

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Student Athlete & Parent

Athletic Handbook

2026-2027



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Duplin County Schools Athletics

The primary purpose of the Duplin County Schools' athletic program is to promote the physical, mental, social, emotional, and moral well-being of the participant. It is hoped that coaches will help athletes in our schools and will be a positive force in preparing our youth for an enriching and contributing role in the 21st Century.

Student athletes must be taught that 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 shall be expected to follow the rules established by the Athletic Department and other specific coaches' rules for their sport. Each student-athlete represents his/her school and student body. The coach and parent have the responsibility to lead by example and to promote healthy wholesome athletic programs free from unsportsmanlike conduct.

The athletic program is an important and integral part of the total school program and is open to participation by all students regardless of individual differences. It is understood that coaching staff dedicate extra time, energy, and responsibilities that are essential to a successful athletic program. In order to provide the highest standards for our athletic programs, coaches must willingly assume these obligations. These individuals must understand they will make sacrifices not required of others in the areas of time, effort, obligation, and the ideals of sportsmanship.

The athletic departments will enforce all rules and regulations as described in the Parent & Student Athletic Handbook and the Duplin County Schools Policy Manual pertaining to academics and conduct.

What You Must Do Before the First Practice

The following things are to be completed by the middle school and high school athletes **before the first practice** with any team:

- Meet academic eligibility and residency requirements
- Take and pass physical examination
- Obtain parental signature on physical exam
- Paid athletic insurance
- Parent information and consent form
- Parent and Athlete Sportsmanship form and Honor Code
- Parent signature on at-risk form
- Gfeller-Waller paperwork must be completed prior to the first practice

North Carolina Coaches Association
Code of Ethics
Coaches Responsibilities

When entering the coaching profession, a coach accepts certain obligations and responsibilities to players, fellow coaches, and to the game each coach directs. If we are to keep the coaching profession on a respected level, we must assume all these responsibilities in such a way that gives our profession honor and dignity.

- The coach in contact with each player should, by principle and example, set a pattern of behavior for each student, for a coach influences students more than any other person. Parents put their dearest possessions under a coach's guidance, and should be able to see that they are better for having played under you.
- The coach should see that every injured athlete is given immediate medical attention.
- Coaches should remember the position they hold in the school system, and that they must support the administration in all policies, rules and regulations. Differences in policies should be discussed behind closed doors.
- The coach should inspire in every student the ability to achieve the highest academic success possible.
- Every coach should have knowledge of all rules of the game which he/she is in charge of. Coaches should never attempt to disregard any rules to use to their advantage.
- Coaches should stress good sportsmanship, and if they defend the use of unsportsmanlike tactics, they should be considered guilty of a breach of coaching ethics.
- Every coach should advise players as to the proper conduct they should exhibit in meetings with the press and how they should conduct themselves in player interviews, for their protection to avoid any embarrassment.

An Athlete's Conduct

- A. The conduct of an athlete in uniform is fully covered in the **rules and regulations of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and the Public Schools of North Carolina.**
- B. It is the responsibility of the home team to provide faculty supervision at all athletic contests.
- C. Responsibility for the enforcement of all regulations and rules rests with the principal, coach, athletic director, and the Duplin County Schools.
- D. Regarding athletic **fighting** and being ejected from a game.

The LEA, which has jurisdiction over the school, may impose additional penalties. LEA's or conferences who adopt additional penalties should have penalties published prior to the first game in the first sport of the school year. Officials have been instructed to notify the principal of the school from which an ejection has occurred for the following to be enforced.

This policy applies to all persons involved in athletic contests, including student-athletes, coaches, managers, and game administrators. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

- **fighting**, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
 - an attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hands, arms, legs, or feet
 - an attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made
 - an attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate
- **taunting or baiting**
- **profanity**, directed toward an official or opponent
- **obscene gestures**, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate
- **disrespectfully addressing or contacting an official**

Penalty for an ejection for the above reasons:

- A. **For a first offense:**
 - a. The person shall be reprimanded and suspended for the next game at the level of play (varsity, junior varsity, or middle/jr. high) and for any intervening games at any level.
- B. **For a second offense:**
 - a. The person shall be placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at that level of play
- C. **For a third offense:**
 - a. The person will be suspended 365 days or a full school year from the time of infraction.
- D. **Teams in the following situations will not be allowed to participate in Tournament play** (or the remainder of the season for those who do not play a tournament):
 - a. a team whose players and coaches accumulate six or more individual ejections during a regular season
 - b. a team whose players and coaches accumulate more than three individual ejections for fighting during the regular season.
- E. All rules and regulations for the successful operation of an athletic program not covered in this manual may be found in the **North Carolina High School Athletic Association Handbook and the Public Schools of North Carolina Middle/Junior High Athletic Manual.**
- F.

Parent-Coach Relationship

Parenting and coaching are both extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater benefit to children. As parents, when your child is involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on him/her. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the sport.

Communications You Should Expected From Coaches

- Start of the season parent meeting for each sport.
- Philosophy of the coach.
- Expectations and goals the coach has for your child as well as for the team/season.
- Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, special equipment, strength and conditioning programs.
- Procedure if your child is injured during participation.
- Team rules, guidelines and consequences for infractions.
- Lettering criteria.
- Team selection process.
- Eligibility requirements including attendance.
- Proper care and responsibility for equipment issued by the school.

Communication Coaches Should Expect From Athletes & Parents

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance.
- Notification of illness or injury as soon as possible.

As our student-athletes become involved in our programs at middle and high school, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important we understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way parents and students expected. During these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding and resolution.

If You Have A Concern To Discuss With A Coach, You Should:

1. Call or e-mail the coach to schedule an appointment.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the School Athletic Director; he/she will set a meeting for you.

Parents are asked to not attempt to address a coach before or after a contest or practice. Please allow coaches 24 hours before contact is made. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive resolutions. Coaches should politely acknowledge they will meet with parents at an appropriate time.

Appropriate/Inappropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches

The following topics are appropriate for discussion:

- The treatment of your child.
- Ways to help your child improve his/her skills.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches are not expected to respond to questions involving the following topics:

- Amount of playing time, positioning, and event entry.
- Team strategies, game tactics, play calling.

Duplin County Schools Athletic Eligibility for Middle Schools/MS Ejection Policy

The following will govern the athletic teams at the middle schools. Each coach is directly responsible for administering the rules in a fair and equitable manner. All athletic directors will check athletic eligibility. Each principal is responsible for certifying that all eligibility requirements are being met by signing the eligibility list.

Only students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th can participate in middle school interscholastic athletic competition. In order to qualify for public school participation a student must meet the following requirements:

1. A student shall not participate on a sixth, seventh, or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.
2. A student must receive a medical examination prior to tryouts. This medical examination is good for 395 days.
3. Each student must meet the specified academic requirements as listed on the academic requirement list.
4. Student-athletes must meet the Duplin County Schools attendance requirements to be eligible for athletics. Athletic eligibility is determined on the first day of the semester. If any school allows a student-athlete to make up missed time, this must be completed prior to the 1st day of that semester. Please refer to the Student Handbook or your Athletic Director for further information on the district's attendance policy and athletic eligibility. Attendance must meet LEA and charter attendance policy the previous semester. Students must attend at least 85 percent of the total number of instructional days in the LEA during the previous semester.
5. Support personnel (statisticians, managers, student trainers, camera crew, etc.) who are associated with athletics must follow the same attendance and academic requirements as athletes.
6. Cheerleaders are required to follow the same guidelines as all other athletes.
7. All athletes are required to enroll in the athletic insurance plan.
8. **Semester Rule:** No student may be eligible to participate at the middle school level for a period lasting longer than six (6) consecutive semesters beginning with the student's entry into sixth grade.
9. **Residence:** The student may only participate in the district the LEA assigns the student.
10. Students of the Gateway Program, Renaissance Center and the Early College are not eligible to participate in athletics.
11. Students must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult.

Middle School Ejection Policy

1. First Offense, Suspended next game.
2. Second Offense, Placed on probation and suspended for the next two games.
3. Third Offense, Suspended for 365 days

Duplin County Schools

Academic/Athletic Middle School Eligibility

1. **Attendance:** The student attended at least 85% of the total instructional days during the previous semester.

Course Performance: The student passed at least 70% of the courses taken during the previous semester. For middle school students, this includes passing both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

Promotion Requirements: The student is making sufficient progress toward meeting the academic and curricular requirements established by the Public School Unit (PSU) and the State Board of Education for promotion to the next grade level or graduation within the next calendar year.

Beginning-of-Year Eligibility: Eligibility at the start of a school year shall be based on the student's end-of-year academic performance from the previous school year. Middle school students must have passed English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for the academic year to be eligible for interscholastic athletics during the following school year.

2. Athletes must meet local promotion guidelines in order to be eligible for participation in athletics.
3. If a student meets promotion standards at the end of the 5th grade year, he/she automatically becomes eligible for athletics during the first semester of the 6th grade. At the end of the school year, a student's first semester and second semester grades will be averaged to determine if the student remains eligible. Attendance must be checked on students in 7th and 8th grade and students must be in compliance with Duplin County Schools attendance policy as of the 1st day of the semester.
4. Athletes' eligibility will be determined each semester. Coaches are encouraged to monitor athlete's grades **at the end of each nine weeks.**
5. Any hardship requests must be made two weeks prior to the beginning of a sports season. Any requests after that time will not be considered. The Middle School Hardship Committee will hear middle school hardship requests. This committee will be composed of two uninvolved principals, two uninvolved athletic directors. The county athletic director will moderate the appeal and cast a vote only in the event the Middle School Hardship Committee fails to reach consensus.
6. **Students are ineligible the day report cards are distributed.** If report cards are distributed on a Wednesday and a student-athlete has a game that Wednesday, the student is ineligible to participate. Coaches should regularly monitor student-athlete grades so when report cards are distributed he/she knows which athletes are eligible to participate. Athletic Directors should ensure ineligible players are removed from the roster within 3 days of report cards being distributed.
7. Students of the Gateway Program, Renaissance Center and the Early College are not eligible to participate in athletics.
8. Student must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult
9. The attendance policy for Duplin County School athletics, per policy 3620 is below:
Policy Code: 3620 Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities in promoting leadership and team skills, practicing democratic principles, and encouraging the lifelong learning process. Students are encouraged to

participate in opportunities available at the school, including interscholastic athletics and student organizations. All activities are open to all students attending that school unless a restriction is justified and has been approved by the principal. The principal shall ensure that students and parents are notified of the various opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities. The principal shall establish any rules necessary for school- and student initiated extracurricular activities.

A. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

Participation in extracurricular activities, including student organizations and interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right, and may be reserved for students in good academic standing who meet behavior standards established by the Board and the school. Participation in extracurricular activities may be restricted if a student (1) is not performing at grade level as provided in policy 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress; (2) has exceeded the number of absences allowed by policy 4400, Attendance; (3) has violated the student conduct standards found in the 4300 series of policies; or (4) has violated school rules for conduct. In addition, in order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics participation, students must have been in daily attendance 85 percent of the previous semester and must meet all eligibility standards of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and any locally established requirements for interscholastic athletics participation. Students not present in school will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities (including but not limited to athletics, clubs, prom, etc.).

School administrators choosing to exercise the authority to restrict participation based upon any of the reasons provided in this paragraph shall provide this policy and any additional rules developed by the superintendent or the principal to all parents or guardians and students. The grievance procedure provided in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized by parents or students who believe that a student has been aggrieved by a decision made pursuant to this policy.

B. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Extracurricular activities may be used as a component of an at-risk student's intervention plan. The intervention plan may include providing for or restricting the student's participation in extracurricular activities. If the plan restricts the student's participation, the plan must include other intervention strategies designed to improve student performance.
2. Students with disabilities must be accorded the legal rights required by federal and state law.

State of North Carolina Eligibility

Academics

In grades sixth, seventh and eighth, the student must pass at least 70 percent of the courses taken in the preceding semester. This includes passing the core subjects of English/Language Arts and Math; and meet promotion standards established by the LEA. If an athlete is "academically eligible" or "academically ineligible" at the beginning of any semester, that status is retained throughout the full semester. It is the responsibility of the school principal to check the academic status of each student/athlete enrolled in school at the beginning and close of a semester. Promotion is defined as progressing to the next grade.

NOTE: An athlete becomes eligible or ineligible on the first day of the new semester.

Age

The principal must have evidence of the legal birth date of the student. A student shall not participate on a **sixth**, seventh, or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31st of that school year. A student shall not participate on a ninth-grade junior high school team if the student becomes 16 years of age on or before October 16 of that school year. A middle/junior high school student who is over age for middle/junior school play shall be eligible for senior high school participation. Ninth graders can be divided so that some play with the seventh and eighth grades at the middle school provided the ninth grade is housed at the same building. Others play at the senior high level, depending upon local policy. Once a student begins practicing with a high school team, he/she may not, at a later date, move down to the seventh, eighth or ninth grade (junior high school) team. A ninth-grade student beginning play with the junior high school team may, at a later date, move to the high school team but could not return to the junior high school team.

Attendance

Student-athletes must meet the Duplin County Schools attendance requirements to be eligible for athletics. Athletic eligibility is determined on the first day of the semester. If any school allows a student-athlete to make up missed time, this must be completed prior to the 1st day of that semester. Please refer to the Student Handbook or your Athletic Director for further information on the district's attendance policy and athletic eligibility. Attendance must meet LEA and charter attendance policy the previous semester. 85% rule was the last semester for all LEAs.

Medical Form

The student must receive a medical examination every 13 months (395 days) by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, subject to the provisions of G.S.90-9, 90-18.1, and 90-18.2. Recommended medical examination forms are found in the Appendices.

Promotion

In grades sixth, seventh, and eighth, the student must meet state and local promotion standards each semester. This includes the academic requirement listed above. Regardless of the school organization pattern, a student who is promoted from the fifth-grade to the sixth grade automatically meets the courses passed requirement for the first semester of the sixth grade. LEAs should adopt a policy incorporating the gateways or other promotion requirements.

Residence

The student must meet the residence criteria of G.S. 115C-366(a). The student may participate only at the school to which the student is assigned by the LEA. Transfers within the same administrative unit may be governed by the local Board of Education policy. A student transferred from one administrative unit to another by mutual agreement as provided in G.S.115C-366.1 (F) is immediately eligible for athletic participation in the receiving unit.

Semester Rule

No student may be eligible to participate at the middle school level for a period lasting longer than six (6) consecutive semesters beginning with the student's entry into sixth grade. The principal shall have evidence of the date of each player's entry into the sixth grade and monitor the six (6) consecutive semesters.

Eligibility Lists

Eligibility lists shall be certified with the signature of the principal and filed with the local superintendent (or his/her designee) prior

to the first game or contest in that sport. One copy shall be kept on file in the office of the principal. All eligible students shall be included and all information must be complete and accurate when certified by the principal. It is recommended to keep these on file for at least three years.

Conforming Rules

To conform middle school athletic rules with rules governing high school athletics the following shall apply:

- In defining participation in middle/junior high school athletics, dressing and sitting on the bench shall be interpreted as playing in the game.
- Summer school attendance shall not be counted in determining percentage of attendance of athletic eligibility.
- Girls are allowed to participate on a boy's interscholastic athletic team where the school does not have a girls' team in the same sport. (Fast pitch softball is not the same as baseball).
- Boys are not allowed to participate on any girls' team as defined by interpretation of the Office of Civil Rights interpretation of Title IX in 1994.

Games and Contests

Evening contests and/or games shall start no later than 7:00 p.m. when followed by a school day. The exception is for tournaments. There shall be no interscholastic athletic practice or contest during the regular school day of the school calendar year. There shall be no Sunday practice or contest in any sport. This includes the assembling of members of athletic squads for purposes of viewing films, chalk talks, or other matters pertaining to coaching. One (1) pre-season scrimmage is permitted with other school teams in each sport. Non-school team scrimmages are not permitted in any sport. The scrimmage does not count as one of the seven (7) football regular season games or 14 other sport events.

Football shall be played as a fall sport. All other sports may be played during any sport's season during the school year and begin as follows:

- Fall, beginning of the fall semester not to exceed November 15, (See football regulations.);
- Winter, October 15 to March 1; and
- Spring, February 1 to the end of school.

State Clinics

It is recommended that the head coach attend one of the NCAAHPERD or North Carolina Coaches Association state clinics in the sport he/she coaches.

Students with Identified Disabilities

Students with identified disabilities are eligible for participation in athletic programs for grades sixth-eighth. Ninth graders participating in high school athletics are governed by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

- Academic eligibility is determined by the student making progress toward meeting the educational goals on the IEP as determined by the school-base committee.
- A student with a disability must meet all other requirements that apply to the regular education student such as age, attendance, and other requirements.

Ejection

For the first offense, the person shall be reprimanded and suspended for the next game at the level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level; For a second offense, the person shall be placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at that level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level; For a third offense, the person shall be suspended for one calendar year. A coach who is suspended at any level of grades 6-12 (middle school, or high school) may not coach at any other grade level in grades 6-12 during the period of suspension. Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season. If a non-member of the school's coaching staff is present to assume an ejected coach's duties, the contest shall be terminated by a forfeit.

Additional Duplin County Athletic Rules

The Duplin County Board of Education realizes the responsibility of coaches, principals, referees, and administrators in regards to proper supervision, instruction, and liability while conducting athletic programs. The Duplin County Board of Education appreciates the efforts made on the part of each individual involved. To ensure our athletic programs are safe, the following additions and guidelines will be incorporated into the existing athletic policy:

1. Injured or Sick Athletes – Students absent from athletic practice for five or more days due to illness or injury shall have a medical examination by a physician licensed to practice medicine before re-admittance to practice or contest.
2. Injury of Player During Athletic Event – If an athlete sustains injuries requiring medical attention by a doctor or medical facility, a brief written account of the accident will be submitted by the head coach to the principal. The report will be written after proper attention has been provided for the athlete and the athletic contest or practice has been completed. If the principal feels the necessity, he will contact the booking agent for a report from the official.
3. Safety Check of Athletic Facility – The Athletic Director and the coach will check the athletic facilities of each school on a seasonal basis, to ensure the safety of the facility. The coach will report any safety hazards they observe in writing to the principal.
4. Equipment Safety – Football helmets and equipment will be checked and updated by a reconditioning company on an annual basis, to ensure safety. Any unsafe equipment shall be discarded. Coaches will also survey all athletic equipment and discard any equipment that cannot be repaired or maintained properly in regards to safety. An inventory of all equipment will be maintained by each coach and the needs for each team will be presented to the athletic director and principal in order.
5. North Carolina Rules Clinics – To ensure the proper instruction of the athlete, all head coaches, of any athletic team (faculty or non-faculty) will attend one of the following for the sports they coach; the North Carolina Rules Clinic, the Regional Rules Clinics or the local rules clinic for the sport.
6. Proper Supervision During Athletic Contest – The principal will ensure proper supervision at all athletic events. Proper supervision at middle/junior high games will include the presence of the principal or his designee at all home contests. At the high school level, proper supervision will include the principal or his designee at all home contests. Designee may include assistant principal; athletic director; coach other than the head coach, or other staff member. The principal or designee will attend all home and away football games.
7. Policies and Procedures Review – The principal will hold an annual meeting with his/her athletic director and all coaches to review all School, Duplin County, and North Carolina Policies pertaining to athletics
8. Any high school athlete or coach who is ejected from an athletic contest will be disciplined according to the NCHSAA standards. The required sportsmanship program will be viewed and each athlete or coach will pass the required test and submit certification of such course prior to participation in their next allowed contest. Any middle school athlete or coach ejected name must be submitted to the county athletic director. Appropriate action will be taken by the coach or athletic director.
9. All high school coaches, including volunteers must view the required NCHSAA power point.
10. An emergency action plan must be developed by each team in both middle school and high school. This plan must be reviewed annually by a Licensed Athletic Trainer and must be posted at each venue. This plan must be reviewed by the entire coaching staff each year.
11. The high school principal must certify on the eligibility list that all coaching staff have viewed the required NCHSAA power point, verify that the Emergency Action Plan has been reviewed and all athletes are eligible. All middle school principals will verify in writing that all students meet the eligibility standards, that there is an emergency action plan that has been reviewed and that all coaches have received a copy of the coaches' handbook and rules have been reviewed. (Middle

School Verification forms)

12. All non-faculty coaches paid and volunteers **MUST** have the appropriate background check prior to beginning practice.
13. All athletic directors and coaches should follow purchasing guidelines developed by Duplin County Schools and the State of North Carolina. Athletic Fundraisers should be approved at the beginning of the school year. Care should be taken to ensure there are no conflicts of interest in financial matters.
14. Summer camps or training should be approved as any other field trip. Overnight and out of state camps require Board approval.
15. There will be a **two-hour time limit on ALL middle school practices in any sport.**
16. All coaches will be given a packet containing these policies by the principal. The principal will require a written statement by the new coach that he/she has received copies of these policies and has had them reviewed with him/her.
17. DCS athletes that are found to be using or possessing tobacco products which includes chewing tobacco and electronic cigarettes on campus or at DCS sponsored events will be disciplined as follows:
 - a. 1st offense, 1 game suspension (Completion of NFHS Course. Understanding Vaping and E-Cigarettes)
 - b. 2nd offense, 2 game suspension
 - c. 3rd offense, eligibility will be terminated for remainder of the year
18. Students of the Gateway Program, Renaissance Center and the Early College are not eligible to participate in athletics.

Alcohol and Drug

1. Duplin County Schools maintains a **zero tolerance** on selling any illegal substance including medical prescriptions or facsimiles. This will result in immediate suspension from athletics.
2. Use or possession of alcohol beverages, drugs, narcotics, or hallucinating agents by athletic program participants is strictly prohibited.
 - a. Penalties:
 - i. 1st Offense - Suspended from team practice and play for two weeks, however, the athlete must attend practice. The athlete is required to attend counseling sessions via an approved mental health or counseling agency. All costs will be covered by the athlete or athlete's family. The student will be required to submit for drug testing on demand within six weeks of positive test. Students must provide verification of mental health counseling at cost to students and family.
 - ii. 2nd Offense- All athletic eligibility will be terminated for 365 days.
 1. Any student-athlete testing positive during their off-season will be required to sit out at the same time during their sport for next season. All athletes will be afforded due process by appealing to the superintendent and to the Duplin County Board of Education. Any appeals must be made in writing to the superintendent or designee within five days. The decision must be made within five days after the appeal is received by the superintendent. Student-athletes testing positive on an initial or random test may be required to submit to a drug screen as deemed appropriate.
3. All student-athletes will be subject to drug testing at the beginning of each academic

year and when randomly selected. All athletes and their parents will be required to sign a waiver in order for athletes to be in the drug testing program. Any student on an athletic eligibility list must be part of the drug testing program. Any athlete refusing to be a part of the testing forfeits their right to participate in athletics for 365 days. The same penalties apply as for use of possession of alcohol or other drugs.

4. Any student athlete that uses alcohol or any illegal substance (marijuana, drugs, steroids, or any substance without medical approval) will be suspended from athletic participation, but he/she will also be subject to school rules and regulations.

Middle School Admission Fees

(*School employees with ID badge admitted for free)

Sport	Adults	Students	Pre-School
Football	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free
Volleyball	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free
Soccer	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free
Basketball	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free
Baseball	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free
Softball	\$5.00	\$5.00	Free

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES: Are You Eligible to Play?

DON'T BE LEFT ON THE SIDELINES!

Protect Your Eligibility by Knowing the Rules

YOU:

- Must be a **properly enrolled student** at the time you participate, must be enrolled no later than the 15th day of the present semester; and must be in regular attendance at that school.
- Must be in compliance with Duplin County Schools attendance policy as of the 1st day of the semester. • Must not have exceeded **eight consecutive semesters of attendance or have participated more than four seasons in any sport** since first entering grade 9.
- Must **not have graduated** from high school.
- Must be **less than 19 years** of age on August 31st of the current year.
- Must **live with your parents or legal custodian** within the school administrative unit (exceptions must be approved by your principal and the NCHSAA). A student is eligible if he/she has attended school within that unit the previous semesters (if eligible in all other respects).
- Must **not falsify any official eligibility information such as residency/address**. Penalty for such acts will result in **loss of eligibility for 365 days**.
- Must have **passed a minimum academic load** during the previous semester, and meet local promotion standards. Students in a **“block schedule” must pass three of four courses per semester** and meet local promotion standards. If the school is on an A/B form of block scheduling, a student **must pass six or eight courses** during what would traditionally be defined as a semester.
- Must have received a **medical examination** by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant within the previous 395 days; and if you miss five or more days of practice due to illness or injury, you must receive a medical release before practicing or playing.
- Must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult. • Must not accept **prizes, merchandise, money** or anything that can be exchanged for money as a result of athletic participation. **THIS INCLUDES BEING ON A FREE LIST OR LOAN LIST FOR EQUIPMENT, ETC.** • Must not have signed a **professional contract**, have played on a **junior college team** or be regularly enrolled in college.
- Must not participate in **unsanctioned all-star or bowl games**.
- May receive Skill Development Sessions, but shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all students with a current and valid pre-participation physical examination. Skill development sessions are not restricted in the number of participants on a daily basis.
- May not play, practice or assemble as a team with your coach on **Sundays**.
- May not **dress for a contest or practice** if you are not eligible to participate.
- Must not play more than three games in one sport per week (exception baseball, softball and volleyball).
- Cheerleaders are subject to the same eligibility requirements as all other athletes.
- All eligibility guidelines are subject to appeal according to NCHSAA Hardship Rules. Any local appeals will be decided by a committee appointed by the County Athletic Director made up of two uninvolved principals, two uninvolved athletic directors
- Additionally, Duplin County athletes **must be willing to participate in the Duplin County Schools Athlete Drug Testing Program**.

Duplin County Guidelines for Cheerleaders

1. The position of the cheerleader in athletics should be kept in perspective. **The game is the primary consideration.**
2. The cheerleaders will promote good sportsmanship.
3. Welcome visiting cheerleaders and make them feel at home.
4. Learn the rules and terms for each sport.
5. Cheers should not ridicule the opposing team, players or referees.
6. Don't imitate or join in boos, whistles, or cat-calls.
7. Keep cheers short and peppy.
8. Regulations for cheerleaders at **basketball games**.
 - a. Remain seated when not leading an organized cheer. (Front row of bleachers – **not on the floor**).
 - b. Cheerleaders shall only lead organized cheers at the times indicated below:
 - i. Before the game
 - ii. Between quarters
 - iii. During called time-outs
 - iv. At the end of the game
 - v. **Basketball games only** – The visiting team will have the floor at the first time-out. The second time-out, the home team will have the floor. The squads will alternate thereafter. After the court cheer has been completed, the other squad may stand at their bench for chants. The squads must be seated before play begins on the court.

Recommendations for Cheerleader Safety

In response to the increased awareness of injuries occurring to cheerleaders in North Carolina public school, the State Department of Public Instruction has developed the following recommendations for cheerleader safety. It is anticipated that all middle/junior high schools will adopt these recommendations to promote safer participation by their cheerleading squads.

1. All cheers, chants, dances or spirit raising activities should be well planned, practiced, and organized to promote the safety of students participating in cheerleading activities.
2. All squads should be supervised by a cheerleading coach during all practices and performances.
3. Cheerleading coaches should have a background in cheerleading, dance choreography, and/or gymnastics, and should be knowledgeable in proper cheerleading techniques, and safety procedures. Coaches should coach only within his/her level of expertise.
4. All routines, pyramids, stunts, and gymnastics should be practiced to perfection prior to actual performance.
5. Cheerleaders should be familiar with the environmental conditions and playing surfaces for which students, pyramids, and routines are to be used.
6. Pyramids and partner stunts may be a part of the squad's routine, provided the following safety precautions are taken:
 - a. No pyramid or stunt formation is to be higher than the equivalent of two standing levels or three kneeling levels.
 - b. No roll-offs, flips, or somersaults off pyramids or stunts.
 - c. No knee drops or tension drop stunts off pyramids.
 - d. No collapsing pyramids or stunts.
 - e. Spotters should be present throughout the mounting, result, and dismounting stages of pyramids and stunts.
7. Acceptable gymnastic maneuvers should be limited to forward and backward walk-overs, splits, round-offs, cartwheels, handsprings, handstands, and front or back somersaults. Cheer sponsors are responsible for the NFHS cheer requirements, the DCS cheerleading policies and the AACCA cheerleading requirements and policies.
8. Mini trampers, springboards, and similar equipment are prohibited.
9. Dangling jewelry should not be worn during practices or performances.
10. Appropriate footwear should be worn, including rubber sole, low heel shoes which offer adequate support and can absorb the forces caused by jumping and other stunts or techniques.
11. Cheerleaders should have access to the school's sports first responder and team physician.
12. Cheerleaders should have a medical examination prior to participating on a squad. Any known medical condition which might interfere with active participation should be recorded (example: asthma, heart condition, epilepsy, diabetes, etc.)
13. A cheerleader who misses a practice at which a pyramid, stunt, or gymnastics maneuver was mastered should not perform any of those maneuvers at the next performance.
14. Cheerleaders should travel together and use transportation, which has been provided by the school administration.

Athletic Insurance

1. All Duplin County students must purchase interscholastic sports insurance to try-out and participate on an athletic team including cheerleaders. The athletic insurance is an accident policy for students without other insurance and secondary to any other insurance the student has. The Athletic Plan is issued by The Young Group for 2026-2027.
2. **This “All Sports” Policy is not meant to pay 100% of the bill**, but is designed to assist parents with the expenses incurred. The maximum benefit is \$25,000 for any one accident, which is in excess of the amount from other collectable insurance or health plans parents may have.
3. If an athlete is injured while participating in a high school or middle school sponsored and supervised interscholastic event, parents are responsible for filing a claim. Claim forms are to be available at all high schools and middle schools. A school employee must complete Part A of the claim form since the injury was during a school-sponsored event.
4. Athletic Trainer/First Responder/School Nurse and Coaches should keep a record of all injuries and any claims filed as a result of injuries.
5. Duplin County Schools require catastrophic insurance for all athletes and coaches in Duplin County Schools provided their name appears on the appropriate eligibility list.

Please see below for insurance provider and policy information

For claims and enrollment questions, please contact:

The Young Group, Inc.

Claims Customer Service: 866.409.5734

Customer Service # for Enrollment Questions: 888.574.6288

Claims Email: k12claims@hsri.com

Claims Fax: 972.512.5818

Claims Mailing Address:

PO Box 117558

Carrollton, Texas 75011-7558

Voluntary Online Enrollment

www.k12studentinsurance.com

**DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS
ATHLETIC ACCIDENT INSURANCE PLAN
SCHEDULE OF BENEFITS FOR 2026-2027**

Schedule of Benefits

Coverage is for injuries due to accidents only.

Maximum Benefits:	Standard Plan	Intermediate Plan	Premier Plan
School-Time Option	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
24-Hour Option	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Football Option	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Accidental Death Benefit / Double Dismemberment	\$10,000 / \$15,000	\$10,000 / \$15,000	\$10,000 / \$15,000
Single Dismemberment	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Loss Period for Medical Benefits	Treatment must begin within 60 days from the date of injury.		
Benefit Period for Medical and AD&D Benefits	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Accident Medical Coverage Basis	Primary	Primary	Primary
Covered Expenses:			
Hospital Room and Board (Semi-Private Room Rate)	\$200 Maximum per day	\$400 Maximum per day	100% R&C*
Hospital Miscellaneous Services	\$500 Max per day	\$1,000 Max per day	80% R&C* / \$10,000 Maximum
Registered Nurses' Services	75% R&C*	80% R&C*	100% R&C*
Emergency Room Treatment	\$200 Maximum	\$400 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$600 Maximum
Surgeon's Fees	\$750 Maximum	\$1,500 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$5,000 Maximum
Ambulance Medical Center Fees	\$750 Maximum	\$1,000 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$5,000 Maximum
Assistant Surgeon &/or Anesthesiologist	20% of Surgical Benefits	25% of Surgical Benefits	80% R&C*
Second Opinion or Consultation Fees	\$200 Maximum	\$400 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$600 Maximum
Office/Physician's Visits (Excludes Physical Therapy)	\$30 first visit / \$25 each subsequent visit	\$50 first visit / \$30 each subsequent visit	100% R&C* / \$75 per day Maximum
Physical Therapy	\$30 first visit / \$25 each subsequent visit / 5 Visits Max.	\$50 first visit / \$30 each subsequent visit / 10 Visits Max.	80% R&C* / \$75 per day max / 15 Visits Max.
Prescription Drugs	\$50 Maximum	\$100 Maximum	100% R&C*
X-rays, Including Interpretation - Outpatient	\$200 Maximum	\$400 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$600 Maximum
Diagnostic Imaging (MRI, CAT Scan, etc.) Including Interpretation - Outpatient	\$200 Maximum	\$400 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$1,200 Maximum
Laboratory	\$50 Maximum	\$100 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$600 Maximum
Ambulance	\$200 Maximum	\$500 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$1,500 Maximum
Durable Medical Equipment (Including Orthopedic Braces & Appliances)	\$50 Maximum	\$100 Maximum	80% R&C* / \$500 Maximum
Replacement of Eyeglasses, Hearing Aids, Contact Lenses in Medical Treatment That Is Also Received for the Covered Injury	100% R&C*	100% R&C*	100% R&C*
Dental Treatment to Sound, Natural Teeth Due to Covered Injury	\$100/tooth	\$300/tooth	80% R&C* / \$2,000 Maximum

*R&C means Reasonable & Customary expense.

Coverage Selected: (Keep for your records.)

Standard Plan	☐ School-Time \$8.00	☐ 24-Hour Accident \$58.00	☐ Football \$96.00
Intermediate Plan	☐ School-Time \$18.00	☐ 24-Hour Accident \$108.00	☐ Football \$157.00
Premier Plan	☐ School-Time \$50.00	☐ 24-Hour Accident \$285.00	☐ Football \$357.00
	☐ Extended Dental \$7.00		

Policy Code: 3620 Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations

The Duplin County Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities in promoting leadership and team skills, practicing democratic principles, and encouraging the lifelong learning process. Students are encouraged to participate in opportunities available at the school, including interscholastic athletics and student organizations. All activities are open to all students attending that school unless a restriction is justified and has been approved by the principal. The principal shall ensure that students and parents are notified of the various opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities. The principal shall establish any rules necessary for school- and student-initiated extracurricular activities.

A. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

Participation in extracurricular activities, including student organizations and interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right, and may be reserved for students in good academic standing who meet behavior standards established by the Board and the school. Participation in extracurricular activities may be restricted if a student (1) is not performing at grade level as provided in policy 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress; (2) has exceeded the number of absences allowed by policy 4400, Attendance; (3) has violated the student conduct standards found in the 4300 series of policies; or (4) has violated school rules for conduct. Students not present in school will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities (including but not limited to athletics, clubs, prom, etc.).

School administrators choosing to exercise the authority to restrict participation based upon any of the reasons provided in this paragraph shall provide this policy and any additional rules developed by the superintendent or the principal to all parents or guardians and students. The grievance procedure provided in policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure, may be utilized by parents or students who believe that a student has been aggrieved by a decision made pursuant to this policy.

B. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Extracurricular activities may be used as a component of an at-risk student’s intervention plan. The intervention plan may include providing for or restricting the student’s participation in extracurricular activities. If the plan restricts the student's participation, the plan must include other intervention strategies designed to improve student performance.
2. Students with disabilities must be accorded the legal rights required by federal and state law.
3. School administrators shall facilitate the inclusion and participation of transitioning military children in extracurricular activities, to the extent they are otherwise qualified, by:
 - a. providing information about extracurricular activities to transitioning military children and
 - b. waiving application deadlines.

C. FUNDS

Each school treasurer shall handle all funds realized from activities, including gate receipts of interscholastic athletic competitions, sale of school annuals and newspapers, and dues of student organizations as provided by law.

Legal References: Americans With Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12132, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 4071-4074; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; G.S. 115C art. 9, 115C-47(4), -391; -407.5, -448; Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, State Board of Education Policy GCS-D-000; N.C. High School Athletic Association Handbook

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Evaluation of Student Progress (policy 3400), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Attendance (policy 4400), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030) *Adopted: February 5, 2013*

Duplin County Schools Concussion Management Protocol

Goal of Concussion Management Protocol

The goal of the Concussion Management Protocol is to improve the prevention, recognition, evaluation and management of concussions in student-athletes. All athletic trainers, coaching staff, school officials, the athletic director, student-athletes, and student athletic trainers will be aware of symptoms associated with concussions and how to appropriately treat and/or manage concussions in the presence or absence of the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC). Communication between all involved members is extremely crucial during such times.

Concussion

A concussion is defined as a head injury that results in a temporary loss of normal brain function, causing a variety of physical, cognitive and emotional symptoms.

- Concussions may result from a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere that causes a force to be transmitted to the head.
- Concussions do not always involve a loss of consciousness and symptoms may include one or more of the following:
 - Headache
 - Drowsiness
 - Dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Memory loss or amnesia
 - Nausea/Vomiting
 - Photosensitivity
 - Visual disturbances
 - Ringing in ears
 - Convulsions
 - Muscle weakness on one or both sides
 - Unequal pupils
 - Unusual eye movements
 - Balance problems
 - Personality disturbances such as becoming aggressive

In the event that your child athlete is injured during a Duplin County sanctioned competition, please be aware that the NCHSAA Concussion Return to Play Form is required. There is also a Concussion Management Guidelines: Home Instruction Sheet for your reference. Both forms can be found on the Duplin County Schools website.

Effects of Concussions

It is important to understand the effects that a concussion can have on an athlete. Potentially serious complications can arise from multiple or untreated concussions such as second impact syndrome or post-concussion syndrome. • Post-concussion syndrome is defined as a large number of symptoms and signs that can occur following a concussion. Symptoms include: loss of intellectual capacity, poor recent memory, personality changes, headaches, dizziness, lack of concentration, poor attention, fatigue, irritability, sound or light phobia, sleep disturbances, depressed mood and anxiety.

- Second Impact Syndrome occurs when an athlete hasn't fully recovered from a sustained head injury and sustains a second head injury. A second blow to the head, even if a minor one, when the brain hasn't fully recovered from the first, can result in a loss of auto regulation of the brain's blood supply which can result in rapid swelling and herniation of the brain. This can occur within several minutes of the second blow, causing rapid respiratory failure, and possibly death.

Assessment of Concussions

- A. At any point a student-athlete shows any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, the student-athlete shall be removed from practice or competition and evaluated by an appropriate healthcare provider. The student-athlete will not be allowed to return to play that day. *If in doubt, sit them out.*
- B. An on-field assessment should be conducted by the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC). In the event that an ATC is not available, then the student-athlete suspected of a possible concussion will be removed from play and will be appropriately referred for assessment.
 - If an ATC is on campus, send word to the ATC or call and he/she will respond immediately.
 - *If an ATC is not on campus, the following observations and questions (only ask questions that you know the answers to) can be used to help determine whether a concussion has been sustained and how urgently he/she needs to be sent for appropriate medical care:*
 - Confused state-dazed, vacant stare, confusion about the events prior to injury or at the moment
 - Memory problems-can't remember assignment, score, opponent, how they got to the game (Do you know where you are? Do you know who we are playing? Do you know the score?)
 - Symptoms reported by athlete-Headache, nausea/vomiting, blurred/double vision, sensitivity to light or sound, ringing in ears, feeling foggy, dizziness (How's your vision? Can you read the scoreboard? Do you feel dizzy?)
 - Inability to sustain attention-difficulty focusing on a task, conversation or coherent thought (Can you tell me the months in reverse order? Count backwards from 100 only counting every 2nd number. Ex: 100, 98, 96... You are looking for an appropriate cognitive thought process, not necessarily the correct answer)
 - Speed of brain function-slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, incoherent speech, slow reaction time
 - Unusual behaviors-combative, aggressive, very silly manner, repeating the same questions over and over, restless behavior, inability to remain still, inappropriate actions
 - Problems with balance and coordination-dizziness, slow clumsy movement, stumbling with walking (Can you stand on one foot?)
 - *"If confusion, unusual behavior or responsiveness, deteriorating condition, loss of consciousness, or concern about neck or spine injury exist, the athlete should be referred at once for emergency care." – National Federation of State High School Associations 2009.*
 - *"If no emergency is apparent...the athlete should be monitored every 5-10 minutes for mental status, attention, balance, behavior, speech and memory... until stable over a few hours. If appropriate medical care is not available, an athlete even with mild symptoms should be sent for medical evaluation." – NFHS 2009.*
 - Inform parents of possible concussion and give them advice to either refer to a physician if symptoms

worsen (if the athlete has not already been referred) or they may wait and have the athlete see the ATC the following day.

- You may have them contact the ATC if the parent has any questions on how to treat the athlete. A concussion management guideline should be given to the parent or guardian so they know how to appropriately care for their student-athlete.
 - *Call and inform ATC of possible concussion so he/she can be aware of concussion and follow-up appropriately.*
- C. In the event a concussion occurs at an away event and medical staff is available from the opposing team, send word requesting an evaluation. If there is no medical staff available, follow the steps from (B).
- D. *Any student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be withheld from the competition or practice and not returned for the remainder of that day.*
- E. The student-athletes will be monitored for changes in symptoms by the ATC.
- A parent or guardian must be contacted by the ATC or coach in the event of a concussion.
- F. The student-athlete must be evaluated by a qualified physician trained in the management of concussions once the symptoms have resolved. The student-athlete will not be allowed to return to play until seen by the physician who has filled out a NCHSAA Concussion Return to Play Form (given to the student-athlete or parent). This form will outline the return to play guidelines that are suggested for the particular student-athlete. *The form must be returned to the Certified Athletic Trainer.*
- *Any form not returned to the ATC, will result in the student-athlete being withheld from practice or competition until the form is signed and returned.* • Signed forms do not guarantee the athlete will be able to return to play that day. There are steps that must be followed for gradual return to play when the athlete is no longer symptomatic.
 - Gradual return to play steps are as follows:
 - Low levels of physical activity
 - Moderate levels of physical activity with body/head movement
 - Heavy non-contact physical activity
 - Sports Specific practice
 - Full contact in a controlled drill or practice
 - Return to competition
 - If at any point the athlete has a return of symptoms during the return to play steps, the athlete will let the ATC, coach and health care provider know. The athlete will return to the first level and restart the program gradually.

Forms included are the NCHSAA Concussion Return to Play (to be filled out by a qualified, licensed health care provider approved by the NCHSAA) ~~physician only~~ and guidelines for the parent/guardian.

Reference Documents

1. Guskiewicz, K., Bruce, S., Cantu, R., Ferrara, M., Kelly, J., McCrea, M.,...McLeod, T. (2004). National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Management of Sport-Related Concussion. *Journal of Athletic Training* 39(3):280-297.
(journal homepage: www.journalofathletictraining.org) (www.nata.org/position-statements)
2. McCrory, P., Meeuwisse, W., Johnston, K., Dvorak, J., Aubry, M., Molloy, M., Cantu, R. (2009). Consensus statement on concussion in sport-The 3rd International Conference concussion in sport, held in Zurich, November 2008. *Journal of Clinical Neuroscience* 16, 755-763.
(journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jocn)
3. *NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook*. 2009-2010. Pages 52-55.
(www.ncaapublications.com)
4. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Sport Concussion Policy: Developed by the Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center and Division of Sports Medicine. (2010).
5. The University of Georgia Athletic Association Sports Medicine: Concussion Management Guidelines (2010).