

2025 - 2026

Cactus Shadows High School



Parent Athlete Handbook



CAVE CREEK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Athletics Staff

Cactus Shadows High School

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Arizona Interscholastic Athletics (AIA)

Opportunities at Cactus Shadows High School

Fall Sports: Football, Cross Country, Volleyball, Swimming, Golf, Cheer and Pom

Winter Sports: Basketball, Wrestling, Soccer, Cheer and Pom

Spring Sports: Baseball, Softball, Tennis, and Track & Field

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1. **Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA):** Cactus Shadows High School is a proud member of the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA). The AIA Constitution and Bylaws are strictly enforced. You may read the AIA Constitution and Bylaws in their entirety at aiaonline.org.

2. **Positive Coaching Alliance**

The Cave Creek Unified School District is a proud partner with the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) in character education for athletes, coaches and parents. Creating a culture of positive behavior aligned with values can develop the ultimate goal of “Better Athletes, Better People”. As a district we will follow the PCA principles of the acronym ROOTS:

Rules are put in place for the betterment of contests and the safety of the student-athletes participating.

Opponents are a necessity. We will treat opponents with dignity and respect in victory and defeat.

Officials are also a necessity. We will treat the officials with dignity and respect in victory and defeat. All athletes and parents must demonstrate respect for game officials. Ejections will be dealt with swiftly and severely. In addition to AIA consequences, CCUSD will impose additional consequences.

First Offense

- Meet with Athletic Director the next school day
- Complete NFHS Sportsmanship Course

Second Offense

- Student or parent will meet with Athletic Director the next school day
- Athletes will be suspended 15 school days from participation in games
- Parents will be suspended 15 days from spectating at games (home and away).

Third Offense

- Removal of player from team
- Parent banned from attending games for remainder of the season
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Teammates are what make our teams strong. We will honor our teammates by treating them with respect regardless of their role within the team.

Self We will practice good sportsmanship and be a great teammate.

Through these important principles, CCUSD athletes, coaches and staff will Honor The Game!

3. **Parent Support and Involvement**

Parents of our athletes are encouraged to become involved in a booster club organization. This group is organized and run by parent boosters with the support of the athletics department. Parents may contact the Athletic Director for membership information or any other means the parent may wish to support the program. Please reference the CCUSD PTO and Booster Club Guidelines for additional information (Board Policy 1-402).

4. Hazing

Hazing is defined as any intentional knowing or reckless act committed by a person(s), whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student(s), and in which both of the following apply:

1. The act was committed in connection with an intention into, an affiliation with or the maintenance in any organization that is affiliated with an educational institution.
2. The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential and/or actual physical injury, mental harm or degradation (©5-408).

CCUSD has a zero tolerance for any acts of hazing. If a student suspects hazing is taking place or has been affected by hazing, then they must let their Coach, Athletic Director and/or Principal know immediately.

5. Social Media

Parents and students should be aware of the Arizona Revised Statute (ARS 13-2916) regarding the use of social media. The statute states “It is unlawful for any person, with intent to terrify, intimidate, threaten or harass a specific person or persons, to do any of the following:

1. Direct any obscene, lewd or profane language or suggest any lewd or lascivious act to the person in an electronic communication.
2. Threaten to inflict physical harm to any person or property in any electronic communication.
3. Otherwise disturbed by repeated anonymous, unwanted or unsolicited electronic communications to the peace, quiet or right of privacy of the person at the place where the communications were received.”

6. Participation Requirements

6.1 Register My Athlete

Athletes must have a complete Register My Athlete account with all documentation uploaded before beginning tryouts and practice. <https://www.registermyathlete.com/login/>

6.2 Signed Athletic Code of Conduct

This document shall be electronically signed within Register My Athlete (RMA) and agreed to by all participants.

6.3 Birth Certificate

Must be recorded and on file with the school administrative office.

6.4 Brainbook and Opioid Education

Must be recorded and uploaded to Register My Athlete. All athletes must take the concussion education course Brainbook and Opioid Education Course. They are only required once in a high school career and are available at aiaacademy.org or within Register My Athlete (AIA Bylaw 14.14).

6.5 Enrollment

Enrollment Only students attending CSHS AIA member school in grades 9 through 12, inclusive, shall be eligible for interscholastic competition at the school. A home-schooled student may be eligible if said student is in compliance with A.R.S. 15-802.01(A). Online schools are not considered home-school and are not eligible for competition.

6.6 Insurance

All athletes must be insured by his/her parent or guardian and evidence of insurance provided including insurance company and policy number. Insurance information must be uploaded onto Register My Athlete.

6.7 Academics

Students must be enrolled in 6 credit receiving classes. Graduating seniors must be enrolled in 4 credit receiving classes.

Academic Eligibility: In order to be academically eligible, a student-athlete must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 (C average) with No F's. Seniors must be enrolled in a minimum of four credit earning courses, and all students must be enrolled in six credit earning courses. Students and parents may access grades on-line to ensure student athletes are maintaining eligibility and adequate progress toward graduation.

Grade checks will be performed every 2 weeks by the Athletic Department. Students who are failing one or more classes (cumulative), have 3 or more D's or fall below a 2.0 average will be INELIGIBLE from the date of the grade check and unable to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities. Once the student has raised their GPA to a 2.0 or above and has no F's they may fill out a grade verification sheet and have the Athletic Director or Principal sign off with their approval. Once the verification has been signed by the Athletic Director or Principal it must then be given to the head coach. The student will then be reinstated to their current sport or activity. Failing grades include those earned as a result of excessive tardiness or absences. Students who receive an "I" or "W/F" may remain ineligible for the remainder of the semester. Students ineligible due to grades may still practice, but may not travel with the team to games/competitions if instructional minutes at school will be missed. This includes trips that may be non-refundable. It is important that athletes understand they are students first and their first priority is to maintain good academic standing while in their season of sport.

Individual programs may include higher standards of academic accountability and coaches may select to check grades more frequently in order to promote academic eligibility.

6.8 Athletic Fees

There is a \$335 athletic fee for each AIA sport and this must be paid prior to the first contest and before uniforms and equipment is handed out. CSHS has a family cap of \$1,005. The athletic fees cover the cost of transportation, officials, coaches' stipends, one tournament fee per team and the AIA membership dues. Additional fundraising per sport is dependent on the needs of the program at that time.

Under no circumstances should a parent/guardians or family members electronically send coaches money (e.g. Venmo, Paypal, Zelle). If cash is used, you will receive a receipt.

6.9 Attendance

Athletes must be in attendance on the day of games at least 50% in order to participate unless excused by administration. Athletes must be in attendance on the day of practice at least 50% in order to practice unless excused by administration.

7. Athlete Behavior

It is expected that all athletes demonstrate good sportsmanship and citizenship at all times. Cactus Shadows Athletes are to be positive leaders on and off campus. Athletes not living up to this expectation may lose team membership or playing privileges.

8. Parent Expectations

We expect parents to join the staff in setting good examples. The school officials are responsible for taking corrective actions when spectators create or contribute to behavior problems. In following with our partnership with the Positive Coaching Alliance we are asking parents to help build a positive culture and behaviors within or programs. We ask that parents do not interfere with the coaches' responsibilities on the court or field of play. A parent who does not meet the parent expectations may be asked to leave the event. Certain violations of the parent expectation may result in a parent being trespassed from a school property and unable to attend future school events.

9. Coaches Expectations

We expect coaches to foster and build an environment putting academics first and foremost. We believe it is the coach's responsibility to support academics, build leadership and create upstanding citizens rather than a "win at all cost" mentality. We expect coaches to engage with school representatives, parents and the community to create a positive culture for their program. Coaches who also coach club must not make their high school athletes feel pressured to participate at the club level in order to play for the high school. We expect coaches to encourage athletes to be multi-sport athletes and collaborate and work with other coaches.

10. Team Selections

The AIA has certain sports who must make team selections due to the number of athletes they are allowed to have play. Our coaches have developed tryout procedures that look at the player's skill, talent, behavior, leadership along with current academic standings. Every single athlete that shows up for tryouts is given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills, talent and behavior. The decisions made by coaches are final.

11. Transportation

The \$335 athletic pay to play fee helps to cover the cost of district transportation. Athletes under no circumstances are allowed to transport themselves to or from games, meets or tournaments. Parents may not transport student athletes except in emergency situations approved by the school administration.

12. NCAA Eligibility Center

We suggest students who are interested in playing college sports to register on the NCAA Eligibility Center website. To be successful in college, students need to be prepared for college coursework. In Division I and Division II, the NCAA sets academic initial-eligibility standards that take into account GPA, standardized test scores, core courses taken in high school and the grades earned in those core courses. Division III schools hold student-athletes to the same overall standards for the institution in which they're enrolling. All student-athletes also must meet the unique acceptance requirements of the college or university they plan to attend (which may exceed NCAA standards). <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

13. Athletic Code of Conduct

All athletes, spiritline, theater, band and team managers must follow the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Cave Creek Unified School District. Our entire Athletic Department is committed to enforcing the Code of Conduct. Playing for the Falcons is a privilege, not a right. Our program has but one rule: "Don't do ANYTHING that is detrimental to yourself or the program." In accordance with the Code of Conduct, no member of the Cactus Shadows athletic team, spiritline, theater, band or team manager will:

Substance Abuse: Knowingly use, attempt to use, possess, sell, distribute, or assist any other student in use of the following:

- A. Tobacco/nicotine products;
- B. Alcoholic beverages- including transporting alcohol in a car or consumption of alcohol;
- C. Any form of controlled substance/drugs. Look-a-like drugs/drug paraphernalia, other than those prescribed by a physician for that student;
- D. Performance enhancement drugs or performance enhancement drug paraphernalia.

Behavior: Exhibit any behavior that the Athletic Department or District Administration considers detrimental to the athlete's team or school. Some examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to: illegal acts, insubordination, unsportsmanlike conduct, inappropriate use of social media, theft, fighting, vandalism, plagiarism, intentionally lying to school officials, falsifying information/signatures on permission or eligibility forms, hazing, bullying or intimidating acts.

*Upon any school disciplinary action, or law related offense, a student will be automatically suspended according to the appropriate offense number and category.

Suspension: The student is not allowed to participate in practices if enrolled in FALCON PRIDE (in-school suspension) or suspended off campus. Students are not allowed to dress out for games/competitions or attend while serving suspension. Students are not allowed to travel with the team to away games/competitions in district or chartered vehicles while serving suspension.

Offenses: Students who violate the Code of Conduct will be declared ineligible and suspended from participation as follows:

A. First Offense

1. **Substance Abuse** Tobacco/nicotine products, alcoholic beverages, or any form of a controlled substance (drugs, look-alike drugs, drug paraphernalia) other than those prescribed by a physician for that student. The student will be suspended for 90 days in his/her current sport season/activity or the first scheduled sport in which the student participates. The student may enroll in a Substance Abuse Program approved by a school counselor. Documentation of enrollment in an approved program must be given to the Dean of Discipline and the Athletic Director within 5 days after notification of the offense, which will result in a 30 day suspension. Failure to enroll in an approved substance abuse program will result in the student's suspension for the entire 90 days. The suspension may be added to the next sport season for non-completion of the approved Substance Abuse Program.
2. **Behavior** The student will be suspended for 14 days in his/her current season or the first scheduled sport/activity in which the student participates.

B. Second Offense

(TWO VIOLATIONS) of the code of conduct (SUBSTANCE ABUSE and/or BEHAVIOR) will result in immediate removal from the current sport/activity and total exclusion from interscholastic athletics/activities at Cactus Shadows High School for the remainder of the academic year, August through July.

C. Appeal Process

A student who feels that his/her due process rights (not given the ability to share their side) have been violated, may appeal; the suspension to the administrative review board (Athletic Director's Office) comprised of a building level administrator, coach/sponsor, and other school personnel appointed by the Principal). The appeal must be made within five (5) school days of the notification of suspension. The appeal must be in writing and must state the reasons why the student feels that his/her due process rights were violated. If the administration Review Board determines that the student was not followed in all substantive respects, the Administration Review Board may modify the discipline. The Administrative Review Board will review the appeal within five (5) school days of receiving the appeal, and the results of the appeal conference will be communicated to parents/guardian. The decision of the Administrative Review Board is Final.

Alleged Infraction: If there is an unconfirmed violation(s) of the Code of Conduct, the student's privilege of participation may be immediately withdrawn and a meeting will be held to discuss the alleged infraction(s). The parent/guardian shall be notified and advised of the date and time of this meeting in a timely manner. The meeting may include (the student, parents/guardians, Athletic Director/Administrator, and coach/advisor/sponsor) will meet to determine if there has been a violations(s) of the Code of Conduct. If the student fails to attend the meeting, the meeting will be held in the student absence, and any sanction or suspension will be served during the student's subsequent season. Multiple violations may be discussed during one meeting and may lead to multiple consequences.

Dates of Sanction (suspension): Violations of the Code of Conduct are cumulative, beginning when the student and parents sign the Code of Conduct and continuing through one academic year (August through July). These policies are in effect on or off campus, throughout the entire academic year, including weekends and school sponsored summer teams/activities, and do not supersede Cave Creek Unified School District disciplinary policies. Suspension for violations will start from the point of confirmation of the infraction and contact with parent/guardian and athlete. If a student participates in a sport or activity after a violation of the Code of Conduct, he/she must complete the season in good standing and may not earn an award in the sport or activity during which the suspension is being administered. Students who are unable to complete a suspension during the course of the season or activity, shall complete the suspension during the next season.

14. Communication

All communication with student-athletes will abide by Governing Board Policy ©4-202. The only written form of communication with students will be through a district-provided email or approved district communication app such as Parent Square. Coaches will not have verbal or text conversations with students or parents on cell phones.

Please refrain from contacting a coach until 24 hours after a game. Meetings can be set-up with coaches upon request. Athletic concerns should follow the CCUSD *Problem Solving Guide* found in the Student Handbook. Playing time is never an allowed discussion point.

Athletics

Step 1–Coach, if not resolved...

Step 2–Assistant Principal (Athletics), if not resolved...

Step 3–School Principal, if not resolved...

Step 4–Director of Student Services, if not resolved...

Step 5–Asst. Supt. of Human Resources, if not resolved ...

Step 6–Superintendent

15. Health and Safety

A certified athletic trainer is on staff. **If a student sees an outside medical practitioner for a sports injury, the student cannot return to play until that outside medical practitioner clears the student for participation.**

The health and safety of participants in interscholastic athletic activities must receive careful consideration. In response to relevant athletic association directives and medical advisories, appropriate guidelines, information and forms to inform and educate coaches, pupils and parents of Heat Acclimatization and Exertional Heat Illness and the risks of continued participation in athletic activity after a related episode. District and school health and safety

management plans may include Heat Acclimatization Protocol, Hydration Strategies, Return to Play standards, and follow-up/clearance requirements released by the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) as Bylaw 14.17 and duplicated in ©5-410.

In consultation with the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) guidelines, information and forms to inform and educate coaches, pupils and parents of the dangers of concussions and head injuries and the risks of continued participation in athletic activity after a concussion.

Before a student participates in an athletic activity, the student, the student's parents, and the coaches shall participate in a District program to educate program participants of the danger of concussions, head injuries, and the risk of continued participation in athletic activity after a concussion.

A student who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice session, a game, or other interscholastic athletic activity shall be immediately removed from the athletic event. A coach from the student's team or an official or licensed health care provider may remove a student from play. A team parent may also remove his or her own child from play. A student may return to play on the same day if a health care provider rules out a suspected concussion at the time the student is removed from play. On a subsequent day, the student may return to play if the student has been evaluated by and receives written clearance to resume participation in athletic activity from a health care provider who has been trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries as prescribed by A.R.S. [15-341](#).