 4 – 6 oz fluid be ingested every 20 minutes	Full gear; minimum of 3 water breaks per hour
3	75.0° - 76.9°	82.5° - 84.9°	3 hours maximum	Insist that 6 – 8 oz fluid be ingested every 20 minutes	Remove helmets unless active in drill; monitor athletes, rest as needed.
4	77.0° - 78.9°	85.0° - 87.4°	3 hours maximum every 45 minutes of work ≥ 15 minutes of rest each hour*	Insist that 8 – 10 oz fluid be ingested every 15 minutes	Helmets only. Remove helmets while not participating in drills.
5	79.0° - 80.9°	87.5° - 89.9°	3 hours maximum every 45 minutes of work ≥ 20 minutes of rest each hour*	Insist that 8 – 10 oz fluid be ingested every 15 minutes.	Shirt and shorts only; No helmets or equipment; Reduce intensity of activity,
6	81.0° +	90.0° +	NO OUTDOOR PRACTICES, SCRIMMAGES or COMPETITIONS	Re-hydrate 24 oz for every pound of body weight loss per day.	Practices conducted indoors must follow the Heat Policy

- When WBGT hits **85–87.4** all equipment accommodations will be county wide.
- When WBGT hits **87.5–89.9** all equipment accommodations will be county wide.
- When the WBGT hits **90** at any site, all activities will be canceled or brought inside across the county.
- High Schools will be permitted to reassess the WBGT after 5 pm for any scheduled practices or games.

Extreme Weather Guidelines

Cold Weather

The following temperature guidelines (including wind-chill; the perception of temperature created by the combination of the actual temperature and additional heat loss from exposed skin caused by the wind) will be used (but not as the sole criteria) in decision making by the principal.

- **32 degrees & above** - students can stay outside for an extended period of time
- **25-32 degrees** - students can stay out 10 – 20 minutes
- **10-25 degrees** - students will not go outside

Please make sure children are properly dressed for cold weather. This includes shoes/boots, hats, gloves, and a warm coat. Children with special health conditions, in particular asthmatic children, may require special accommodations during cold weather.

Lightning Delay

The recommendation is to use the Perry Weather System to monitor storms heading in our direction. The VHSL guidelines states -

- When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event.

Using this protocol is more conservative than the VHSL guidelines. This will allow for a more accurate evaluation of the lightning threat by using the Perry Weather System, distant storms traveling away from our area would not cause a cancellation or delay of the competition.

Any days when severe weather is forecasted, Athletic Trainers and DAA's will closely monitor Perry Weather System throughout the day.

Stafford County Public Schools

Heat and Hydration Statement of Understanding

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to another athletic season in Stafford County Public Schools! As the coaching staff prepares for practice, you and your child should read the following important information carefully.

Many high school athletes appear for workouts physically unprepared to cope with the stress that heat can place on their bodies. The challenge of hard work during conditioning increases this stress. For these reasons, it is imperative that athletes spend time getting acclimated to the heat and humidity before reporting for their first practice.

For our part, the coaching staff and sports medicine team will be vigilant in monitoring players for the signs and symptoms of heat illness and providing players opportunities to rest. We will incorporate regular fluid breaks to promote proper hydration and will encourage players to speak up if they are feeling bad. Here is what you can do to help keep your child safe during their athletic experience in Stafford County Public Schools:

PRE-SEASON EXERCISE – Your child should start with 15-20 minutes of continuous exercise two weeks prior to the season. Add 5-10 minutes each day, which should be enough to make and maintain a steady sweat throughout activity. Many of our coaches have pre-season conditioning programs to address this issue.

NUTRITION – Please provide your son/daughter with well balanced meals. The best advice is to follow the My Plate guide. You can find more information at the following website <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. McDonald's and other fast foods are fine in moderation, but most are not healthy choices. As young men and women, student athletes need the proper fuel to run their bodies. Excess grease and fat will only slow them down and contribute to heat-related illnesses and other injuries.

HYDRATION – Please monitor your student-athlete's drinking habits at home. Water, PowerAde and Gatorade are the drinks of choice. As a guideline, an athlete should drink 24 oz. of water/PowerAde/Gatorade for each pound of weight lost during activity. In general, each player should be drinking 20-60 ounces of fluid each night after practice to replenish fluids lost throughout the day. All caffeinated beverages are bad for athletes. Caffeine is a diuretic, causing rapid fluid loss and in turn leading to dehydration. **ENERGY DRINKS are particularly BAD!** No athlete should be consuming these due to high amounts of caffeine and sugar. For more information visit <http://www.gssiweb.com>.

PROPER REST – Athletes should get proper rest following workouts. Encourage your son/daughter to go to bed early. Rest allows the body to recharge.

HEAT vs. ICE – Always apply ice directly after an injury. It will stop swelling and help reduce recovery time. Ice should continuously used 2-4 days after the injury, depending on severity. Applying heat after an acute injury will increase swelling, in turn limiting range of motion and increasing healing

time. Heat is great for sore muscles, but bad for acutely injured tissues. Always consult your physician, if you have any questions.

TEAM PHYSICIAN – The athletic trainers have a close relationship with their team physicians. Should your son/daughter need to see an orthopedic doctor, you can schedule an appointment by stating he/she is high school athlete. If they cannot schedule an immediate appointment (2-3 days), please contact the athletic trainer to expedite the process.

COMMUNICATION – Please feel free to contact the athletic trainer at any time concerning the health and well-being of your son/daughter. Many times, students do not report injuries to the Certified Athletic Trainer. If you notice symptoms of limping or pain while at home, encourage your son/daughter to see the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer is here to make sure your son/daughter plays safe and gets the proper care for any type of injury. Please feel free to contact the athletic trainer with any concerns.

STEROIDS AND SUPPLEMENTS – Steroids are illegal and have no place in high school athletics. The punishment for steroids is a two year suspension from all high school sports. Please visit <https://www.vhsl.org/sports-medicine-links/> for information on steroids and supplements. If your son/daughter is taking any supplements, please make sure that they know exactly what they are taking and the effects that supplements can have on their bodies. Feel free to consult the athletic trainer to answer any questions that may arise from any type of supplements.

Paying attention to these guidelines will decrease the risk of serious injury.

Please complete and detach the form below. The form must be returned to your head coach before an athlete can participate in athletics. Please retain a copy of this information for your reference.

We are looking forward to a safe and winning season. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Director of Athletics and Activities or your Certified Athletic Trainer at your school.

Sincerely,

Directors of Athletics and Activities; Certified Athletic Trainers

Student Name (Print): _____ , _____
Last First

I have read and understand the information provided regarding the topics of heat illness, hydration, steroids and proper health care for student-athletes.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in young athletes is **usually caused by a structural or electrical abnormality of the heart**. Most of these abnormalities are inherited, but remain undiagnosed and may be unknown to the athlete. An annual pre-participation physical examination, including a detailed personal and family medical history, is critical to identifying potential causes of SCA. Exercise can be a trigger for SCA in individuals with an abnormal heart condition. Although SCA happens unexpectedly, up to 72 percent of SCAs are preceded by symptoms which often go unrecognized, unreported, or misdiagnosed. Parents, student-athletes, and coaches are often unaware of the warning signs which may include:

- Shortness of breath or fatigue that is not typical with the type of activity
- Pressure, tightness or pain in the chest
- Lightheadedness or fainting during or right after exercise
- Heart palpitations or the sensation of your heart skipping beats (racing, fluttering)

A student-athlete reporting any warning signs of SCA should be removed immediately from activity and referred for further evaluation.

Management of SCA:

1. Check for responsiveness (Tap the person and ask “Hey, are you ok?” / “Can you hear me?”)
2. Check for a pulse
3. Immediately activate EMS - instruct someone nearby to call 911 or do so yourself
4. Retrieve AED (automatic external defibrillator) if one is available
5. Begin chest compressions, pushing the chest down 2 to 2 ½ inches, 100 to 120 times a minute to the beat of the Bee Gees song “Stayin’ Alive” until the AED or EMS arrive
6. Follow the instructions given by the AED, continuing chest compressions when advised to do so until EMS arrives

Student-Athlete Responsibilities

- Attend parent/athlete information event at your school
- Read information in student-athlete code of conduct regarding SCA and sign signature page of understanding
- Report symptoms to coach/athletic trainer
- Look out for other team mates who may be experiencing symptoms and report to coach or athletic trainer

Parent Responsibilities

- Attend the parent/athlete information event at your student-athlete’s school
- Read information in student-athlete code of conduct regarding SCA and sign signature page of understanding

Coach Responsibilities

- Maintain a current CPR/AED/FA certification
- Follow guidance on symptoms and management of SCA
- Immediately remove symptomatic athletes from practice or competitions (“when in doubt, sit them out”)

Athletic Trainer Responsibilities

- Maintain all AEDs in respective buildings
- Keep portable AEDs accessible during all athletic activities
- Educate coaches about symptoms and management of SCA
- Educate parents and student-athletes about SCA during parent/athlete information event
- Immediately remove symptomatic athletes from practice or competitions

School Nurse Responsibilities

- Work with coaches and athletic trainers to document and monitor any student athletes who have reported cardiac concerns that could potentially lead to SCA
- Provide contact information to parents of students experiencing symptoms
- Work with the CPR/AED/FA technician to access the list of CPR certified staff in each building.

Directors of Athletics and Activities, Coordinator of Health, Physical Education, Athletics and Student Wellness and building Administration Responsibilities

- Work with Athletic Trainers, HPE teachers, and the school nurses to ensure all coaches are current with their CPR/AED/FA certification
- Ensure all coaches, athletes, and parents are provided the opportunity to learn about Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
31 STAFFORD AVENUE
STAFFORD, VA 22554

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING – SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT-ATHLETE

Initial

I understand that it is my responsibility to report all injuries and illnesses to my athletic/trainer or team physician.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is usually caused by a structural or electrical abnormality of the heart.

Symptoms of SCA include tightness or discomfort in the chest, lightheadedness, fainting, and heart palpitations.

Exercise can be a trigger for SCA in individuals with an abnormal heart condition.

Abnormalities that may cause SCA are typically inherited and may be undiagnosed, so obtaining an annual pre-participation physical examination with a thorough personal and family medical history is critical to identifying potential signs of SCA.

I have answered honestly and accurately on the medical history portion of my pre-participation physical examination.

I have read and understand the information in the SCA in the student-athlete code of conduct.

School

Grade

Sport/Activity

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

NCAA College Freshman Athletic Eligibility Standards

Division I Academic Eligibility -To be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during your first year at a Division I school, you must graduate high school and meet ALL the following requirements:

- Complete [16 core courses](#):
 - Four years of English
 - Three years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
 - Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it)
 - One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science
 - Two years of social science
 - Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
- Complete 10 core courses, including seven in English, math or natural/physical science, before your seventh semester. Once you begin your seventh semester, you may not repeat or replace any of those 10 courses to improve your core-course GPA.
- Earn at least a [2.3 GPA](#) in your core courses.
- Submit your final transcript with proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center

Division II Academic Eligibility - To be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during your first year at a Division II school, you must meet academic requirements for your core courses, grade-point average (GPA) and test scores. You must graduate high school and meet **ALL** the following requirements:

- Complete [16 core courses](#):
 - Three years of English.
 - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher).
 - Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
 - Three additional years of English, math or natural or physical science
 - Two years of social science
 - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
- Earn at least a [2.2 GPA](#) in your core courses.

Play Division III sports

Division III schools provide an integrated environment focusing on academic success while offering a competitive athletics environment. Division III rules minimize potential conflicts between athletics and academics and focus on regional in-season and conference play.

While Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships, 75 percent of Division III student-athletes receive some form of merit or need-based financial aid.

If you are planning to attend a Division III school, you do not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Division III schools set their own admissions standards.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Students enrolling at an NCAA Division I or II institution for the first time also need to complete the amateurism questionnaire through the Eligibility Center website. Students need to request final amateurism certification prior to enrollment.

For more information regarding the rules, please go to www.ncaa.org. Click on "Academics and Athletes," then "Eligibility and Recruiting" or visit the Eligibility Center website at www.eligibilitycenter.org.

Please call the NCAA Eligibility Center if you have questions: Toll-free number: 877-262-1492

For additional NCAA eligibility information, click on the link below:

<https://sites.google.com/staffordschools.net/ncaa-eligibility/home>

Credit Recovery

High school students who have failed an academic core course can take a district adopted/approved online course that is self-paced and based on a mastery of individual units. Participation requires approval by the principal. The purpose of credit recovery is to provide an opportunity for each student who failed a course to accelerate and complete courses based on individual needs, and to meet specific graduation requirements. Students must pass the online examination to earn credit and will receive a pass/fail grade.

(The grade of pass/fail will not be calculated into a student's GPA.)

Please note: This course does not meet the NCAA Eligibility Center Requirements. If you plan to participate in collegiate athletics, the eligibility center has not approved this class to count towards the NCAA eligibility standards.

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

Class Taken: _____

Date: _____

**National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)
POSITION STATEMENT ON ANABOLIC STEROIDS**

EXISTING POLICIES/STANDS

The NFHS strongly opposes the use of anabolic steroids and other performance-enhancing substances by high school student-athletes. Such use violates legal, ethical and competitive equity standards, and imposes unreasonable long-term health risks. The NFHS supports prohibitions by educational institutions, amateur and professional organizations and governmental regulators on the use of anabolic steroids and other controlled substances, except as specifically prescribed by physicians for therapeutic purposes.

BACKGROUND

Anabolic, androgenic steroids (AAS) are synthetic derivatives of the male hormone testosterone. Natural testosterone regulates, promotes and maintains physical and sexual development, primarily in the male, with effects in the female as well. Like testosterone, AAS have both an anabolic effect (increase in muscle tissue) and an androgenic effect (masculinizing effects that boys experience during puberty). No AAS is purely anabolic. As a result, the use of AAS won't lead to muscle growth without also leading to other unintended, undesirable side effects.

According to national surveys, the use of AAS among high school students has been decreasing since about 2001. There are no national studies that measure the extent of AAS use by high school student-athletes, although some states publish statewide prevalence data. Nearly one-third of high-school age steroid users do not participate in organized athletics and are taking AAS primarily to modify their physical appearance. Athletes who use AAS do so for two main reasons: 1) to gain strength and 2) to recover more quickly from injury.

AAS are controlled substances and are illegal to use or possess without a prescription from a physician for a legitimate medical diagnosis. Some AAS are used by veterinarians to treat pigs, horses and cows. In humans, medical uses of AAS include weight gain in wasting diseases such as HIV-infection or muscular dystrophy, absent gonadal function in males, and metastatic breast cancer in women. AAS should not be confused with corticosteroids, which are steroids that doctors prescribe for medical conditions such as asthma and inflammation. AAS are prohibited by all sports governing organizations.

FACTS ABOUT ANABOLIC STEROIDS

- Anabolic steroids are controlled substances and are illegal to possess or sell without a prescription for a legitimate medical condition by the prescribing physician.
- Androstenedione, norandrostenedione and other similar prohormones, at one time available over the counter as dietary supplements, are now defined as controlled anabolic steroids.
- Athletes who have injected anabolic steroids in high school have tested positive in collegiate drug tests – months after they stopped injecting.
- Athletes who have injected anabolic steroids are at greater risk for infections, HIV and hepatitis.

POTENTIAL NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE USE OF ANABOLIC STEROIDS

- Decreased eventual height if consumed before growth plates have fused in pre-pubertal youngsters
- Secondary sex characteristic changes
- Increased acne
- Growth of body/facial hair in girls
- Loss of hair in boys
- Permanent voice-lowering in girls
- Violent, combative behavior
- Sexual dysfunction and impotence
- Mood swings, loss of sleep, paranoia
- Depression upon stopping use
- Organ damage and death from heavy use

PREVENTING ATHLETES FROM TAKING ANABOLIC STEROIDS

- School personnel, coaches and parents can reduce steroid abuse by speaking out against their use.
- Talk with your athletes about frustrations they may have about how they look or how they are performing in their sport. Help them establish healthy expectations of their bodies.
- Talk to athletes about realistic performance standards.
- Focus on proper nutrition and hydration. Work with a registered dietician to develop a plan for appropriate weight gain and/or weight loss.
- Don't trust Internet marketing messages about quick fixes.
- Restrict athletes' access to environments where steroid use might occur and to people who are involved with anabolic steroids.
- Don't subscribe to publications such as muscle magazines that depict unrealistic pictures of men and women.
- Help athletes understand that using anabolic steroids not only is illegal but also is cheating.
- Consider initiating a formal performance-enhancing, drug-education program to educate athletes and deter use.

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Revised and Approved in April 2009

**National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)
POSITION STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF
ENERGY DRINKS BY YOUNG ATHLETES**

Background: Energy drinks have become increasingly popular among adolescents and young adults in recent years. In 2006, nearly 500 new brands were introduced to the market place, and over 7 million adolescents reported that they had consumed an energy drink. These beverages are particularly popular among young athletes who see the consumption of energy drinks as a quick and easy way to maximize athletic and academic performance.

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee's position on energy drinks:

The NFHS SMAC strongly recommends that:

- 1) Water and appropriate sports drinks should be used for rehydration as outlined in the NFHS Document **"Position Statement and Recommendations for Hydration to Minimize the Risk for Dehydration and Heat Illness."**
- 2) Energy drinks should not be used for hydration.
- 3) Information about the absence of benefit and the presence of potential risk associated with energy drinks should be widely shared among all individuals who interact with young athletes.
- 4) Energy drinks should not be consumed by athletes who are dehydrated.
- 5) Energy drinks should not be consumed without prior medical approval, by athletes taking over the counter or prescription medications.

WARNING: There is no regulatory control over energy drinks, thus their content and purity cannot be insured. This may lead to adverse side-effects, potentially harmful interactions with prescription medications (particularly stimulant medications used to treat ADHD), or positive drug tests.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an energy drink?

An energy drink is a beverage marketed to both athletes and the general public as a quick and easy means of relieving fatigue and improving performance. Nearly all energy drinks contain carbohydrates and caffeine as their main ingredients. The carbohydrates provide nutrient energy while the caffeine acts as a stimulant to the central nervous system.

What are the differences between an energy drink and a sports drink?

Sports drinks are designed to provide re-hydration during or after athletic activity. While contents vary, most sports drinks contain a 6-8% carbohydrate solution and a mixture of electrolytes. The carbohydrate and electrolyte concentrations are formulated to allow maximal absorption of the fluid by the gastrointestinal tract.

Energy drinks contain a higher concentration of carbohydrate (usually 9-10%), and thus a larger number of calories than sports drinks. They also contain high amounts of caffeine and, in some cases, other nutritional supplements. **Energy drinks are not designed to re-hydrate athletes during activity and should not be used in such circumstances.**

What ingredients are found in energy drinks?

Carbohydrates- Most energy drinks have from 18g to 25 g of carbohydrate per 8 ounces. The high carbohydrate concentration will impede absorption of fluid in the gastrointestinal tract.

Caffeine- Nearly all energy drinks contain some amount of “natural” or synthetic caffeine. The caffeine concentration may range from the equivalent to an 8 ounce cup of coffee (85mg) to more than twice that amount.

Herbs- Many energy drinks include herbal forms of caffeine such as guarana seeds, kola nuts, and Yerba mate leaves, in addition to synthetic caffeine. The “performance enhancing” effects and health benefits of other herbs like Astragalus, Echinacea, Ginko biloba, ginseng, and countless other herbs have not been well established by scientific studies.

Vitamins- Athletes with even reasonably good diets should be assured that they are not at risk for vitamin deficiency and do not need supplementation. There is no evidence to suggest that vitamin supplementation improves athletic performance. Female athletes may benefit from iron and calcium supplementation, but these are more easily and inexpensively obtained in pill form rather than energy drinks.

Protein and amino acids- Only a small amount of protein is used as fuel for exercise. Carbohydrates are utilized as the primary fuel source. No scientific evidence exists to support claims that amino acids enhance athletic performance. Protein, and the amino acids which compose it, are available less expensively in food.

Other ingredients- With the hundreds of energy drink brands that are available, the potential ingredients which they may contain are virtually unlimited. Possible additions include pyruvate, creatine, carnitine, medium-chain triglycerides, and even oxygen.

What are the possible effects of using energy drinks?

Central nervous system- Caffeine often has the effect of making a person feel “energized.” Studies have shown some performance-enhancing benefits from caffeine at high doses (6mg/kg of body weight). Such high doses of caffeine may produce light headedness, tremor, impaired sleep and difficulty with fine motor control, and may exceed drug testing caffeine thresholds.

Gastrointestinal system- The high concentrations of carbohydrates found in energy drinks may delay gastric emptying, resulting in a feeling of being bloated. Abdominal cramping may also occur. Both carbohydrates and caffeine in the high concentrations found in most energy drinks can cause diarrhea.

Dehydration- Energy drinks should not be used for the purposes of hydration or re-hydration. The high carbohydrate concentration results in slow absorption from the gastrointestinal tract and may cause diarrhea. Caffeine acts as a diuretic and, therefore, results in increased fluid loss.

Positive drug tests- Like all nutritional supplements, there is little or no regulatory oversight of energy drinks. The purity of the products cannot be assured and it is possible that they may contain banned substances.

Approved October 2008

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)
SUPPLEMENTS POSITION STATEMENT

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) strongly opposes the use of dietary supplements for the purpose of athletic advantage. Research data shows widespread use of dietary supplements by adolescent and high school athletes, despite considerable safety concerns. Dietary supplements are marketed as an easy way to enhance athletic performance, increase energy levels, lose weight, and feel better. It is proven that adolescents are more susceptible to advertising messages and peer pressure, increasing the risk of dietary supplement usage. This can create a culture more concerned about short term performance rather than overall long term health.

The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 removed dietary supplements from pre-market regulation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Thus, many of the substances that can be obtained from nutrition stores and the internet are not subject to the same strict tests and regulations as “over the counter” and prescription medications. The companies that produce dietary supplements do not need to test their safety or effectiveness before they are available to consumers. In fact, dietary supplements cannot be removed from the marketplace unless they present a significant or unreasonable risk of illness or injury.

MYTHS regarding dietary supplements:

- If a substance is natural, it must be safe and beneficial.
- Athletes that consume a well balanced diet still have nutritional deficiencies.
- Since dietary supplements may be purchased at a store or over the internet, they must be safe and legal.

The NFHS SMAC discourages the use of supplements by athletes due to the lack of published, reproducible scientific research addressing the benefits and documenting long term adverse health effects of the supplements, particularly in the adolescent age group. Dietary supplements should be used only upon the advice of one’s health care provider. **School personnel and coaches should never recommend, endorse or encourage the use of any dietary supplement, drug, or medication for performance enhancement.**

We recommend that coaches, athletic directors, and school personnel develop strategies that address the growing concerns of using dietary supplements. Such strategies may include conversations with athletes and their parents about the potential dangers of dietary supplement use. Athletes should be encouraged to pursue their goals through hard work and good nutrition, not dietary shortcuts.

Dietary supplements receive no FDA regulation:

- There is no guarantee the true amount or concentration of ingredients is listed on the label.
- There is no guarantee the substance is pure, as studies have found lead and arsenic in supplements.
- There may be other compounds not listed on the label in the dietary supplement which may be illegal or banned substances.

- There is minimal evidence that dietary supplements enhance performance for most high school sports.
- There is even less evidence supporting their use in adolescents.
- School personnel, coaches, and parents should allow for open discussion about supplement use, but strongly encourage optimal nutrition and a well-balanced diet.
- Remind athletes that no supplement is harmless and free from consequences.
- Remind athletes that there is no short cut to improved performance, it takes hard work.
- Because they are not regulated, dietary supplements may contain impurities and illegal substances not listed on the label.
- **Adolescents that use dietary supplements are more likely to use steroids, continue usage into adulthood, and to engage in other high risk behaviors like smoking, drinking, and using drugs.**

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