

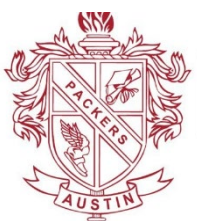
AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2025 2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK

At Austin Public Schools, we are preparing all learners to make a difference in the world.



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AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL FIGHT SONG

Fight, Fight, Fight for Old Austin High
We're gonna win this victory.
Win, Win, Win for Old Austin High
Winners we'll always be.
Rah, Rah, Rah
Go, Go, Go for Scarlet and White
Our colors stand for might.
Waving to those courageous and bold
So, FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!!
A...U...S...TIN!

WELCOME LETTER

Austin Packers Families -

This handbook will help you support your child and all those involved in athletic programs at Austin High School. All adults – coaches, officials, event staff, administrators, fans, and parents – are responsible for creating a positive experience for our student-athletes.

Parenting a child in youth sports today is a complex task. The intensity, time commitment, financial costs, and emotional investment for young athletes and their families are at all-time highs. Youth are involved in competitive teams and leagues run by adults as early as elementary school. Supplemental camps and clinics ensure that there is rarely an "off-season" as they age. Within that context, ensuring our children have developmentally appropriate experiences as they progress through high school programs is our top priority.

Chances are great that you have been very involved as a parent throughout your child's athletic experience. A significant percentage of parents coach their own children's teams. Others volunteer as team managers, coordinate fundraisers, or sit on booster clubs. Many parents played competitive sports themselves at some level. No matter your personal experiences, transitioning from "youth" and "club" sports into the school district's educational athletics system can be challenging.

Realistically, you will have less control and influence. You will probably experience a shift in how you engage with your child's experience. This does not have to be a bad thing! High school athletics are often the most rewarding, memorable stage of your child's participation in sports. And we need your parental partnership! Chances are that parenting a student-athlete in high school athletics will differ from your past experiences in club or association sports. We aim to support you throughout the journey.

Please let the coaches coach. Assume positive intent, especially when their style or strategy may differ from your own. Coaches are educators, with a focus on developing the whole person. Note that openly sharing negative opinions of coaches – in front of your child, on social media, and in public settings - may directly affect your child's ability to be coachable, and it takes away from the team and the experience.

Thoughtfully consider the following advice rooted in research, psychology, and years of educational experience. Do not over-focus on your child's athletic success – particularly when it comes to statistical accomplishments or rewards. Instead, **focus on their attitude, work ethic, and ability to be coachable and respectful. These transferable life skills are far more valuable than a goal scored, or a conference award won.** While accolades are exciting, they are temporary. They honor the entire season and experience, not the score and result.

When sports are experienced at their most successful, students are challenged and supported; they are allowed to fail and recover; they have opportunities to deal with adversity and succeed with integrity. They are empowered to advocate for

themselves; they develop as people and athletes. We hope our student-athletes at Austin High School have such an experience during their time wearing our scarlet and white.

In this handbook, we aim to understand better the issues surrounding a student's participation in interscholastic athletics. We hope that you will find this information both informative and beneficial. Thank you, families, for allowing our staff to coach and advise your child! **GO PACKERS!**

Sincerely,
Katie Carter
Austin High School - Director of Activities
Responsible . Resilient . Learner . Communicator . Contributor

CONTACT AND WEBSITE INFORMATION

AUSTIN ACTIVITIES WEBPAGE

We have a website for Austin Packers Activities located within the Austin Public Schools website. The Athletic Office and APS Communications Department manage this site. Sport-specific pages include contact information, calendars, game schedules, program handbooks, and more.

Please visit: www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/activities-office

AUSTIN ACTIVITIES SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow Austin Packers Activities on Facebook as well as Austin Public Schools on Facebook, Instagram, and X. These platforms regularly share informational and celebratory posts highlighting our Austin Packers.

Austin Athletics & Activities:



Austin Public Schools:



TEAM SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION APPS

Each team will use a communication app (i.e., Remind) to relay updates to players about schedules, bus times, events and more.

SCHOOL ADDRESS

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL
301 3RD ST. NE, AUSTIN, MN 55912

ACTIVITIES TEAM

- Activities Director, Katie Carter - katie.carter@austin.k12.mn.us
- Activities Assistant, Kelly Joseph - kelly.joseph@austin.k12.mn.us
- Athletic Trainer, Chelsey Kasel - kasel.chelsey@mayo.edu

- Activities Department Phone Number - 507.460.1825

EVENT SCHEDULES

For Austin and Big 9 Conference schedules, game times, locations, and bus times, you may visit www.big9.org

* This is the fastest/easiest way to stay connected and up to date about any changes. *

ADMISSION FEES, SEASON PASSES

Most AHS athletic events require admission tickets. Tickets are \$7/adults and \$5/students & seniors. We offer season passes for admission to home athletic and music events all year that can be purchased on our digital ticketing site GOFAN, or you can download the app on your phone. **Season pass prices: Family Pass \$150 (all minors, grades K-8 must live in the same household); Adult Pass \$60; Student K-8 Pass \$35; APS Spouse Pass \$35.**

AHS ATHLETICS PURPOSE, VALUES & VISION

PURPOSE

We provide diverse sports opportunities that develop CHARACTER and COMMUNITY

VALUES

- **RESPONSIBLE:** Demonstrates accountability to self and others
- **RESILIENT:** Develops perseverance and self-confidence
- **LEARNER:** Challenges self to think critically
- **COMMUNICATOR:** Listens actively and shares learning and experiences
- **CONTRIBUTOR:** Engages as a productive member of the community and global society

AUSTIN PACKERS ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT: DIRECTLY SUPPORTING APS STRATEGIC ROADMAP

Austin Packers Activities, under the direction of competent, caring professionals, provides successful, quality experiences in an enjoyable environment for students by providing a diverse and wide range of programs to attract many students, promoting positive school and community pride, developing strong, positive moral and performance character, developing sportsmanship, and setting expectations for individual and team excellence.



OUR PURPOSE

AHS features **education-based** sports programming. We are not club sports. We are not college or professional sports. what does this mean? It means that as scholastic, educational athletic programs, we are purpose *and* goal-oriented. Goals are the results or achievements toward which effort is directed or aimed– like winning a game. Purpose is the reason for which something exists or is done – like developing life skills. Goals have a beginning and an end. Purpose doesn't. Purpose is what we live for.

Our AHS coaches and programs aim to develop the whole child. Our shared **PURPOSE** is to develop values and life skills that are transferable to all aspects of students' lives now and in the future. These include integrity, sportsmanship, work ethic, empathy, teamwork, and more. We also intend to compete. Our **GOALS** include competitive, statistical, and scoreboard-related achievements.

As an AHS sports community, we must acknowledge that we have a purpose *and* goals. You are encouraged to discuss with your child about their purpose and goals as a student-athlete.



TITLE IX & ATHLETICS

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations (“Title IX”), schools may not discriminate on the basis of sex in their athletic programs and activities and must provide equal athletic opportunity to students of both sexes. In determining whether equal opportunity is provided to both boys and girls athletic teams, the following factors are considered:

- Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes;
- The provision of equipment and supplies;
- Scheduling of games and practice time;
- Travel and per diem allowance;
- Coaching;
- Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities;
- Provision of medical and training facilities and services;
- Publicity.

The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education uses a three-part test to determine whether the school is meeting its duty to provide equal opportunity in athletics:

1. The number of male and female athletes is substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or
2. The school has a history and continuing practice of expanding participation opportunities responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex; or
3. The school is fully and effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.

The school can show compliance with the requirements of Title IX by meeting any part of the three-part test.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDING/REMOVING ATHLETIC TEAMS AND LEVELS

The school strives to accommodate the interests and abilities of students in its athletic programs. In considering whether to add a proposed athletic activity or level, the school shall consider whether the activity is a Minnesota State High School League sponsored sport, the available funding, facilities, and staffing in compliance with Title IX.

Students and/or their parents may request changes to the school's athletic offerings by contacting the Activities Office.

TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Complaints of unlawful sex discrimination in the school's athletic programs should be made to the Title IX Coordinator. Additionally, any student who believes they have been the victim of unlawful sex discrimination or sexual harassment, or any person (including the parent of a student) with actual knowledge of conduct which may constitute unlawful sex discrimination or sexual harassment toward a student should report the alleged acts as soon as possible to the Title IX Coordinator. Refer to School Board Policy 522 – [Student Sex Nondiscrimination for additional information regarding the school's Title IX grievance procedure and process.](#)

JOINING A TEAM

AHS offers 30 different sports throughout the year. Most sports offer at least two levels of play, including varsity and junior varsity. Many sports offer three to five levels of play, including B-Squad/sophomore and/or C-Squad/Freshman teams.

Students interested in joining a team should visit the sport-specific website at <http://www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/activities-office>. Coaches and the Activities Department will post information about registration, pre-season meetings, equipment needed, levels offered, and more. They will also identify a team communication app for their sport that athletes are encouraged to join. Fall sports begin in mid-August, winter sports start in November, and spring sports start in March. Check out the website about four (4) weeks before the start of your season to get all the information you need.

A complete staff directory of head coaches, including email addresses, can be found [HERE](#).

Athletes must be registered and cleared by the AHS athletic office before starting practice. Registration is a fully online process. **You can find registration information on the athletics website [HERE](#).** Athletes must have a current sports-qualifying physical on file with the athletic office before starting registration. You can find your physical date under the health tab in the parent portal of Infinite Campus. New physicals can be emailed, faxed, or dropped off in the HS Athletic Office. **Sports Physical Form [HERE](#)**

There is a financial participation fee required to be on a team. Participation fees are \$100/sport. **Participation fees shall not be a barrier to participation.** If you have concerns or need financial assistance, please contact the athletic office at 507.460.1825 or email katie.carter@austin.k12.mn.us. **Educational Benefits form [HERE](#) (fill out if you feel you might qualify for benefits).**

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

FALL SPORTS

- CHEER (B&G)
- FOOTBALL
- SOCCER (B&G)
- GIRLS VOLLEYBALL
- CROSS COUNTRY (B&G)
- GIRLS TENNIS
- GIRLS SWIM & DIVE

WINTER SPORTS

- DANCE (B&G)
- HOCKEY (B&G)
- BASKETBALL (B&G)
- WRESTLING (B&G)
- GIRLS GYMNASTICS
- BOYS SWIM & DIVE

SPRING SPORTS

- ADAPTED BOWLING (B&G)
- SOFTBALL
- BASEBALL
- TRACK & FIELD (B&G)
- BOYS VOLLEYBALL
- GOLF (B&G)
- BOYS TENNIS

Activities & Clubs

- African Student Assoc.
- Archery
- Art Club
- Asian Student Union
- Austinares
- Austinian (Yearbook)
- Choralaires
- Fall & Spring Clay Target
- DECA
- Debate
- Diversity Club

- Drama Club
- FFA
- FIRST Robotics
- Future Teachers
- Go Green
- Hispanic/Latino Youth Group
- Jazz Band
- Knowledge Bowl
- La Fiera Chamber

- Marching Band
- NHS
- Pep Band
- Prom Committee
- Science Olympiad
- Speech
- STAND
- Student Council
- Vocal Jazz
- Weight Training
- Youth Leadership

AHS ACTIVITY DEPT.
507.460.1825

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/activities-office

How to Register in Parent Portal

Please note:

- Students **MUST** have a current sports physical on file to see our athletic offerings
- Activities and Clubs do not require a sports physical

Educational Benefits (formerly Free & Reduced Lunch) YOU could qualify for reduced or FREE activity fees!

It is very important for families to complete the Application for Educational Benefits. Applications for Educational Benefits determine how much funding your child's school receives for educational as well as other programs and support. Please fill out an application!

Additionally, eligible families can qualify for other benefits, such as:

- WIC Benefits
- FCC Affordable Connectivity Program/Reduced price internet programs
- Some summer camps, athletics programs, preschools and/or childcare programs offer scholarships or discounts.

Paper Ed Benefits PAPER Application:

<https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1752068918/austink12mnus/tmwdkn6esahnxsc6f17/FreeReducedLunchApp.pdf>

Online Application: Found in Parent Portal under
Food Service

AHS ACTIVITY DEPT.
507.460.1825

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.austin.k12.mn.us/district-offices/activities-office

Signing up for activity using Portal - School Store

1

Go to School Store
Choose School

2

Austin Online Academy Store

3

AHS HEAD COACH DIRECTORY

FALL HEAD COACHES:
CHEER: JUSTICE GUY
JUSTICE.GUY@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

FOOTBALL: ED SCHMITT
ED.SCHMITT@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS SOCCER: JENS LEVISEN
JENS.LEVISEN@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS SOCCER: DAVE BAHR
DBAHR@HILLERCARPET.COM

VOLLEYBALL: NICHELLE GABRIELSON
NICHELLE.GABRIELSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

CROSS COUNTRY: TONY EINERTSON &
ROBIN DEGLAVIN
TONY.EINERTSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US
ROBIN.DEGLAVIN@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS SWIM & DIVE: ALEXA DOLAN-
PETERSON & RYAN KELLY
ALEXA.DOLAN@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US
RYAN.KELLY@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS TENNIS: JEFF ANDERSON
JEFF.ANDERSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

WINTER HEAD COACHES:
DANCE: KAYLA SELLERS
KAYLA.SELLERS@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS HOCKEY: DENNY BRAY
DENNYB73.DB@GMAIL.COM

BOYS HOCKEY: TROY SCHAEFER
TROYSCHAEFER14@GMAIL.COM

WRESTLING: JAKE NELSON
JACOB.NELSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS BASKETBALL: JORDAN PLINE
JORDAN.PLINE@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS BASKETBALL: JAMAAL GIBSON
JAMAAL.GIBSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GYMNASTICS: AMY BICKLER
AMY.BICKLER@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS SWIM & DIVE: RYAN KELLY
RYAN.KELLY@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

SPRING HEAD COACHES:
ADAPTED BOWLING:
DANIEL.MARREEL@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

SOFTBALL: TBD

BASEBALL: JAKE NELSON
JACOB.NELSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

TRACK & FIELD: GABE NELSON & NANCY JONES
GABE.NELSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US
NANCY.JONES@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS GOLF: MATT RASO
MATT.RASO@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

GIRLS GOLF: DAVE BROWN
DAVID.BROWN@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS VOLLEYBALL: NATE THAW
NATE.THAW@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

BOYS TENNIS: JEFF ANDERSON
JEFF.ANDERSON@AUSTIN.K12.MN.US

MSHSL ELIGIBILITY & CODE OF CONDUCT

We are a proud member of the Minnesota State High School League and the Big 9 Conference. Participation in an MSHSL sport at AHS is a privilege. **Being on an AHS team means athletes are committed to following all MSHSL rules and regulations.** This includes but is not limited to:

- I will respect the rights and beliefs of others and will treat others with courtesy and consideration.
- I will be responsible for my actions and the consequences of my actions.
- I will respect the property of others.
- I will respect and obey the rules of my school and the laws of my community, state, and country.
- I will show respect to those responsible for enforcing the rules of my school and the laws of my community, state, and country.

Your sport-specific coach may have team standards and rules that best fit their unique program philosophy while supporting our AHS athletics purpose. These standards and rules will be clearly delineated and may be more restrictive than those set by the MSHSL.

TEAM SELECTION, STYLE OF PLAY

In each program, coaches are hired by the school district to be responsible for that sport. Team selection, style of play, game strategy, playing time, and decisions regarding game situations are the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. This subjective and objective process includes both quantitative (skills, agility, strength) and qualitative factors (maturity, coachability, work ethic). The head coach establishes the criteria for these decisions with input from their assistants. Coaches will share their team selection and philosophy of style of play at pre-season meetings.

THE 70% RULE

Over 70% of children who participate in a sport in elementary school do NOT participate in that sport in high school. Participating in high school athletics is a privilege. It is an experience that a statistical few have the opportunity to enjoy. If you are reading this, your child is one of them!

Research about why kids play/stay in sports shows that winning never makes the top five. Concurrently, when researching why kids quit sports, *not* winning does not make the top three. Kids love to compete. But it is more about growth and camaraderie. Athletics are about more than statistics and winning –ask the kids!

THE 96% RULE

96% of student-athletes will not participate in organized, competitive athletics after high school. This means your child has only a 4% chance of competing at *any* level of college athletics. Further, did you know that only 1% of high school athletes earn a scholarship at the Division I or II level? We are committed to supporting and developing the 4%. However, please note our broad and balanced commitment to the 96%. AHS athletics functions to support the holistic development of all student-athletes. It may be a byproduct, but it is not our mission to promote individuals for the sole purpose of post-secondary recognition or opportunity.

NCAA scholarship probability data can be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

PARTICIPATION PYRAMID

Student-athletes in high school sports programs will likely experience a "participation pyramid" as they age. This means there are often fewer opportunities as students move from 9th grade to varsity teams.

There is an increasingly competitive arc as teams evolve from being more developmental to more competitive. C-Squad/9th grade and B-Squad/Sophomore teams are typically filled with students from a single grade, while varsity teams roster students from multiple grades based on competitive criteria. Realistically, fewer student-athletes in each grade will compete from year to year as athletes progress from 9th to B to JV to Varsity teams. Please review the sport-specific expectations coaches provide about their program so that you can be informed about the progression of each level for that sport.

ATHLETE PROMOTION

ISD 492 implements an athletic department policy regarding the potential promotion of student-athletes in grades 7-10 on high school teams. For a promotion to be considered, coaches must receive approval from the athletic director, according to established departmental criteria. The intent and purpose behind this approach is to keep the sports participation pyramid as wide as possible, for as long as possible, at the C/9, B/Sophomore, and JV levels.

An exception to this policy is if we have limited participation numbers overall at a particular level and need to move student-athletes "up" to fill a roster and fulfill our obligation to a conference schedule.

A second exception would be for AHS programs offered for grades 7-12. (e.g., Tennis, Swim and Dive, Cross Country, Wrestling, Girls Golf, Girls Hockey, Gymnastics).

HOW TO BE THE BEST SPORTS PARENT YOU CAN BE

Your child's success or lack of success in sports – when measured by playing time, statistics, and awards - does not indicate what kind of parent you are. Having a coachable, respectful child, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient, and trying their best reflects your parenting. Research shows that (1) giving your child feedback has an impact and (2) the kind of feedback you give matters tremendously! Sports psychologists inform us that parent feedback should first and most often be developmentally supportive. Specifically, the following statements are most impactful, especially when they are not attached at all to statistics like minutes played, goals scored, or accolades awarded:

- **I love to watch you play.**
- **I love to watch you grow.**
- **I am proud of you.**

Engaging with your child directly before or after a game can be particularly challenging for both the parent and the athlete. Please take steps to ensure that the "ride home" or game-related conversation is healthy - where you demonstrate empathy and allow your son/daughter to steer the conversation – *if they want to discuss the event at all*. Please view and reflect on this "ride home" video lesson for three minutes. How might this influence your post-game parenting?

<http://truesportpur.ca/theridehome>.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR SPORTS PARENTS:

- *Changing the Game* by John O'Sullivan (book and website) <http://changingthegameproject.com/>
- *Why More is Less for WOSPs-How to be the Best Sports Parent You Can Be* – by Dr. John Tauer ([book - link](#))
- *A Parent's Guide to Helping Athletes Have a Successful Sport Experience* by Gregory Dale ([book - link](#))

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON THE STUDY OF YOUTH SPORTS:

- Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University (website) <http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/isys/>
- The Aspen Institute – Project Play (website)
- <http://www.aspenideas.org/speaker/Tom-Farrey?gclid=CPncxqXlz80CFQIOaQodR8UGUw>
- *Is It Wise to Specialize?* By John O'Sullivan ([book - link](#))
- *The Most Expensive Game in Town* by Mark Hyman (book, website) <https://markhyman.com/>
- *Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of Our Children* by Tom Farrey ([book-link](#))

SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is a big deal and a huge commitment! At its best, athletic competitions are of great value for the entire Austin community and society. It is a symbol of a great ideal - pursuing victory with integrity. Everyone involved in athletic competitions - especially the players, coaches, and parents - must respect the sports' traditions and other participants.

Disrespectful behavior towards opponents, officials, or anyone involved in your sport and events is unacceptable.

Profanity, trash-talking, taunting, and unseemly celebrations do not have a place at high school competitions and will not be tolerated at Austin High School events. We have high expectations. We know that sometimes our opponents or other schools may behave differently. We hold ourselves to a high standard and will set the bar high for behavior. Act with class at all times, places, and in all ways.

Did you know? Officials are required to be registered, certified, and complete annual continuing education requirements. They typically get paid between \$75-100 per game before taxes. Some are not compensated for travel.

The MSHSL currently has a record low number of available and new officials. The #1 reason why, according to officials? Unruly and disrespectful fans. *Please act with class at AHS.*

We cannot have competitions without officials. Games are increasingly being canceled and moved to non-traditional nights. As a parent, please be a part of a solution and not the problem. Set a positive example for your child and others. Refrain from disrespectful criticism, yelling and negative behavior, and hold your fellow fans to the same high standard.

Yelling and trying to coerce officials, opponents, or spectators into changing their behavior creates a hostile, negative atmosphere. When did an official last change a call because you yelled at them? Have you seen an opponent or fan change because you are taunting or screaming it at them? Of course, this sounds ridiculous! Yet, this kind of behavior does happen. And we need to be better.

Attending AHS athletic events is a privilege, and with that privilege comes responsibility. Responsibility to practice exemplary sportsmanship. Our collective behaviors all reflect upon AHS and help to form our reputation in the community. Please consider what you are modeling and your message regarding your actions and behavior. **Sportsmanship begins with you!**

GREAT SPORTSMANSHIP "101"

TOWARDS OPPONENTS

- Treat opponents as you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. We need opponents – we can't have a game or competition without them!
- Refrain from taunting or making derogatory remarks to opponents during the game, particularly any comments of ethnic, racial, or sexual nature. Refrain from intimidating behavior.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner that you would like to be greeted following either victory or defeat. Encourage injured players and recognize outstanding performances for both teams.

TOWARDS GAME RULES & OFFICIALS

- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete and the sport and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public. Treating them respectfully, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression on you, your team, your school, and our community.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with others. This will assist both them and you in achieving a better understanding and appreciation of the game.

OF SPECTATORS IN GENERAL...

- Remember that you are at a contest to support your team and to enjoy the skill and competition; do not ridicule the other team and its fans. Avoid antics that draw attention to you instead of the game.
- Remember that school athletics are student learning experiences, and mistakes are made.
- Remember that a ticket to a school athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to assault others and be generally obnoxious verbally.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during games and afterward on or near the site of the event (i.e., tailgating).
- Use only those cheers that support and uplift the teams involved. Be a positive behavior role model at events through your actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming.

OF PARENTS IN PARTICULAR...

- Understand the purpose of educational athletics. School sports are about kids learning and having fun.
- Understand that you are possibly the biggest role model in your child's life. Wild behavior in the stands and challenging the authority of coaches and officials do little to model positive behavior in your child's presence.
- Make your cheers during games that support your child – not instructions on how to play.
- Recognize that school coaches, officials, and administrators are facilitating leadership of your child's athletic activities. Model respect for this authority – openly and behind the scenes.

TIPS ON BEING A GREAT SPORTS PARENT

LET YOUR STUDENT CREATE THEIR OWN MEMORIES

Separate your sports life from theirs. Let your student discover their own sports journey. Help to calm the stormy waters but let them handle the navigational problems. They will learn to be their own person, which will most likely differ from you. This is developmentally appropriate!

TEACH RESPECT FOR OTHERS

There will be times when you disagree with a coach or official. Remember, they are trained, trying their best, and intend to be fair. Show good sportsmanship by assuming positive intent and treating the situation with respect. Cheer for good plays by both teams. Mention good calls by the officials to others.

Remember to have fun and enjoy the event!

LET THE COACH DO THE COACHING

When your student is competing, let the coach do the coaching. You can teach and model discipline, maturity, sportsmanship, and how to deal with success and failure. Develop your student-athlete's character and teach life skills that athletics bring to the forefront.

If you have questions about or problems with what the coach is doing, it is best to follow the conflict resolution process and seek a solution in person. Complaining and jumping to conclusions without all the necessary information rarely leads to an agreeable and rewarding experience.

HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN THROUGH FAILURE

How your students handle failure can help them face the failures life will throw at them in the future. The worst time for you as a parent to give advice is immediately after a disappointment. Let your student cope in their own way; then, later, they will be more receptive to your words of correction or advice.

GET TO KNOW THE COACH

Since the coach has a powerful influence on your student, take the time to attend parent meetings and get to know the coach's philosophy, expectations, and knowledge.

FOCUS ON YOUR CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Focus on what your students do well, how they contribute positively, and where they need to improve. Do not focus on the progress or success of other athletes. Especially if you wish it were different, do not assume your child does not enjoy their role on the team.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD...BUT STAY RATIONAL

Always listen to your child but remember to stay rational until you dig deeper to understand the situation better. Students often exaggerate both their heroics and their woes. They are teenagers and do not want to disappoint you. When appropriate, seek perspective from the coaches who are/were present.

BE MINDFUL OF YOUR ROLE AS A ROLE MODEL

Take a good, honest look at your actions and reactions in the athletic arena. These actions are a big cue to your student and others around you. Would your child be proud of your actions? Your spouse? Your employer?

SHOW UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

The most important thing is to show your child and communicate to them that you love and support them - win or lose - no matter their role *or how they performed*.

PARENT PLEDGE

Everyone involved in athletic competitions has to respect the traditions of the sport and other participants. As adults, it is our responsibility to teach and model self-control.

We have high expectations. Two simple rules can help:

1. KEEP IT **POSITIVE!**
2. DIRECT YOUR CHEERS TOWARD **OUR TEAM!**

If you follow these two rules, the event can be energized in a supportive way! Disrespectful behavior involving negative treatment of opponents and officials, profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting, and unseemly celebrations do not have a place at high school competitions and will not be tolerated at AHS events. Spectators who yell, scream, and coerce officials, players, coaches, and opponents create a hostile, negative atmosphere. These are not supportive behaviors. They are disruptive, have no proof of having a positive impact, and often embarrass themselves and their child.

Refrain from coaching your child from the stands. They have already demonstrated the courage to compete. They will do their best, and they will make mistakes. They can only process a limited amount of real-time information in the middle of an event. They cannot focus, compete, and communicate with their teammates and coaches...and try to listen to whatever you may try to yell at them.

Let go and let your child play.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND COACHES

Both parenting and coaching can be challenging vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we can better appreciate the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to your child. As parents, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on them. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

COMMUNICATION FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH

1. Expectations the coach has for your child, including sportsmanship and MSHSL rules and policies
2. Location and times of all practices and games and transportation expectations
3. Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, out-of-season training, lettering policy, etc.
4. Procedures to follow – should your child be injured, attendance at school on practice/game days, etc.
5. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation
6. Regular, individual meetings with players regarding roles, how to improve, etc.
7. Consistent, timely, thorough communication throughout the season (email, website, etc.)

COMMUNICATION THAT COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Specific concerns regarding a coach's philosophy and or expectations
3. Notification of any illness or injury of missed practices

As your child becomes involved in the programs at AHS, they may experience some of the most rewarding moments of their young lives. However, there may also be times when things do not go how you or your child wished. In some circumstances, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACHES

1. Treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It can be difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you hope or in a role you may not prefer. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you can see above, certain things can and should be discussed with the coach. Other things, such as the items below, must be left to the professional judgment of the coach.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH

1. Team selection
2. Playing time
3. Team strategy
4. Play calling
5. Other student-athletes

Certain situations may require a conference between the coach and the parents. **The student-athlete should be involved in these meetings and is expected to be.** To resolve any issue, we must have everyone's perspectives and involvement.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Some situations may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. However, you are requested to follow professional dialogue expectations. Both parties involved must have a clear understanding of the other's position. When a conference is necessary, the following steps are expected to be followed to promote resolution.

If there is a problem:

STEP 1: Have your son/daughter talk one-on-one with the coach – this is part of the learning and maturing process. * A developmentally appropriate exception can be made if involving a very young athlete, i.e., a 7th grader on a high school team. In these select cases, a parent can begin on step 2.

If the problem is not resolved:

STEP 2: Contact the coach for their insight into the problem. Parents are welcome to support the student-athlete through conversations with the coach after the initial player/coach discussion.

STEP 3: Set up a face-to-face meeting with the coach **and your son/daughter**. The call should be directed to the coaches' school phone number/email. Inquiries will be returned by coaches in a timely fashion, typically between 24-48 hours.

Parents Should Not:

1. Call the Athletic Director or AHS administration without participating in the first 3 steps.
2. Confront the coach before or after practice - in person, via phone, or electronically.

3. Confront the coach before or after a game - in person, via phone, or electronically.
4. Confront the coach before or after the banquet - in person, via phone, or electronically.

These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. ** Please allow for a 24-hour "processing" period and follow the 4-step process.

Coaches are professionals. A parent would not walk into a classroom during class time and confront the teacher about a poor grade. They would not walk into a doctor's office without an appointment to confront them about a diagnosis. **Please do not confront a coach in a public setting.** There are respectful, professional, and proper ways to communicate and have your concerns addressed. Practices and games are highly emotional times for everyone involved: players, coaches, and parents. Confrontations around these times take everyone out of their game. Like athletes who prepare mentally and physically for a practice or game, coaches are also thoughtful in their daily preparation. During a practice or game, coaches need to be able to focus 100% of their energy on the athletes as individuals and as a team.

If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution:

STEP 4: Contact the Athletic Director and request a meeting with all parties. If steps 1-3 have been followed appropriately, the AD will mediate a resolution between the student-athlete, coach, and parent.

We appreciate your respect for this professional, respectful chain of communication!

Focused dialogue is a crucial part of conflict resolution. Your willingness to follow the expectations is paramount to successfully resolving potential issues and ensuring positive outcomes.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Austin High School and the MSHSL have an academic eligibility requirement. Student-athletes will be certified as eligible to represent Austin High School (HHS) in Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) activities according to bylaw 108.00 of the MSHSL Official Handbook, which requires adequate progress toward graduation. Student eligibility status will fall into one of three categories:

- **Eligible:** Eligible for participation in all athletics without restriction.
- **Probationary:** Eligible for participation in all athletics subject to fulfillment of the requirements outlined below.
- **Ineligible:** May not participate in athletics.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

AHS student-athlete eligibility status will be determined based on the number of credits completed before and during athletic registration/participation. Student-athletes must have accumulated the minimum number of credits to be considered a member in good standing of the class to which they chronologically belong. **Entering the fall semester, a student must have 6 credits = sophomore, 12 credits = junior, 18 credits = senior.**

Students who do not meet the grade level credit requirement will remain ineligible until they accumulate the required credits to join their class, or have an academic plan with the Activities Director and AHS Admin and Teachers. Suppose a student begins a year with fewer credits than they need to qualify as eligible. In that case, they may gain eligibility at any time during the school year that they have attained the minimum number of credits to become a member in good standing of their chronological class. All incoming 9th graders will have initial, automatic eligibility for fall activities.

PROGRESS MONITORING

Any AHS student-athlete with two (2) or more "F's" at any time during the season will be placed on probation. Weekly grade checks for student-athletes throughout the season. A student-athlete may participate with one "F." More than one "F," and they are on probation until that grade is passing.

If any probation conditions are not met, the student will remain on probation and be immediately ineligible from competition (games/contests/events). The student will remain on the athletic roster and eligible to attend practices and other team functions as defined by the academic team. The student will remain on probation – and ineligible for competition – indefinitely until they meet their probation conditions.

PROBATION

Probation may include any or all of the following supportive interventions:

- Weekly homework, progress monitoring, and/or grade checks
- Temporary loss of athletic eligibility from practices and/or competitions
- Other assistive interventions, as determined by the academic team

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

To fully participate in athletic practice or competition, student-athletes must:

1. be present for 100% of their scheduled school day to be eligible to participate on that particular day
2. have no unexcused absences during a school day to be eligible on that given day
3. be present in school on time for 100% of the day following a game or competition in order to be eligible for the practice/game on that given day (or have written medical appointment verification or administrative permission)

PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE AHS ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

1. When students are involved in multiple school-sponsored activities at AHS, conflicts will arise where practices and/or competitions may be missed. Missing a practice or competition may directly affect the student's participation in those activities. Students are expected to adhere to the following:
2. The student should coordinate their schedules between activities and note the conflicts that might exist before becoming involved or trying out those activities.
3. If a conflict exists, the student should proactively contact the coaches and advisors involved before the conflict (s) to discuss the conflicts and possible resolutions.
4. Generally, participation in performance is considered a priority over a practice (i.e., a band concert before a soccer practice or a basketball game over a choir practice), and a varsity-level event is accepted as a priority over a non-varsity event.
5. If a conflict still exists, the advisors and coaches shall meet in person to resolve any potential conflicts and then coordinate a joint communication with the student.
6. If a conflict remains, the Athletic Director and/or Principal may intervene with the coaches and/or advisors involved to resolve the conflict.

LEADERSHIP & CHEMICAL/CONDUCT ELIGIBILITY

Austin High School values student leadership and focuses on character, integrity, respect, and citizenship development. Students will be recognized as leaders in our school community for outstanding effort, exemplary attitude, and positive contributions and achievements in these areas.

As part of this philosophy, **students who have a chemical or conduct violation as defined by the MSHSL will not be allowed to serve as a leader for one calendar year from the effective date of violation.** Specifically, students will not be allowed to serve as a sports captain, an officer in music, clubs, NHS, and Student Council, stand up as part of the Homecoming/Spirit Week or Winter Week courts, and all other elected or appointed leadership positions. All Austin Head Coaches and Advisors support and implement this policy as part of our school-wide mission to develop leaders and recognize positive contributors to the Packers community.

Further, students with a chemical violation are subject to MSHSL/HHS consequences. Students will be ineligible for the following contests/events, whichever is greater: 1st violation = 2 weeks/2 contests, 2nd violation = 3 weeks/6 contests, 3rd violation = 4 weeks/12 contests. Student-athletes will meet with the Athletic Director to determine the contests/events to be served for the violation within that student's sport or sports. Contests/events would carry over. A letter from the AD will be sent to the student, parents, and coaches detailing eligibility.

STUDENT TRAVEL, RELEASE TO PARENT PROTOCOL

When District transportation **IS** provided, a student participating in an activity must travel to and from events via District transportation. Exceptions to this practice may be extended as noted below.

- The parent/guardian must submit requests **at least 24 hours in advance**. Please complete and submit the Online Travel Release form for approval: [Travel Release Form - Austin Public Schools | Inspire. Empower. Accelerate.](#)

OVERNIGHT TRIPS PROCEDURE

When overnight trips are scheduled, participating students will be assigned hotel rooms with other students of the same gender. There is a two student per bed protocol. A student's gender, as used in this procedure, refers to either: (a) the gender that corresponds to the student's legal sex as listed in the school's official records; or (b) the gender with which the student consistently identifies, or which is sincerely held as part of the student's core identity.

Students may be permitted to identify another student with whom they would prefer to be assigned to the same hotel room ("Preferred Roommates"). Coaches/advisors will make reasonable efforts to house students with their Preferred Roommates of the same gender. Requests for Preferred Roommates who are not of the same gender as the requesting student will be reviewed upon request.. Coaches/advisors retain final decision-making power over hotel room assignments and may consider all known information, in addition to Preferred Roommate requests, when making decisions about which students will be assigned to share a hotel room. Nothing in this procedure shall prevent a student from sharing a hotel room with that student's parent or guardian who is serving as a chaperone, if that student chooses.

BOOSTER CLUBS

A "booster club" is defined as an organization formed to help support the efforts of a sports team, academic club, or social activity collectively. Support is shown in many ways, including volunteering time, talents, or treasures to enhance the team or organization's performance.

Booster clubs are separate from the school district. They are different entities with different laws and rules. However, a mutual understanding of the laws and rules that impact school and booster procedures is necessary. Booster representatives and AHS coaches shall maintain open dialogue and follow all relevant and required procedures dictated by the school district. The 501(c) legal parameters to maintain joint compliance.

SOCIAL MEDIA

AHS and ISD 492 do not have a formal social media policy for student-athletes. Students must be thoughtful and respectful about what and where they post material. AHS recognizes and supports the student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. However, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for Austin High School is a privilege. Student-athletes represent the school district and are encouraged to positively portray themselves, their teams, their school, and the school district. Social media comments and posts are an extension of their in-person behavior and will be held to high standards in alignment with the MSHSL code of conduct.

Do not have a false sense of security about student rights to freedom of speech – it is not unlimited. Online networks are not where student-athletes can say and do whatever they want without repercussions. The information posted on a social networking site is considered public and permanent. Think about who athletes represent: themselves, their family, their teammates and coaches, and their schools. Athletes should protect themselves by maintaining a self-image of which they can be proud... their athletic eligibility and, more importantly, their character and reputation depend on it!

THANK YOU

Thank you for making the time to read and engage with this handbook. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming AHS athletics event. Take care and GO PACKERS!