



2025-2026
THOMAS COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT/STUDENT ATHLETIC HAND BOOK

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OUR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S PHILOSOPHY

The primary focus of an athletic director is to provide leadership to everyone under the umbrella of the athletic department as defined by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). The secondary focus of an athletic director is to meet and exceed the needs of all student athletes who participate in sanctioned athletics in the high school and middle school realm. The athletic director is also a liaison between the athletic department, school system, and community to ensure that all measures are taken to create a well-rounded and healthy young person upon graduation. Of top priority, the athletic director is to be organized, efficient, and transparent about all that is happening within the program to all stakeholders. As educators, our accountability for creating an environment that fosters communication, success, growth, and empathy to and for all student-athletes is paramount.

In regards to athletics, and more specifically the purpose of sports, it is my belief that middle school and junior varsity programs are meant to teach athletes how to compete and to develop competency in basic skills that allow for a progression within the sport. Varsity competitive sports are just that - competition - and playing time should be a reflection of the skill of the individual. The best players should be playing regardless of age or time within the program. For example, if a freshman player is better than a senior player, the freshman should play because the games are played to be won. This can be a difficult and complex concept to communicate to players and parents, but we should not shy from this conversation. As coaches and administrators, we should be willing to sit down and speak with players and parents about the development necessary to improve their overall skill level. This is not a guarantee of playing time to come, but rather an open and honest evaluation of the player while reiterating that playing time is a fluid situation and dependent on the work, effort, and improvement of the athlete. These hard conversations are what I appreciate most about sport, though. The lessons learned through constructive criticism (coaching), response to adversity, and perseverance become core characteristics of an individual that will serve them well past their time in sports.

In summation, an athletic director should be someone who is passionate about helping students, athletes, and the overall athletic department. On both fronts, development and reaching full potential should be the purpose. Working collaboratively and as a team, I am confident that Thomas County Central High School will realize both of these goals.

Philip Duplantis, PhD
Athletic Director

THOMAS COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Thomas County Central High School creates an inclusive environment where all student athletes can grow, learn and experience success in a variety of areas including sports, arts, and academics. Thomas County Central High School student-athletes will leave with a competitive advantage for success in a global society.

Thomas County Central Athletic Department Core Values

1. **Honesty-** Doing what is right all the time!
2. **Unity-** All coaches and athletes have the “all for one mentality” and a true family atmosphere of support.
3. **Servant Leadership-** Leaders focus on serving the athlete, community, and school system.
4. **Communication-** Over communicate in many areas so that an entire community understands the mission of our organization.
5. **Sportsmanship-** Instilling virtues such as fairness, self-control, courage, and persistence. Treat others fairly and expect the same in return, and show respect for authority and opponents.
6. **Loyalty-** Supporting and having allegiance to Thomas County Schools Athletics.
7. **Empathy-** Understanding and sharing feelings or experiences with others.
8. **Trust-** Building a foundation of understanding and confidence in each other.
9. **Safety-** Creating an environment where all people feel safe and can enjoy themselves without the fear of negative consequences or danger when involved with Thomas County Schools athletics.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

STUDENT-ATHLETE BEHAVIOR

The rules and procedures listed in this Athletic Handbook apply to all student-athletes and are expected to be followed year-round, including off-season and during school holiday periods. Violations of the Athletic Handbook will result in disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion from participation in athletics. The rules and procedures listed in the Athletic Handbook do not supersede or modify the Thomas County Schools Code of Conduct, by which all students are expected to comply. Violations of the Thomas County Schools Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion from participation in athletics. Our student-athletes are expected to:

- Abide by the TCS Student Code of Conduct.
- Attend school regularly and be punctual to class.
- Avoid the use of profanity, abusive language, or gestures toward opponents, officials, coaches, teammates, and spectators.
- Abstain from the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco at all times.
- Accept the decisions of officials without question.
- Show consideration for the playing facilities of all schools (both home and away).
- Be a positive role model for other students and athletes in academics, language, dress, and behavior - both on and off the playing area. (Remember that an athlete assumes a leadership role and that younger students emulate your behavior.)
- Avoid displays of self-glorification.
- Accept victory with grace and defeat with dignity.

It is our desire that all individuals (athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and supervisors) involved with interscholastic athletics display behavior that reflects the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and a sense of fair play. It is important for all to recognize that the purpose of playing a sport is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players. Participation in athletics is a privilege that carries with it varying degrees of honor, responsibility, and sacrifice. Since competition is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate will be expected to follow the rules established by the Thomas County Schools athletic department and other specific coaches' rules for their particular sport. Please remember that, most of all, it is the duty of all parties concerned with middle school and high school athletics to remember that each individual athletic contest is only a game and should always be kept in that perspective.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS/ELIGIBILITY

THOMAS COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Students participating in athletics must have a Sports Participation Consent form completed in DragonFly at www.dragonflymax.com by their parent/guardian giving permission for the student to participate in athletics at Thomas County Central High School. This form must be completed prior to the student participating in any try-out. The form will also include acknowledgement by the parent/guardian of the following:

- Acknowledgement of Risks and Assumption of Risks
- General Release of Liability
- Consent for Travel and Release of Travel-Related Liability
- Consent to Medical Treatment and Authorization to Act
- Financial Responsibility for Medical Care
- Media Release

Parent/guardian must also complete the following forms in DragonFly as required by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA):

- Student/Parent Concussion Awareness Form
- Student/Parent Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form
- Heat and Humidity Policy for All Sports

All student-athletes must have an up to date and cleared Physical Examination form on file in the athletic office at TCCHS. (See Physical Examination Form in this handbook)

GHSA rules require that, in order to be eligible to participate and/or try-out for an athletic team, a student must be enrolled at the school seeking eligibility or, in the case of an 8th grade student, they must be enrolled in a feeder school. Students who are “planning” to enroll in Thomas County Schools, but have not yet done so, are not eligible to try-out for an athletic team until their enrollment is complete.

To be academically eligible for participation in any interscholastic activity, TCCHS students must meet the following requirements:

- **Rising 9th graders** are considered eligible at the school they attend on their first day of 9th grade.
- **Rising 10th graders** must accumulate 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have earned 5 units in the previous school year.
- **Rising 11th graders** must accumulate 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have earned 11 units upon entering their third year of high school.

- **Rising 12th graders** must accumulate 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have earned 17 units upon entering their fourth year of high school.

- One year long course equals 1 unit (1/2 unit each semester)
- One semester course equals 1/2 unit
- Eligibility is established at the end of each semester
- A student must pass 5 out of 7 classes each semester to remain eligible for athletic participation

Other GHSA Policies:

1. Once entered into the 9th grade, a student has four years, or eight semesters, of continuous eligibility.
2. To be eligible a student must not have reached his/her 19th birthday prior to May 1 of the preceding year of participation.
3. An athlete must be enrolled as a full-time student during the present semester.
4. A transfer student who establishes eligibility at his/her former school in grades 9-12 shall be immediately eligible at the new school if:
 - the student moved simultaneously with the entire family unit or persons he/she resided with at the former school,
 - the student and parent(s) or persons residing with the student live in the service area of the new school, and
 - it is apparent that the parent(s) or persons residing with the student, as well as the student, have relinquished the residence in the former service area and have occupied a resident in the new service area.
5. A student's gender is determined as follows:
 - Athletes shall compete on boys or girls teams based on the gender assigned at birth.
 - Girls may participate on boys' teams when there is no girls' team offered in that sport or activity by the school (exception: wrestling).
 - Boys may not participate on girls' teams even when there is no corresponding boys' sport or activity.
 - Cheerleading is a coed sport.
 - The GHSA will attempt to accommodate requests for private restroom or locker/dressing room facilities for students requesting the same at GHSA playoff events or contests provided notice of the request is made as soon as possible to the GHSA office.

THOMAS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school athletic activities are not regulated by the GHSA; however, TCMS will use the same enrollment and academic eligibility guidelines utilized by the GHSA for high schools, therefore, all middle school athletes must pass five classes each semester to be eligible to participate in an athletic activity the following semester.

- Eligibility is established at the end of each semester
- A student must pass five classes each semester to be eligible to participate in an athletic activity the following semester.
- Final year-end grades for 6th and 7th grade students will determine their ability to participate in an athletic activity the following school year.
- All rising 6th grade students are eligible for athletic participation during the 1st semester. Further athletic eligibility will be determined at the end of 1st semester.

Prior to try-outs, all TCMS students must have the following on file in the TCMS athletic department:

- An up-to-date and cleared Physical Examination form (see Physical Examination Forms in this handbook)
- Consent to Treatment
- Liability Release and Limited Power of Attorney for off-campus activities
- GHSA Student/Parent Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness form (completed on DragonFly)
- GHSA Student/Parent Concussion Awareness form (completed on DragonFly)
- GHSA Heat and Humidity Policy for All Sports form (completed on DragonFly)

TCMS students in the 8th grade may participate in a high school junior varsity or 9th grade (c team) competition if:

- They are academically eligible per GHSA academic requirements,
- They are in good disciplinary standing at TCMS,
- The high school head coach requests that they participate,
- The student-athlete can attend all required practices and competitions, and
- The student is registered with the GHSA as a middle school student participating in a high school sport.

A TCMS student who plays on a high school team does not lose any high school eligibility.

Students attending the Renaissance Center or Bishop Hall are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at TCCHS or TCMS. Only after a student returns to their home school will they be considered for participation on an athletic team if all other eligibility requirements are met.

SENATE BILL 42 – DEXTER MOSELY ACT

A home study student, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690(c) by the Georgia Department of Education, in grades 6-12 shall be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities and interscholastic (E/I) activities on behalf of the student's resident school and under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the resident school or resident school system, provided that each of the following requirements is met:

1. Parent Notification: At least 30 calendar days before the first school day of the semester in which a home study student will enroll in a qualifying course, the parent/guardian provides to resident principal and superintendent a written notice of home study student's intent to participate in one or more E/I activities.

2. Student Progress Verification: Parent/guardian must provide to the resident principal and superintendent a copy of the home study student's most recent annual progress report, with written verification by the home study program instructor that the student is currently receiving a passing grade in each home study program course, is maintaining satisfactory progress towards advancement, and meets the academic requirements for participation in the specified E/I.

3. Qualifying Course Enrollment: The home study student must enroll in and attempt to complete one qualifying course for each semester of the regular school year during any part of which the home study student participates in an E/I activity. Participation in an E/I activity includes tryouts, practices, rehearsals, and conditionings (in- and off-season, summer, and holiday) and all exhibitions, contests, and competitions. [Georgia Department of Education 3 July 1, 2021]

4. Participation Requirements: The home study student must meet established age, academic, behavioral, conduct, disciplinary, residence, zoning, and other rules and requirements applicable to all students for participation in the specified E/I activity and must provide any supporting documentation required by the resident school.

5. Policy Adherence: The home study student must abide by the same student code of conduct and disciplinary measures and transportation policies as students enrolled at the resident school who are participating in the same E/I activity as the home study student.

6. E/I Activity and Selection Requirements: The home study student must complete the tryout process or equivalent for participation in the specified E/I activity applicable to all students for participation in the E/I activity and must be selected for participation in those E/I activities which involve a competitive selection process. The home study student must provide any supporting documentation required by the resident school. The resident school, system or athletic association shall not deny the home study student the opportunity to try out and participate, if selected, in any E/I activity available if the student meets the eligibility requirements outlined above.

- **Ineligibility** – a student who withdraws from a public school to participate in a home study program shall be ineligible for participation in any E/I activity for 12 months from the date of the home study Declaration of Intent submission to GaDOE.

For more information on SB 42, please contact the enrollment office at the TCBOE.

ATHLETIC TEAMS/SQUADS OFFERED AT THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Thomas County Schools offers athletic opportunities for students at TCMS and TCCHS through middle school teams, C teams, junior varsity, and varsity level teams.

TCS currently sponsors the following activities for the fall, winter and spring seasons:

FALL

Varsity

Cheerleading
Game Day Cheerleading
Cross Country (B & G)
Fast Pitch Softball
Football
Volleyball (G)
Flag Football (G)

Junior Varsity

Cheerleading
Cross Country (B & G)
Fast Pitch Softball
Football
Volleyball (G)
Flag Football (G)

C Team

Football

TCMS

Cheerleading
Cross Country (B & G)
Fast Pitch Softball
Football
Volleyball (G)

WINTER

Varsity

Basketball (B & G)
Cheerleading
Swimming (B & G)
Wrestling

Junior Varsity

Basketball (B & G)
Swimming (B & G)
Wrestling

C Team

Basketball (B)

TCMS

Basketball (B & G)
Swimming (B & G)
Wrestling

SPRING

Varsity

Baseball
Golf (B & G)
Soccer (B & G)
Tennis (B & G)
Track & Field (B & G)
Gymnastics

Junior Varsity

Baseball
Soccer (B & G)
Tennis (B & G)
Track & Field (B & G)

C Team

Baseball

TCMS

Baseball
Golf (B & G)
Soccer (B & G)
Tennis (B & G)
Track & Field (B & G)

Middle school and C teams serve the following purpose:

- To develop the skills of an athlete
- To help athletes learn the rules of the sport
- To develop the athlete's continued interest in the sport
- To provide playing time for all participants, at the discretion of the coach

Middle school teams will consist of students enrolled in TCMS. C teams will consist primarily of ninth grade students who display the proper attitude and desire to develop and become a junior varsity or varsity level player. The number of players on a middle school or C team will vary from season to season and by sport.

Junior Varsity teams serve the following purpose:

- To further develop the skills of an athlete.
- To help the athlete adapt to a more intense level of competition
- To help prepare the athlete for varsity level competition, while adapting to an increased emphasis on winning
- To provide opportunities for playing time at the discretion of the coach

The junior varsity team will primarily consist of sophomores, however, some freshmen and juniors may also play at this level. JV athletes are encouraged to be students who display the proper attitude and desire to develop and become a varsity level player. The number of players on a junior varsity team will vary from season to season and by sport.

Varsity teams serve the following purpose:

- To develop the skills and physical conditioning of the athlete and prepare them to compete at their highest potential.
- To allow talented athletes the chance to excel and possibly prepare for college-level competition
- To provide an athlete the opportunity to set goals, strive to achieve those goals, and serve as role models for younger athletes.
- To understand the focus of the varsity program is to win while having fun.

The varsity team will primarily include, but is not limited to, junior and senior students. Freshmen and sophomores who have demonstrated the ability to be starters or key contributors may also be members of a varsity level team. The number of players on a varsity team will vary from season to season and by sport.

TRY-OUT INFORMATION

Our philosophy of athletics is driven by a desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic programs at Thomas County Schools. We encourage coaches to select as many students as possible without compromising the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, athletic ability, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. However, when developing procedure in this regard, coaches will strive to maximize the opportunities for student athletes without diluting the quality of the programs. Choosing the members and captains of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coach.

At least two weeks prior to trying out, the coach will provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

- Extent of the tryout period
- Criteria used to select the team

- Practice and game commitments for those who make the team

Sports are competitive and team rosters are limited. It is possible that not all students who try out will be selected for the team. In all possible situations, the coach will notify students when they have been cut. If circumstances dictate, rosters of the players who made the team may be posted at a location designated by the coach. Making a junior varsity or a C team does not automatically guarantee a spot on a varsity team in the future. You will have to tryout and earn a spot at each team level.

The goals of the tryout process are as follows:

- To judge the relative ability of the athletes and determine which athletes are likely to contribute the most to the program.
- To select the athletes that will benefit the most from the experience.
- To maintain a roster size that maximizes practice and playing opportunities for participants.
- To maintain a roster size that can be properly uniformed and equipped within the constraints of the athletic department or team budget.

A student's prior discipline in school may affect a student's chances of making the team. (This right is reserved by the coach.)

Middle school students participating in high school sports cannot displace high school students on a given team. In other words, if high school team membership is reduced at any time during the official GHSA season, middle school students will be "cut" first.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORMS

1. All students who participate in competitive interscholastic athletics and cheerleading shall have an annual physical examination prior to participation in any tryout, practice, or conditioning, whichever comes first, or thereafter as is deemed necessary to protect the health and physical welfare of participating students.
2. The physical examination form shall indicate approval for participation and be signed by a doctor of medicine, a doctor of osteopathy, or a physician's assistant.

The physical examination form shall also include the date the exam was performed (month, date, and year), the student's name and signature, the parent's signature, and the physician's signature. The form **must** be on file for all athletes in the athletic director's office **prior** to participation. Physical examinations will be good for twelve (12) months from the date of the exam; however, those taken after April 1 are good for the entire subsequent school year.

CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS

Thomas County Schools is fortunate to have certified athletic trainers at our high school. The primary function of the trainers is to help protect our student athletes when injuries occur and to help rehabilitate the injury after it occurs. When injuries occur, the athletic trainer will communicate

with the coach and the parent on possible treatment options. The athletic trainer is not a substitute for a medical doctor; however, the athletic trainer can rehab the injury at the school. Athletic trainers will also check on heat readings prior to practice and report their findings to the coach and/or athletic director, who will make a final decision on practice schedules.

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ATHLETES

Playing a sport requires student-athletes to make a commitment to participate in scheduled practices in order to develop their skills. The following attendance guidelines should be used:

- If an athlete is going to miss a scheduled practice, the player or a parent should notify the head coach for their sport.
- A student assigned to Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) may not participate in a practice or a game from the day the OSS is assigned until the first day the student is permitted to return to school.
- The head coach of each sport will make the determination on participation by a student-athlete assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS).
- A student attending a field trip is considered present at school.
- All athletes are required to attend all scheduled team practices and contests unless specifically excused for medical, religious, or other reasons deemed appropriate by the head coach and/or the athletic director.
- Students should be prepared to practice on Saturdays and during school holidays as deemed necessary by their head coach.
- It is recommended that parents plan vacations so as not to conflict with their son/daughter's participation on a team.

Consequences for unexcused absences shall be at the discretion of the head coach for each sport.

MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES

All TCS athletes, parents, and coaches should understand the importance of the multiple-sport athlete to our programs. We support, encourage, and allow students to participate in one, two, or as many sports as they choose. It should be understood that students who are finishing one athletic season while try-outs are in progress for another season will be given special consideration and an opportunity for a delayed try-out. However, it is the duty of the athlete to discuss this with all coaches involved well in advance. At no time should a coach encourage an athlete to specialize in one specific sport. Coaches must support the multiple-sport concept.

However, when a student joins a specific team, they assume a responsibility and commitment to that team and coach for the duration of that season. Dropping out of a sport is discouraged. On occasion, however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. Dropping a sport and requesting to transfer to another sport will be governed by the following guidelines:

1. An athlete who wishes to leave a team (and/or transfer to another team) may do so provided he/she leaves while in good standing and only after discussing with their current coach the reason for leaving.

2. No changing of teams will be allowed after the second week of a season or after the final cut has been made on the team being dropped or the team to be joined.
3. The athlete must meet the requirements for the new sport before he/she may participate in any athletic contest.
4. All issued equipment must be returned. If the student has lost equipment, it must be paid for before a new sport can be started. When fees from the current sport are cleared, the student may then begin a new sport.
5. When beginning a new sport, a student should turn in their physical form with all the appropriate information filled out completely. After the coach checks for eligibility, the student may begin participating.
6. An athlete who is dismissed from a squad/team for disciplinary reasons (i.e., violation of the code of conduct, insubordination, excessive unexcused absences, etc.) shall not be allowed to participate in another sport for the remainder of the current sports season or until the period of suspension expires.
7. Students who chose to leave their current team without following the proper procedures or are not granted permission by the current coach will not be allowed to participate on a new team until the current season is completed.

EQUIPMENT

It is important to emphasize to all student athletes their responsibility as team members to take good care of school equipment and report any abuses to their coach or athletic director. Replacing or repairing equipment is expensive. Athletes are expected to follow these rules regarding equipment:

1. Each athlete is solely responsible for all the equipment and uniform components signed out in his or her name. Lost, stolen, or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at the athlete's expense.
2. Immediately report any loss, theft, or damaged equipment or uniform to your coach. Lost, stolen, or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at cost. Cost may include replacing a complete set when items cannot be replaced individually. The athlete is notified in writing of the amount he or she owes.
3. All uniforms and equipment must be returned in good condition on the date specified by the coach, or athletes will be charged the replacement cost. Compensation is required regardless of whether or not the athlete still has the item. Athletes will not be permitted to practice or tryout for another sport until the school is compensated for all unreturned items.

ATHLETE/TEAM APPEARANCE

To continue the tradition of honoring school pride, all athletic uniforms worn by our students will predominantly display our school colors. Athletes should dress in team apparel at home competitions, whenever travelling or any time they are representing TCCHS, TCMS, or Thomas County Schools and under the direction of his/her coach. All components of the uniform are at the

discretion of the head coach and he/she must approve any additional accessories worn by a player or manager.

Student-athletes are not to wear school-issued equipment or uniforms for:

- Physical education classes
- Work or job
- Social events

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Athletes at TCMS and TCCHS are not required to pay to play on a sports team. Occasionally, an athlete may be asked to pay fees for items necessary for playing that sport or that will become the possession of the athlete. Fundraisers will be available to help each student raise the money needed. If a student chooses not to participate in the fundraising activity, they will be responsible for any fees incurred and may not be issued those items until the fees are paid.

STUDENT-ATHLETE DISCIPLINE

Thomas County Schools believes that a student should consider participation in athletics as both a privilege and a responsibility. The privilege is the opportunity to take part in the athletics programs provided, while understanding that privilege may be revoked if the student fails or refuses to comply with the rules contained in this handbook. The responsibility is found when the student-athlete is representing the school, which involves maintaining academic eligibility, high standards of citizenship at all times, sportsmanship, and playing the game to the best of his/her ability. Respect for and compliance with the Code of Conduct found in the TCCHS or TCMS Parent/Student Handbook is expected of every student who participates. The Athletic Department will uphold any discipline issued by TCCHS or TCMS, but may implement additional penalties including, but not limited to, restitution, behavior intervention, suspension from an athletic event or competition, and dismissal from the squad/team.

ATHLETE/PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

It is our expectation that communication will be encouraged and maintained among parents, athletes, and coaches. Parents are entitled answers to legitimate questions regarding their child's performance and/or status. During the season, concerns may arise. Our philosophy at TCCHS and TCMS is that we are student/athlete advocates. The following communication process will be followed:

Step 1: Player meets with the coach to discuss concerns/issues.

Step 2: If unresolved, player and parent meets with the coach for further discussion.

Step 3: If unresolved, player, parent, and the coach meet with the athletic director for further discussion.

Step 4: As a last resort, player, parent, coach, and the athletic director meet with the school principal.

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to students. As a parent, when your child becomes involved in our athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication with your child's head coach.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all players on the squad/team
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements, (i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- Procedure should your child be injured during participation
- Discipline which results in the denial of your child's participation

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any practice/schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your child becomes involved in the program, he/she 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 might desire. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of your child, mentally and/or physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior or school work

It is difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other topics, such as those listed below, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Team strategy

- Play calling
- Playing time
- Team position
- Other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These 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 appropriate procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue or concern. **Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not usually promote a favorable resolution.** If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, you should follow the procedure outlined this handbook.

PARENT MEETINGS

Each coach will meet with the athletes and parents of his/her team to explain details of the upcoming season, summarize their expectations for all athletes, and explain what parents can expect from the coaching staff. Coaches will also outline their philosophy, practice schedule, game schedule, tryouts, making the team and other policies specific to their team.

LETTERING IN A SPORT

EARNING and MAINTAINING A LETTER JACKET

Letters will be awarded for junior varsity and varsity players. The determination of whether or not a letter is awarded to an athlete is the responsibility of the head coach of each sport. Each coach will work with the athletic director to make sure the criteria for lettering are met. Awards/Letters are given by each coach for his/her particular sport during their post-season banquet. Athletes must successfully complete the athletic season, including all post-season competition, to be eligible for an award/letter.

Athletes who have lettered in a varsity sport may earn a letter jacket when the following criteria are met:

1. The athlete has competed, or been available to compete, at the varsity level for at least two seasons, or will compete at that level for the second season during the current school year.
 - a. Athletes who have participated at the varsity level during their 9th and 10th grade seasons may be fitted for their letter jacket at the first fitting of their junior year. The head coach of each sport will provide the names of athletes who qualify for this privilege.
2. The athlete is a junior or a senior.
 - a. Athletes who transfer to TCCHS during their 11th or 12th grade years may qualify

for a letter jacket if, as determined by the head coach, the player makes a significant impact on the team at the varsity level and the athlete participated in the sport at their previous school. Proof of participation may be required.

3. The athlete is in good standing, actively participating on the team in which they will letter, and will continue to participate through their senior season.
 - a. Athletes who choose not to participate their senior season must:
 - i. Return the letter jacket to the TCCHS Athletic Booster Club via their head coach, OR
 - ii. Purchase the letter jacket from the TCCHS Athletic Booster Club

All letter jackets at TCCHS are provided to our athletes by the Thomas County Central Athletic Booster Club. Students who letter in multiple sports will be allowed to request sport specific logos when their jacket is ordered. Each athlete must sign a contract agreeing to the above information prior to being fitted for their letter jacket.

THOMAS COUNTY CENTRAL ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB

The Thomas County Central Athletic Booster Club benefits all our athletic teams and provides financial help in the following ways:

- Providing letter jackets to all eligible athletes
- Providing banquet meals for athletes and four awards, plus the Envision Credit Union Scholar Athlete award
- \$5.00 per student-athlete per meal for game travel beyond a 60 mile radius

The booster club meets the first Monday of each month in the TCCHS conference room at 7:00 p.m. For more information on joining the booster club, please contact Donnie Powell at acermanfive@yahoo.com.

TRANSPORTING ATHLETES

All transportation is the coach's responsibility. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure all rules and regulations of bus transportation are followed. During an "away" contest, the following procedures should be followed:

1. While visiting another school, athletes representing TCS should dress and act appropriately at all times. Athletes are expected to travel to contests in appropriate attire as dictated by the coach.
2. Athletes are strongly advised not to travel with expensive jewelry, large amounts of cash, or other valuable items. An athlete who does so is solely responsible for the safekeeping of these items. TCS or the host school will not be held responsible for damage, loss, or theft.
3. Athletes should bring just enough money to pay for meals required during the trip. Teams are not required to stop for a meal after every away contest. Coaches will consider time (and/or

location) when deciding to stop for an after-game meal.

4. Transportation to all athletic contests is provided by the school via school bus or commercial coach. All athletes and support personnel must travel to and from the contest on school transportation. Athletes are not permitted to drive themselves, drive other students, or ride with other students to athletic contests. Coaches may not transport athletes in a personal vehicle at any time. Exceptions may be granted for athletes wishing to return home after a contest with a parent/guardian. The parent must properly notify the coach in writing prior to the contest.
5. Athletes are expected to be ready to board the bus at the time designated by the coach. Coaches are instructed not to wait for tardy athletes. Habitually tardy athletes may face disciplinary action by the coach.
6. Occasionally, a team travels overnight for a contest or tournament. Athletes are held to all school policies for the duration of the trip. Essentially, the athlete will be "on school grounds" for the entire trip and any violation of school policy will result in the appropriate disciplinary action by the school. If an athlete disrupts the team or is a danger to himself or others, the parent or guardian will be called and the athlete will be sent home.

EARLY DISMISSAL and MISSED SCHOOL WORK

Periodically student-athletes will be dismissed from school prior to school dismissal to attend an athletic event. It is the responsibility of the student to ask teachers for any assignments missed as a result of an early dismissal. Missed work should be made up in a timely manner. If a teacher requires the student to make up missed work in their presence, the student should work with their head coach to arrange a time suitable to the teacher.

ATHLETE SUPERVISION

Coaches are responsible for the athletes under their supervision. The coach's responsibility begins when the students are instructed to report for practice, competition (home or away), and ends when the last student-athlete has left. Parents are encouraged to be on time for pick up after games and practices. Alternate transportation arrangements should be made prior to a practice or contest. Athletes will not be left in the gym, locker rooms, or any other school facility to wait for a parent.

WEATHER REGULATIONS

Weather readings are taken daily during the months of August and September to monitor heat issues. Once these readings are taken, the head coach and/or athletic director will make the final decision on any practice or contest adjustments, if heat issues arise. Weather is also monitored on ThorGuard and Weather Bug. If either device, or a lightning detector, indicates there is lightning in the area (within a 10 mile radius) the practice or contest will immediately be postponed or cancelled and all athletes moved to a safe area. The head coach and athletic director will work together to determine if the contest can continue, be postponed or cancelled. Continuation or cancellation of a practice will be at the discretion of the head coach.

SPECTATORS

All Yellow Jacket spectators, at any school event, are expected to behave responsibly. Violators are subject to eviction from the event and/or being banned from future events at Thomas County Schools.

Expectations of Spectators:

- To conform to standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.
- To show respect and positive support for officials, coaches, and players prior to, during, and after any game.
- To recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fairplay exhibited by either team.
- To participate in cheers that support, encourage, and uplift the teams involved.
- To understand that school athletics is an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for the student athletes.
- To treat visiting teams and officials as guests, extending them every courtesy.
- To understand that schools are responsible for the conduct of their respective spectators whether home or away.

Parent/Adult Supervision Policy for Football and Basketball Athletic Events:

A parent or adult must supervise all Pre-K - 8th grade students when entering and while attending a Thomas County Schools' high school football or basketball events. Pre-K - 8th grade students without parent or adult supervision will not be permitted into these events. Students in grades 9-12 will be allowed at all athletic events under the supervision of administrators and game managers.

CLEAR BAG POLICY

The Thomas County School System has a clear bag policy for all sporting events held on our campuses. Under the school system's policy, the following bags are allowed:

- Bags, purses or backpacks that are clear plastic, vinyl or PVC
- One-gallon clear plastic freezer bags (Ziploc bag or similar)
- Small clutch bags, approximately the size of a hand, with or without a handle or strap
- Mesh bags

Thomas County Schools will make an exception for bags containing medically necessary items, camera or binocular cases, or diaper bags (when a baby is present).

All bags are subject to inspection prior to entering any event area.

Bag types that will be prohibited include, but are not limited to:

- Purses larger than 7" x 5" that are not clear
- Printed pattern bags
- Large totes
- Plastic or reusable grocery bags that are not clear
- Duffel bags
- Backpacks that are not clear
- Colored plastic storage bags
- Any other items deemed non-compliant by security or game management

Blankets and additional clothing may be carried into the event area in an approved clear bag or carried loosely. Seat cushions that do not contain pockets are allowed.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Athletes who plan to continue their athletic career beyond high school should make use of the NCAA Eligibility Center. The eligibility center will certify academic and amateur credentials of all college bound student-athletes. For more information, please visit www.eligibilitycenter.org or call 877-262-1492.

NAIA ELIGIBILITY

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is a college athletics association for small colleges and universities in North America. It has 252 member institutions, of which two are in British Columbia, one in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the rest in the conterminous United States. Students interested in playing a college sport at an NAIA school should access information at the NAIA website at www.naia.org.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) expresses the concept of sportsmanship as follows:

“The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, awareness is expected of the impact of an individual’s influence on the behavior of others. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity.”

The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) sportsmanship statement is as follows:

“The GHSA and its member schools have made a commitment to promote good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches, and spectators at all GHSA sanctioned events. Profanity, degrading remarks, and intimidating actions directed at officials or competitors will not be tolerated, and are grounds for removal from the event site. Spectators are not allowed to enter the competition area during warm-ups or while the contest is being conducted. Thank you for your cooperation in the promotion of good sportsmanship at today’s event.”