



Athlete/Parent Handbook for GHSA Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities 2026-27

MEMBER SCHOOLS OF THE GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

ALPHARETTA HIGH SCHOOL

BANNEKER HIGH SCHOOL

CAMBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL

CHATTAHOOCHEE HIGH SCHOOL

CREEKSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

HAPEVILLE CHARTER CAREER ACADEMY

JOHNS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

LANGSTON HUGHES HIGH SCHOOL

MILTON HIGH SCHOOL

NORTH SPRINGS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

NORTHVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

RIVERWOOD INTERNATIONAL CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

ROSWELL HIGH SCHOOL

TRI CITIES HIGH SCHOOL

WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Athlete/Parent Handbook for GHSA

Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities

GHSA Member Schools of Fulton County Schools	1
Table of Contents	2
GHSA Beginning and Ending Dates & Number of contests	3
Statement of Philosophy	4
Objectives	4
Governances	4
Fulton County Board of Education (FCBOE)	4
Georgia High School Association (GHSA)	4
The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Regions	4
National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)	4
Requirements for Participation	5
Pre-Participation Physical Examination	5
Parent Consent for Athletic Participation and Transportation	5
Emergency Medical Authorization	5
Student/Parent Concussion Awareness	5
Student Insurance	5
Introductions	5
To the Parent/Guardian	5-6
Sportsmanship	6
Grievances and Complaints	6
To the Student-Athlete	7
Conditioning and Try Outs / Dead Week	7
Participation is a privilege	7
Athlete Playing Time	8
Varsity Teams	8
Student-Athletic Codes of Conduct	8-11
Basic Interscholastic Participation Policies	12-13
NIL Rules and Guidelines	14
GHSA White book (Constitution and By-Laws)	15
Athletic Interest and Additional FCS Policies	15
Appendix	16
Off-Season and Summer Training Tips	16
Concussions in Sports	16
Q & A for MRSA	16-17
Skin Lesions	18-20
Weather Conditions and Athletics	21-27
Fulton County Guidelines on Recruiting/Undue Influence	28
Forms	
Receipt Acknowledgement for Athlete/Parent Handbook for GHSA Sports	29
Student-Athlete Social Media Guidelines	30
Sports Equity Grievance Form	31-32
Tips for proper hydration	33
GHSA Heat Index Chart	34

This handbook is designed as minimum standards for the Fulton County Board of Education schools that are members of and participate in Georgia High School Association Interscholastic Athletic sanctioned athletic events. Participating schools may increase the standards for participation but are required to submit to the Fulton County Schools Director of Athletics and to print/distribute to parents/ distribute to parents/guardians and students any addenda for each section that exceeds the minimum standards set in the handbook.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
Beginning and Ending Dates for 2026-2027

Revised
5/18/2026

ACTIVITY	DATE FOR FIRST PRACTICE	FIRST CONTEST	MAXIMUM GAMES/DATES	PSR MINIMUM GAMES TO QUALIFY	LAST PLAY DATE	PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS DETERMINED	First Round/ Sectionals	Second Round	Quarterfinals	Semifinals	Finals
Football	Jul 27	Aug 21	10 (7 JV)	9	Nov 6	Nov 6	Nov 13	Nov 20	Nov 27	Dec 4	Dec 14-16
Cheerleading	Jul 27	Aug 8	6 (4JV)		Oct 31		Nov 7				Nov 13-14
Game Day	Jul 27	Sep 19			Dec 5						Dec 10-12
Softball (FP)	Jul 27	Aug 1	30 V/21 JV	20	Oct 8	Oct 8	Oct 12-15	Oct 19-22			Oct 28-31
Volleyball	Jul 27	Aug 3	18 (13 JV) Dates	30	Oct 13	Oct 13	Oct 17	Oct 20-21	Oct 24	Oct 27-28	Oct 29 Oct 31
Cross Country	Jul 27	Aug 10	10 (7 JV)		Oct 31	Oct 31	Oct 31				Nov 6-7
Flag Football	Sep 7	Sep 14	20 V/14 JV	14	Nov 14	Nov 14	Nov 18	Nov 18	Dec 1	Dec 3	Dec 8
One Act Play	Jul 27				Oct 31 Nov 7	Oct 31 Nov 7					Nov 14 Nov 21
Literary	Jul 27				Mar 8	Mar 8					Mar 13 Mar 20
Riflery	Jul 27	Oct 19			Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 25			Mar 4	Mar 20
Swimming/Diving	Oct 5	Oct 19	10 (7 JV)		Jan 26						Jan 30 Diving Feb 5-6, Swim
Dance	Oct 19	Nov 7	6 (4JV)		Feb 6						Feb 12-13
Basketball	Oct 19	Nov 6	25 (18 JV)	22	Feb 20	Feb 20	Feb 23-24	Feb 26-27	Mar 2-3	Mar 5-6	Mar 10-13
Wrestling (Duals)	Oct 19	Nov 6	20 (14 JV) Dates Total Duals and Trad		Jan 28	Jan 8-9 Jan 8 G, 9 B	Jan 15				Jan 15-16 Boys Jan 23, Girls
Wrestling (Traditional)	Oct 19	Nov 6	20 (14 JV) Dates Total Duals and Trad		Jan 28	Jan 29-30	Feb 5-6				Feb 10-13 By Class.
Gymnastics	Jan 25	Feb 6	10 (7 JV)		Apr 17		Apr 23-24				Apr 24
Tennis	Jan 25	Feb 8	18 (13 JV) Dates	14	Apr 16	Apr 17	Apr 23	Apr 29	May 4	May 8	May 13
Soccer	Jan 25	Feb 8	18 (13 JV)	14	Apr 15	Apr 15	Apr 20-23	Apr 27-30	May 3-4	May 6-7	May 11-14
Track & Field	Jan 25	Feb 8	10 (7 JV)		Apr 24	Apr 24					
Lacrosse	Jan 25	Feb 8	18 V/ 13 JV	14	Apr 22		Apr 27-28	Apr 30-May 1	May 5-6	May 7-8	May 13-15
Baseball	Jan 25	Feb 15	30 (21 JV)	20	Apr 29	Apr 29	May 3-6	May 10-11	May 15 May 17	May 22 May 24	May 28-29 May 31
Golf	Jan 25	Feb 8	12 (8JV) Dates		May 4	Apr 29 (5-7A) May 4, (1-4A, Priv)	May 3-4 (5-7A)				May 17-18

NOTES: Dates are Subject to Change. Dates and more information for Bass Fishing and Esports may be found on the GHSA website (www.ghsa.net)
The "Dead Weeks" for the 2027-2028 school year are Monday, May 31 through Sunday, June 6, 2027 and Monday, June 28 through Sunday, July 4, 2027. The GHSA Office will be closed both weeks.

Interscholastic Athletic Competition Philosophy Statement of Philosophy – The Fulton County interscholastic athletic activity program will provide a variety of experiences to aid in the development of favorable habits and attitudes that will prepare students for adult life in a democratic society. The interscholastic athletic activity program will be an integral part of the total school program as conducted in accordance with existing Board of Education policies, rules and regulations and the Georgia High School Association Constitution and By-laws. While the Board of Education encourages the highest level of performance, it discourages any and all pressures which might tend to neglect good sportsmanship and/or good mental health.

Athletic Goal and Objectives

GOAL – The athlete participant shall become a more effective and productive citizen in a democratic society.

OBJECTIVES – The athlete participant shall learn:

1. To work with others – In a democratic society a person must develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. The team and its objectives must be placed higher than personal desires.
2. To be successful – Our society is very competitive. We do not always win but we succeed when we continually strive to do our best. You can learn to accept defeat only by striving to win with earnest dedication. Develop a desire to excel.
3. To develop sportsmanship – To accept any defeat like a true sportsman, knowing we have done our best, we must learn to treat others the way we would have them treat us. We need to develop desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation and dependability.
4. To improve – Continual improvement is essential to good citizenship. As an athlete, you must establish goals and you must continually try to reach those goals. Try to better yourself in the skills involved and those characteristics set forth as being desirable in your chosen activity.
5. To enjoy participation – It is necessary for athletes to enjoy participation, to acknowledge all the personal rewards to be derived from participation, and to give sufficiently of themselves in order to preserve and improve the program.
6. To develop desirable personal health habits – To be an active, contributing citizen, it is important to obtain a high degree of physical fitness through exercise and good health habits and to develop the desire to maintain this level of physical fitness after formal competition has been completed.

Governances

The Fulton County Board of Education (FCBOE) – One of the primary duties of the Board of Education is to enact policy. The Superintendent and staff enforce the policies and permit each student to have an equal opportunity for a quality education. The Board also fulfills those duties described in [LINK POLICY AAB].

The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) – All schools are voluntary members of the Georgia High School Association and compete only with member schools or out-of-state schools that are approved by the GHSA. As GHSA member schools, the high schools of the Fulton County School System agree to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations set forth by the HGSA. The primary role of the GHSA, which is empowered by the Georgia State Board of Education, is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the athletes and a balance with other educational 2016-2017 programs. The GHSA solicits input and is responsive to requests for modification from member schools, appointed committees, and coaches' associations. The GHSA attempts to enforce such rules that assure the greatest good for the greatest number to ensure that competition is conducted in an appropriate manner.

The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Regions – Each Fulton County High School is a voluntary member of a GHSA Region. The Region was established for the purpose of promoting selected interscholastic athletic activities among member schools and the assurance of such advantages as may be gained by a union of effort. Region membership facilitates the arranging of schedules, equalizing competition, conducting Region meets, tournaments, playoffs, and determining schools of similar size. Membership requires abiding by Region schedules, rules, and regulations. The GHSA Executive Committee determines each school's Region membership assignment.

The National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) – The National Federation consists of the fifty-individual state high school athletic/activities associations. The purposes of the Federation are to serve, protect and enhance the interstate activity interests of the high schools belonging to the state associations; to assist in those activities of the state associations which can best be operated on a nationwide scale; to sponsor meetings, publications, and activities which will permit each state association to profit by the experience of all other member associations; and to coordinate the work to minimize duplication.

Requirements for Athlete Participation

Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation – A yearly physical examination is required. The physical must be completed by a medical doctor and submitted to the coach prior to participation. The physical covers all sports for one calendar year. The form will be kept on file in the high school athletic office. The recommended pre-participation physical evaluation form is the form which was adopted by the GHSA. It consists of an athlete's personal and family medical history and an athlete's physical examination completed by a medical physician. (See Appendix)

Parental Consent for Athletic Participation and Transportation – All athletes and parent(s) / guardian(s) must realize the risk of serious injury which may be a result of athletic participation. Fulton County School System requires that a Parental Consent for Athletic Participation and Transportation Form is signed by the athlete and his/her parent(s) / guardian(s). Parent(s) / Guardian(s) may not alter or change this form. Parent(s) / Guardian(s) acknowledge that they have read and understand the "Athlete / Parent/Guardian Handbook for HGSA Sanctioned Athletics Interscholastic Activities" when they sign this form. (See Appendix)

Emergency Medical Authorization – Each student-athlete's parent(s) /guardian(s) shall complete an Emergency Medical Authorization Form giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parent(s) / guardian(s) are not available. The form will be kept by the school's athletic department for use as needed during the emergency. (See Appendix). **Each sport should have an emergency action plan for every sport and this plan should always be accessible by the head coaches, assistant coaches, administrators, and athletic trainers.**

Student/Parent Concussion Form–Each student and parent/guardian shall complete the GHSA Concussion Awareness Form. Please list all sports that the student athlete will compete in during the school year. (See Appendix)

Insurance – The school district provides an opportunity to purchase insurance to cover student athletic injuries. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to sign a form stating that they have purchased either the necessary school insurance or possess a family insurance plan that covers athletic injury. If a family insurance plan is used, the family must provide the school with the name of the insurance company and the policy number on the appropriate form. Where possible, a scholarship fund should be set up to assist students who are in financial need as determined by the principal or his/her designee. Some method of discreet communication through a school contact person should be made available for students. There are **NO WAIVERS** for insurance; **ALL ATHLETES MUST HAVE INSURANCE.** (See Appendix) Policy EGB

Introductions to the Parent/Guardian/Student Athlete

Parent/Guardian/Student Athlete Awareness of Athletic Policies and Procedures – All student athletes/parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have access to this Handbook through the Fulton County Schools website. A hard copy of this handbook will be made available at student athlete/parent/guardian who requests a copy. Each parent(s)/guardian(s)/student athlete shall be expected to read all of the enclosed material and complete all required forms including but not limited to athletic participation and transportation, health insurance, and physical examination. This handbook is designed as minimum standards for the Fulton county Board of Education schools that are members of and participate in Georgia High School Association Interscholastic Athletic sanctioned athletic events. Participating schools may increase the standards for participation but should submit any participation standards which exceed those described in this handbook to the Director of Athletics and to parents/guardians and students.

To the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) – This material is presented to you because your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in GHSA Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities. The GHSA interscholastic athletic activities include baseball, basketball, competition cheerleading, cross country, football, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, track and field, tennis, volleyball, and wrestling. The Fulton County School System believes that participation in interscholastic athletic activities provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences which will assist students in personal growth and development.

We believe that a properly controlled, well-organized interscholastic athletic activity program meets with students' needs for self-expression, mental alertness and physical growth. It is our hope to maintain a program that is sound in purpose and that will further each student's educational maturity.

Interscholastic sports and athletic activities are exciting and often involve forceful contact with the ground, playing surface, and another player. Because of these conditions inherent to the sport or activity, participation in a school's interscholastic athletic activity program exposes an athlete to many risks or injury. In an effort to make the sports and athletic activities safer, the coaching staff will instruct players in the rules and correct mechanics of skills. It is vital that parent/guardian should be aware that student-athletes should: participate in proper warm-up and stretching before strenuous activity takes place either during practice or at a contest; (2) check his/her equipment before use for each practice and contest; (3) perform only those skills and techniques instructed and/or supervised by his/her coach; (4) be aware of his/her surroundings, taking no unnecessary risks on either home or

away playing surfaces; (5) contact his/her coach immediately if an injury occurs, no matter how slight the injury might be; (6) read the National Federation of High School and Georgia High School Association information on supplements, hot/cold weather training advisories; read and understand the section on eligibility, transportation, codes of conduct, and basic participation policies; and, read and understand the "Athlete/Parent/Guardian Handbook for GHSA Sanctioned interscholastic Athletic Activities 2020-2021".

A Student who elects to participate in the interscholastic athletic activity program is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. These are the reasons we place such stress on good training habits. Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct may mean exclusion from participation. This concept of self-discipline and self-denial is tempered by our responsibility to recognize the rights so the individual within the objectives of the team or activity. Staff will strive to:

- 1) to provide adequate equipment and facilities;
- 2) to provide well-trained coaches; and,
- 3) to provide full schedules with qualified officials as directed by the GHSA

Likewise, we feel that you have committed yourselves to certain responsibilities and obligations. We would encourage you to join your school's Booster Club(s) to help provide the financial support essential to your school's interscholastic athletic activities program.

It is the role of the school system to make rules that govern the spirit of competition for the schools. These rules need a broad basis of community support, which is achieved only through communication to the parent/guardian. It is our hope to accomplish this objective through this publication.

Why should it be any different now that your child is an athlete? A parent's job is not to be the coach or the certified expert even if you are retired from a professional sports team. Parents are there so that they can share "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat" –together. In fact, each athlete needs parental support more in defeat than in victory. Did you ever notice that strangers feel free to come out of the stands and congratulate the winner? But, in defeat, sometimes the athlete's own teammates and coaches ignore him/her and the fans do not come out to console or congratulate him/her on a good game or match. As a parent/guardian you must be there to cushion setbacks with a positive "We'll get them next time!" Let the three "B's" be your guide:

- **Be there!** Parents can never hope to be an All-Star parent unless they show up at games. Regardless of the skill level of the athletes or the success of the team – go to the games. Be supportive. Don't be a fickle, fair-weather fan or an absent, to busy parent.
- **Be positive!** On the sidelines or in the stands, if parents can't say something positive, don't say anything at all. Nothing good comes from negative statements and nothing negative comes from positive ones. If parents can't say some positive and supportive during the contest at least be silent.
- **Be seated!** Even though it's good to be positive, it's not good to overdo it. Don't stick out. Be an admirer not a cheerleader. Players should not confuse their parent's voice from the home stands with that of the public-address system's announcers.

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

Grievances and Complaints – Athletics involvement is highly emotional and very time consuming. Sometimes conflicts arise between athletes, coaches, and occasionally parents. When conflicts or issues arise, it is important that they be addressed immediately, and as directly as possible, so that it can be resolved promptly. Parents/Guardians should use the following process as a guideline when seeking resolution to conflicts or issues between athlete and coach:

- **The First Step: Contacting the Coach** –The parent(s)/guardian(s) should present the conflict/issue to the coach as soon as possible. In order for the contact to be as productive as possible, times that should be avoided are: prior to, during or immediately following a contest; during an active practice session when other athletes or parents are present or when it would be readily visible to others that the discussion is taking place or when it is apparent that there is not sufficient time to allow for complete discussion. This includes the time immediately before leaving for an away contest. Perhaps the best solution is to ask the coach, either over the phone or in person, if an appointment could be made to discuss the issue. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may also leave a note for the coach in the athletic office.
- **The Second Step: Contacting the School's Athletic Director** – If a satisfactory solution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should contact the school's Athletic Coordinator. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory conclusion, then a meeting will be scheduled involving all concerned parties to reach a satisfactory resolution. Since athletic seasons are relatively short, there should be no delay in airing any and all concerns. It is important for all parent(s)/guardian(s) to know that any comments,

concerns or issues raised to the Athletic Coordinator will be addressed and communicated to the coach. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may also expect to hear from the Athletic Coordinator as to the disposition of their concerns. Although there can be no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

- **The Third Step: Contacting the Principal** – If there is still not a satisfactory resolution, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may contact the high school Principal. The school's Athletic Coordinator should be informed that this contact is going to be made. In accordance with the GHSA Constitution and By-Laws 2.20 and 2.30 the high school shall operate all interscholastic contests and activities under direct and complete control of the school administration or designated school personnel. The grievances and complaints involving Title IX compliance, which are investigated according to the procedures outlined in Board Policy IDFA.

To the Student Athlete – Being a member of a Fulton County Schools interscholastic athletic activity is the fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great competitive tradition is not built overnight; it takes hard work from many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic activity team, you will be faced with either the task of maintaining an already successful tradition or the task of establishing a successful tradition. It is not easy to build a great tradition in interscholastic athletic activity competition. When you represent your school, we assume that you not only understand your school's goals and traditions, but also that you are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them.

Interscholastic sports and athletic activities are exciting and often involve forceful contact with the ground, playing surface, or another player. Because of these conditions inherent to the sport or activity, participation in a school's interscholastic athletic activity program exposes an athlete to many risks or injury. To make the sports and athletic activities as safe as they can, the coaching staff will instruct players in the rules and correct mechanics of skills. It is vital that athletes follow the coach's skill instructions, training rules, and team rules to decrease the possibility of serious injury. The athletes should: (1) participate in proper warm-up and stretching before strenuous activity takes place either during practice or at a contest; (2) check his/her equipment before use for each practice and contest; (3) perform only those skills and techniques instructed and/or supervised by his/her coach; (4) be aware of his/her surroundings, taking no unnecessary risks on either home or away playing surfaces; (5) contact his/her coach immediately if an injury occurs, no matter how slight the injury might be; (6) read the National Federation of High School and Georgia High School Association information on supplements and hot/cold weather training advisories as printed in this handbook; read and understand the section on eligibility, transportation, codes of conduct, and basic participation policies; and, reads and understands the "Athlete/Parent/Guardian Handbook for GHSA Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities. The GHSA and its member schools have made a commitment to promote good sportsmanship by student/athletes, coaches, and spectators at all GHSA sanctioned events. Profanity, degrading remarks, and intimidating actions directed at officials or competitors will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the event site.

Conditioning and tryouts for programs in and out of season are open to all FCS students providing they meet the standards of academic eligibility, parental permission; basic physical/health qualifications; and medical/health insurance.

DEAD WEEK: NO PRACTICES, WORK OUT SESSIONS, OR MEETINGS. During the summer (i.e., between the ending of one school year and the beginning of the next) the only restrictions on practices and competition are that all activities must be strictly voluntary, and the "Dead Week" must be observed, as follows: Schools are prohibited from participating in voluntary workouts, camps and/or clinics, weight training or competitions during the week (Sunday through Saturday) in which the Fourth of July falls each year. While athletes may work out on their own, they cannot do so at their school or any other Fulton County school site under the supervision of a coach or at any non-school site under the supervision of a coach.

Summer Conditioning Rule: No student can participate in any activity with the school or a team during the summer months unless they are an enrolled student in that school or a rising 9th grader from a feeder school. This includes summer conditioning and weight room sessions. Once the student is officially enrolled at the high school, the student can start participating in any and all activities.

The student must have a current physical packet on file with the high school.

Participation in athletics is a privilege; athletes try out voluntarily and, for some of our teams, risk being cut. During the tryout period the coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is the athlete's responsibility to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can meet these expectations. No athlete is guaranteed a place on the team simply because of his or her grade level or past participation. Athletes cut from a team are encouraged to try out for another team if there is space on that team and the final cuts have not been made. The athlete cut from a team may request a meeting with the coach during which the athlete will be informed as to the reason for the cut. Decisions made by the coaches will be explained to athletes at an appropriate time and an appropriate setting, usually in an athlete-requested meeting with the coach. **A student/parent can appeal the tryout process to the high school principal, but the principal's decision is final.**

Student Athlete Codes of Conduct

Athlete Playing Time – There are many factors that determine playing time, such as practice attendance, attitude, commitment, effort and athletic ability. There are many decisions made on a regular basis by the coaching staff. It is the coach's responsibility to decide which athletes should start a contest, which athlete should play what position, and how long each athlete should play. These decisions, often difficult to make, are made only by the coaching staff and are approached very seriously after having observed the athlete in practice sessions, scrimmages and, at times, games.

Varsity Teams – The emphasis at the varsity level shifts towards fielding competitive teams. Our teams will compete against opponents at the highest level of execution and the goal is to win as many games as possible while constantly emphasizing fair play and sportsmanship. This emphasis may result in the major burden of the contest being carried by the most competitive, skilled team members and uneven playing time along the athletes, with some athletes not playing in every game. Once again, it is the coach who makes the decision on who starts, plays and for how long. However, teams cannot be successful without committed substitutes. These players should always be ready to step up and take on the burden of competition when called upon. It is the hard work in practice each day that prepares the whole team for the upcoming games.

Athlete Codes of Conduct – A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the county and school. The community, school administrators and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program. The welfare of the athlete is our major consideration. Any conduct which results in dishonor to the athlete, the team, the school, or the community will not be tolerated. Notwithstanding the consequences discussed in this handbook, any act at school or away from school, which results in any discipline by school administration; or any act at school or away from school which, in the opinion of the Principal reflects in a negative manner on the school, athletic program, or activity may result in removal from the team or event or lessened participation opportunities. Behavioral expectations and prohibitions apply 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, in and out of the specific extracurricular season, and on or off school grounds. In addition to the individual penalties associated with this handbook, all athletes fall under the jurisdiction of local school rules and policies and the Fulton County Code of Conduct ([LINKS TO ALL PARTS OF OPERATING GUIDELINES JD \(Parts A, B, and C\)](#)).

Ethics Rule: Acts of unacceptable conduct, such as, but not limited to disruption of school, theft, vandalism, disrespect, immorality, or violations of the law tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the program and will not be tolerated. Due to the serious nature of violations of the Ethics Rule, the appropriate coach, the athletic director and the principal shall establish procedures to determine the penalty according to the degree of the infraction.

Bullying and Hazing: The Fulton County School District expressly prohibits the bullying of any person by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions. Policy JDB and Operating Guideline JD. The Fulton County School System strictly prohibits hazing and will have zero tolerance for any hazing behavior. Hazing is also illegal in the state of Georgia.

Hazing is defined as, but not limited to, any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health or safety of a student. Intent is irrelevant and team history and tradition should not include, endorse or support any element of hazing.

Penalties for Hazing: Athletes participating in the hazing of other individuals will be, at a minimum, immediately removed from their team for the remainder of that season and may be subject to other consequences such as criminal charges, suspension, expulsion or assignment to alternative school. A second offense will result in, at a minimum, loss of the privilege of participation in athletics for the remainder of their high school career and may be subject to the consequences previously mentioned.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ATHLETES

Training Rules/Regulations: The athlete who uses tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or any type of mood-altering substance found in legal over the counter products jeopardizes team morale, team reputation, and team success and does physical harm to himself/herself (Operating Guideline JD).

1. Use of Tobacco – Student athletes who uses tobacco at any time, during the season and/or off-season.
2. Use of Alcoholic Beverages – Student athletes shall not consume alcoholic beverages at any time, during the season and/or off-season.
3. Use of Illegal Drugs or Mood-Altering Substances – Student athletes shall not use illegal drugs or mood-altering substances at any time, during the season and/or off-season.

Chemical Use and Penalties for Violation of Training Rules with Alcohol or Drugs (Non-Felony)

A. Chemical Use

1. An athlete, regardless of quantity, shall not:
 - a. Buy, be in possession of, or use a beverage containing alcohol at any time;
 - b. Be in possession of, or use tobacco at any time;
 - c. Use, consume, possess, buy, sell, or distribute any controlled or other illegal or mood-altering substance at any time.
2. Athletes are responsible for their off-season and out of school behavior. These rules apply to an athlete's entire high school career **(365 days/24 hours)**.
3. It is not a violation for an athlete be in possession of a controlled substance specifically prescribed for the student's personal use by his/her doctor.
4. Athlete possession of substances containing alcohol under parent supervision for religious purposes will not be considered a violation of this policy.

B. Penalties for violation include:

Alcohol/Drugs:

1. **First Violation:**
After confirmation of the first violation, the student will lose a minimum of 20% of the current season or the next season that the athlete competes in. The penalty will be immediately assessed to the athlete's next competitions. If the offense happens prior to a season starting, the athlete may be permitted to try out for the sport but will then serve the suspension at the start of the season. The student can practice with the team if he coach/school permits him/her to practice during the suspension. Practicing during the suspension will be a local school decision. The student may not travel with the team during the suspension to competitions.
2. **Second Violation:**
After confirmation of the second violation, the student will lose a minimum of 50% of the current season or the next season that the athlete competes in. The penalty will be immediately assessed to the athlete's next competitions. If the offense happens prior to a season starting, the athlete may be per permitted to try out for the sport but will then serve the suspension at the start of the season. The student can practice with the team if the coach/school permits him/her to practice during the suspension. Practicing during the suspension will be a local school decision. The student may not travel with the team during the suspension to competitions.
3. **Third Violation:**
If a third violation occurs, the athlete will be suspended from all practices/competitions for one calendar year, and the athlete may be prohibited from ever representing his/her school in inter-scholastic activities at any time in the future.
4. **Fourth Violation:**
The athlete will lose the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities for their remaining time in high school.

- Scrimmages **are not** counted as games; they are considered practices. When assessing a suspension, only GHSA regular season and playoff games count.
- If a student is suspended, playoff games count towards the suspension. For Example: A football player is caught with alcohol after the 9th football game of the suspension. The football team has qualified for the state playoffs. The student athlete must serve 20%, in this case, 2 games. The student athlete will be suspended for the 10th game and the 1st playoff game. If the team wins in the playoffs, the athlete is eligible to play in the 2nd playoff game.
- Suspensions for multi-sport athletes. A suspension can carry over from one sport to another sport. For this to be the case, the athlete must have played the 2nd sport the previous year (the exception is a 9th grader). An athlete can't play a second sport just to avoid serving a suspension in their main sport. The district athletic director will make the final determination in these cases.
- Suspensions for one sport athletes. If a suspension occurs at the end of the season, the athlete will serve their suspension the following year. If an athlete plays more than one sport at the same time, the suspension will occur in both sports. For example: an athlete is on the baseball team and the track team in the spring: 2 track meets and 6 baseball games.
- Suspensions per sport are listed below. They are based on the total varsity games allowed by the GHSA By-Laws.
20% Suspensions
 Football – 2 games
 Cheerleading – Same as sport if sideline, 1 meet for competition cheer
 Softball – 5 games
 Volleyball – 4 play dates
 Cross Country – 2 dates
 Swimming – 2 meets
 Basketball – 5 games
 Wrestling – 4 dates
 Gymnastics – 2 meets
 Tennis -- 4 matches
 Soccer – 4 games
 Track – 2 meets
 Baseball – 6 games
 Lacrosse – 4 games
 Golf – 2 matches

Tobacco:

1. First Violation:

After confirmation of the first violation, the student will lose a minimum of 10% of the current season or the next season that the athlete competes in. The penalty will be assessed to the athlete's next competitions. If the offense happens prior to the start of the season, the athlete may be permitted to try out for the sport and then will immediately serve the suspension at the start of the season. The student can practice with the team if the coach/school permits him/her to practice during the suspension. Practice during the suspension will be a local decision. The student may not travel with the team during the suspension to any competitions.

2. Second Violation:

After confirmation of the second violation, the student will lose a minimum of 50% of the current season or the next season that the athlete competes in. The penalty will be assessed in the athlete's next competitions. If the offense happens prior to the start of the season, the athlete may be permitted to try out for the sport and then will immediately serve the suspension at the start of the season. The student can practice with the team if the coach/school permits him/her to practice during the suspension. Practice during the suspension will be a local school decision. The student may not travel with the team during the suspension to any competitions.

3. Third Violation: After confirmation of the third violation, the student will be suspended for a minimum of one calendar year from extracurricular activities.

These rules and consequences are in addition to any other school discipline under the Code of Conduct. Because rules are consistently applied in all Fulton County Schools, an athlete may not regain eligibility by transferring to another Fulton County School.

Vaping/E-Cigarette:

School administrators are trained to use THC test strips that will test the contents of a vape or e-cigarette that is suspected of having THC/Marijuana or other illegal drug contents. Consequences for Vaping will be determined by the substance that the student athlete used when he/she was caught vaping. If it was a tobacco-based product, the consequences will fall under the tobacco violations. If the product was THC/Marijuana or other illegal drugs, then the consequences will be determined by the drug/alcohol penalties.

Criminal Activity:

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or students must report any arrest of a student or behavior in which law enforcement is involved, to their high school administration or coach within two weeks (14 calendar days) of the arrest or behavior. The two-week time frame includes weekends, school holidays and summer vacation. Failure to report arrest or behavior.

Felonies (Including Felonies Relating to Drugs and Alcohol):

A student who is arrested for or charged with a felony or charged with an act that would constitute a felony if committed by an adult shall be automatically suspended from interscholastic GHSA activities. Students will not be permitted to participate in preseason activities. The student shall remain suspended until: (1) The charges are completely dismissed; (2) The charges are reduced to a misdemeanor in which case the student may be subject to penalties outlined for misdemeanors or alcohol/drugs; (3) The student is found not guilty; or (4) The student successfully completes the consequences assigned by the judge or agreed to by the student, including probation of diversion. Evidence that the probation period has expired, fines have been paid and/or community service has been completed as required.

If a student has been arrested or charged with an offense, but the matter has been expunged sealed, removed from a student's record, or the behavior has not been prosecuted (nolle prosequi), the student should present or obtain documentation as required by the school to determine the circumstances of the matter. These circumstances may not be enough to lift the student's consequences.

Misdemeanors Not Related to Drugs and Alcohol:

A student who is arrested for, charged with, or found guilty of a misdemeanor shall receive consequences as outlined below. However, any student who is accused of a misdemeanor alcohol/drug offense or a misdemeanor DUI will receive consequences as "Chemical Use and Penalties of Violation of Training Rules with Alcohol or Drugs" above.

1st of Subsequent Offenses: Minimum suspension from activities for one (1) school day up to a maximum of permanent suspension from extracurricular activities.

If the student produces proof that the charges are completely dismissed or the student is found not guilty, these consequences may be lifted. If a student has been arrested or charged with an offense, but the matter has been expunged, sealed, removed from a student's record, or the behavior has not been prosecuted (nolle Prosequi), that student should present or obtain documentation as required by the school to determine the circumstances of the matter. These circumstances may not be enough to lift the student's consequences.

Individual Coach's Rules:

Coaches may establish general rules and regulations with the approval of the athletic director and principal for their respective activities. Coaches may also address unique situations and issue consequences to athletes in accordance with the circumstances involving the athlete and his/her membership on the team. These rules, pertaining to a activity, must be given by the coach in writing to all team members and explained fully at the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will be in writing and will be administered by the coach. Copies of all additional team rules by coaches are on file in the local athletic office.

Basic Interscholastic Participation Policies
Extracurricular Activities are covered by District Procedure IDE and District Policy IDF

- A. **Participation:** An athlete may participate in only one sport per season unless two coaches/sponsors agree to the athlete's competing in both athletic activities, and priorities are set to settle conflicts before the season.
- B. **Fees:** Some sports carry an athletic participation fee. The maximum activity fee for student athletes is \$300 per sport. Fifty dollars from this total is a uniform and/or equipment deposit and will be refunded upon the return of uniforms and/or equipment in good condition, leaving a maximum total expenditure of \$250.00. Any expenses in excess of the \$300.00 will be funded through general fund raising and not by soliciting donations from students participating in the program or their parents. Athletes will not be denied the opportunity to participate if they cannot pay this fee. Where possible, a scholarship fund will be set up to assist students who are in financial need. Students who believe they cannot afford this fee should contact their local school Athletic Director for more information.
- C. **Dropping or transferring sports**
 - 1. An athlete that quits one sport may lose the privilege of participating in the interscholastic program. On occasion, however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:
 - (a) The athlete will consult with immediate coach and then the head coach. (b) The coach will report the situation to the athletic director. (c) The athlete will return all equipment issued to him or her.
 - 2. The athlete cannot begin a new sport until the season of the sport in which he/she quit has finished. If the team makes the post season, the local school will determine if the athlete must wait until the post season is completed as well.
- D. **Equipment:** School equipment issued to the athlete is the student's responsibility. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation and failing to meet that obligation can result in the denial of participation in the program.
- E. **Missing practice:** An athlete should always consult his/her coach before missing practice. Missing practice or a game without good reason will be dealt with at the discretion of the coach.
- F. **College recruitment policy:** If an athlete should be contacted personally by a college recruiter, he/she has an obligation to work through his/her coach and the athletic department. It is important to inform the coach about the contact as soon as possible. College recruitment information is available in the school's athletic office or counseling office.
- G. **Conflicts in extracurricular activities:** An individual athlete who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of conflict of obligations.
 - A. The school recognizes that each athlete should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities, and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts.
 - B. Athletes have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous of conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts are bound to happen. It also means notifying the faculty sponsors/coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise.
 - C. When a conflict arises, the sponsors/coaches will work out a solution. If a solution cannot be found, the principal will make the decision based on the following:
 - a) The relative importance each event. b) The importance of each event to the student. c) The relative contribution the athlete can make. d) How long each event has been scheduled. E) Input from the parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - D. Once the decision has been made and the athlete has followed that decision, he/she will not be penalized in any way by either sponsor/coach. If it becomes obvious that an athlete cannot fulfill the obligations of a school activity, he/she should withdraw from the activity.
- H. **Attendance:** Students who miss over half of the school day due to illness will not be able to participate in a contest or practice on that day. Students missing school for reasons other than illness must have an excused absence in order to participate. Final authority for infractions of this rule will rest with the principal. Students absent from school on the day prior to a non-school day will be eligible to participate the day after the absence.
- I. **In-School and Out-Of-School Suspension:** Students will not be allowed to participate in activities on the days they have been assigned to in-school suspension and until they have served their out-of-school suspension. There should be no adjustments made in the assignment of suspension days to allow a student to participate in any activities.
- J. **Release from Class:** It is the responsibility of the student to see his/her teacher(s) the day before he/she is to be released to participate in an interscholastic activity. All work shall be made up at the convenience of the teacher. (Link to Policy JBD)
- K. **Team Selection:** In accordance with our philosophy of interscholastic activities and the desire to see as many students as possible participate in interscholastic programs while at our school, we encourage coaches to involve as many students as possible without compromising the integrity of the program. Time, space, facilities, equipment, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective team size for any activity. Choosing the members of teams is the responsibility of the coaches or sponsors of those teams.

- L. **Reporting of Injury:** All injuries that occur while participating in interscholastic activities should be reported to the trainer/coach. If the injury requires medical attention by a doctor or treatment center, it will be necessary to have an injury report form completed by the trainer/coach. Once a student is treated by a doctor, written permission from the doctor is required to return to the activity.
- M. **Dismissal of a Student-Athlete from a Team:**
- A. When a coach decides to dismiss a student-athlete from a team, the student-athlete should be informed verbally by the coach in a private setting. It is the responsibility of the coach to discuss the situation with the student-athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - B. The student-athlete may appeal the coach's decision for dismissal from the team to the Principal/athletic director of the school. The appeal must be made within 48 hours of the notification of dismissal and the appeal must be made in writing by the student-athlete to the principal/athletic director.
 - C. The student-athlete is denied participation on the team until the appeal process is completed.
 - D. The Principal should review the appeal and decide whether to uphold the dismissal from the team or to restore the student-athlete's membership to the team. *The Principal's decision should be made within 72 hours of receipt of the written appeal from the student-athlete.*
 - E. **The Principal's decision of the appeal made by the student-athlete is the final decision and represents the conclusion of the appeal process. There is no appeal beyond the appeal to the Principal.**
NOTE: a Principal can remove or suspend a student-athlete from any team. The Principal should inform the student-athlete of the decision and should also inform the student-athletes parent(s)/guardian(s). Participation on an interscholastic athletic team is a privilege and not a right. A student may also be removed from a team in other circumstances, such as when the student is expelled from school.
- N. **Transportation**
- A. Under normal circumstances Fulton County Schools provides transportation for all student-athletes, support, and coaching personnel of athletic teams in authorized school vehicles when the contest has been scheduled away from the high school site.
 - B. Team members may only ride with those individuals listed on the student's transportation release (see Appendix).
 - 1. A Transportation Release must be signed by the student-athlete's parent/guardian;
 - 2. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student must submit a written request for Travel Release to the team's coach 24 hours in advance of the trip to the contest. The coach will release the student-athlete to the parent(s)/guardian or designated adult upon presentation of the written Travel Release:
 - 3. Should a parent approach the coach at an away contest and request that his/her student-athlete ride home with him/her, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must still submit the request in writing to the coach, then and only then may the coach agree;
 - 4. A student-athlete will not be allowed to ride home with another student or another parent from any away athletic contest unless conditions are met under Section B.

O. **SPORTS EQUITY**

State and federal law prohibits discrimination based on sex in athletic programs of local school systems (Riley Gaines Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Fulton County School District does not discriminate based on sex in its athletic programs. The Sports Equity Compliance Coordinator for Fulton County School District is:

Mr. Lamarr Glenn
Director of Athletics / Sports Equity Coordinator
470-254-6892
glennl2@fultonschools.org

Administrative Center
Athletic Department
6201 Powers Ferry Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30339

In accordance with Georgia law, each interscholastic sports team operated or sponsored by the District will be designated as male, female, or coed, and students electing to participate in interscholastic athletics must do so by participating on the team(s) which align with that student's biological sex. The definitions of "sex," "male," "female," and "coed" contained within Georgia's Riley Gaines Act of 2025 (OCGA § 20-2-315) will apply to these categories.

Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in Fulton County School District may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator in accordance with Board Policy IDFA. A copy of the Sports Equity Grievance Form is available in this handbook and on the Fulton County School District website.

In accordance with Georgia law, male students shall not be allowed to participate in any interscholastic competition on any team that is designated as female. Female students shall not be allowed to participate in any interscholastic competition on any team that is designated as male, unless a corresponding team designated for females is not offered or available for competitions. Any student shall be allowed to participate in any interscholastic competition on a team that is designated as coed.

When used for athletics purposes, multiple occupancy restrooms or changing areas (including restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms, and shower rooms) will be designated for exclusive use by males or for exclusive use by females. No male may use any multiple occupancy restroom, changing area, or sleeping quarters designated for females in conjunction with interscholastic competition. No female may use any such facility designated for males in conjunction with interscholastic competition. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to individuals who are unwilling or unable to use such spaces designated for such individual's sex. Access to single-sex multiple occupancy spaces may be granted to members of the opposite sex for custodial, maintenance, or inspection purposes; to render emergency medical assistance; to address an ongoing emergency; to facilitate access for a parent or legal guardian of a minor child when necessary for the child's safety, welfare, or assistance; or to perform authorized coaching and training duties; as permitted under Georgia law.

NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS (NIL)

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Rules:

- A. The GHSA does not specifically prohibit students from engaging in certain commercial activities as individuals.
- B. These activities, commonly referred to as name, image and likeness (NIL), will not put a student's amateur status at risk provided the student meets all the requirements for maintaining amateur status in compliance with GHSA by-law 1.92-c and providing there is no violation of by-laws prohibiting influencing a student to attend or remain at a member school under GHSA by-law 1.70 (Recruiting/Undue Influence/Following The Coach).
- C. A student-athlete may benefit from the use of their name, image, and likeness (NIL) in compliance with GHSA by-law 1.92-c provided:
 - i. The compensation is not contingent on specific athletic performance or achievement.
 - ii. The compensation is not provided as an incentive to enroll or remain enrolled at a specific school.
 - iii. The compensation is not provided by the school or any person acting as an agent for the school.

Guidelines for NIL Activities:

- A. Intellectual property - No "marks" may be used including, but not limited to, school logos, school name, school uniforms, school mascot, or any trademarked GHSA logo or acronyms.
- B. No school apparel or equipment shall be worn, which includes school name, school uniforms, school logo, school mascot or any apparel displaying trademarked GHSA logos or acronyms.
- C. No member school facility may be used for the purpose of name, image, and likeness activities.

- D. No activities in conflict with a member school's local school district policy may be endorsed. (Examples include, but are not limited to, tobacco products, alcohol products and controlled substances. Additional categories such as adult entertainment, cannabis, casinos/gambling including the lottery, sports betting, weapons/firearms/ammunition).
- E. Students and their families should seek professional guidance as to how NIL activities could impact collegiate financial aid and/or tax implications, among other issues.
- F. Within seven (7) calendar days after entering into any type of NIL contract/agreement, a student, or the student's parents/guardians, must notify the Principal or Athletic Director of the student's school of entering into that agreement.

Failure to follow these rules and guidelines could result in immediate loss of GHSA eligibility.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All Fulton County Schools voluntarily join the GHSA for athletic competitions. Each of the 16 high schools agree to abide by all eligibility requirements and by-laws created by the GHSA. The white book can be viewed on the GHSA website located at www.ghsa.net.

ATHLETIC INTEREST

The Fulton County School District values student participation in athletics. All sports offered at each school are listed on the District's Athletic webpage at www.fultonschools.org, or you can access each school's individual webpage.

Student Athletic Interest Survey for All High School and Eighth Grade Students

Are you a high school student or an eighth-grade student? If YES, then please participate in a short athletic interest survey---your input is very important! Please access the interest survey on the District's Athletics webpage at www.fultonschools.org.

Suggestions or Changes

If you are a high school student, eighth grade student, parent/guardian, coach or other interested school personnel that has a specific suggestion or request about:

- The addition of a Georgia High School Association (GHSA) sanctioned sport not currently offered at your high school;
- Adding an additional level of competition for an existing GHSA sport at your high school (such as a freshman or junior varsity team);
- Getting your school's assistance in approaching GHSA about adding a sport to its list of sanctioned sports; or
- An idea on a way to increase participation in currently existing GHSA sports teams, then please complete the form that can be accessed on the District's Athletics webpage at www.fultonschools.org. Your feedback will be sent to the School District's Athletic Director and the relevant school and may be shared with relevant coaches. Someone will contact you about your request of feedback within one week, but if you have not received a response or cannot access the form, please feel free to contact the District Athletic Director, Lamarr Glenn, at glennl2@fultonschools.org. In your email, please let Mr. Glenn know the date you completed and send the form (if any), as well as your name, grade, and high school.

Additional FCS Athletic Guidelines

1. **8th Grade rule**-- Fulton County Schools allows 8th graders to participate on any JV teams at the high school that is in their feeder program. 8th graders are welcome to participate in any community teams or park and rec teams.
2. **Seniors on Junior Varsity Teams**—Junior Varsity teams are used to help prepare athletes to compete on varsity teams. They are developmental in nature. **Seniors are not allowed to play on Junior Varsity teams.** Individual sports such as cross country and swimming do not apply (these are open competitions that are individually timed). If you have any questions, please call the school Athletic Director.
3. **Transgender Athletes**—Fulton County Schools will abide by all GHSA and Georgia State Laws.
4. **Feeder/Community Middle School Sports**—Fulton County Schools do not offer middle school sports. The district does offer some intramural and extramural opportunities at the middle schools. Several schools do have feeder programs associated with their schools, but these organizations are separate community organized programs.
5. **Injuries to athletes Protocol**—If an athlete is injured in a contest or practice, the following protocols must be followed:
 - A. The coach must call or contact the parents/guardians
 - B. Notify the school trainer if one is present on campus
 - C. If there is a potential head injury, the concussion protocol must be followed
 - D. When the athlete returns to practice, continuous supervision and monitoring must continue until the athlete is 100%
6. **NOTE: Fulton County Schools complies with the "Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children" (POLICY JG).**

7. **FCS Athletic Coaching Assignment Practice**

Fulton County Schools expects certified and classified employees assigned to a high school within the district to coach at the school to which they are assigned as their primary work location.

General Expectations

1. Employees assigned to a high school (full-time or part-time) should coach at their assigned school.
2. Coaching assignments outside of an employee's assigned school are strongly discouraged and permitted only under defined exceptions.
3. Local school principals and athletic directors are expected to prioritize hiring coaches who are on-site employees.

Key Benefits

- Strengthens alignment between academics and athletics
- Enhances school culture and daily visibility of coaches
- Promotes equity across athletic programs
- Increases accountability and oversight

Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. All exceptions must be approved by both principals and the District Athletic Director, documented annually, and subject to review.

APPENDIX

Off-Season and Summer Training Tips

During the off-season and summer vacation, high school athletes may be tempted "to slack off" from the rigorous training regimen which they need to stay in shape. Whether the high school athlete aspires to be a college athlete, professional athlete, or play sports for fun, here are some tips for off-season training.

When participating in any athletic activity, especially during the hot, humid summer months, it is important to stay well hydrated. Proper hydration does not begin at game time; it's the result of daily attention to the body's needs. Most heat illnesses are preventable. Signs and symptoms of heat illness and dehydration include but are not limited to decreased performance, muscle cramping, weakness, fatigue, intense thirst, profuse sweating, blurred vision and/or cool, pale clammy skin. Younger athletes have a lower sweating capacity and higher core temperature than adolescents and adults. The composition of children's sweat is also different from adolescent and adult athletes, which means they do not benefit from electrolyte replacement drinks. Water is the fluid of choice for younger athletes. To diminish the risk of heat illness/dehydration. Follow these simple tips as suggested by the American College of Sports Medicine:

- **Drink 8-12 cups of water daily**
- **Drink at least 16 oz. of fluid two hours prior to an event and then again 20 minutes before the event**
- **Offer unlimited access to fluids during the game/practice.**
- **Drink cool fluids containing less than 8 percent carbohydrate.**
- **Drink beyond your thirst.**
- **Avoid caffeine and carbonated beverages.**
- **Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.**
- **Take frequent breaks and rest when necessary.**
- **Sports Nutrition** – In addition to having enough water or sports drink on hand it is equally important to have nutritious snacks available. This becomes even more critical during a long day and/or weekend of tournament play where games may start at 7 a.m. and may not finish until after 5 p.m. Grabbing a piece of pizza from the concession stand works in a pinch, but it is not the energy food of choice. Eating the wrong type of foods can actually produce a negative energy effect, slowing down your game instead of providing that needed energy boost. Gastric irritability may also occur when poor food choices and combined strenuous physical activity. Having nutritious snacks, such as granola bars, fresh fruit and vegetables, bagels and some trail mixes can help keep young athletes performing well until there is adequate time for a complete and healthy meal. It is equally as important to replenish muscle energy sources at the end of the day as it is to "prep" them with a pre-game meal.
- **Avoid Peak Sun:** Avoid rigorous workouts during the peak temperatures usually from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or when predicted by the weather service for your geographic area.

- Warm-Up: All athletes need to stretch their muscles before strenuous exercise. It is a way to prevent muscle injury. Proper stretching lengthens or “loosens” muscle tissue, making it less prone to trauma and tears.
- Eat Balanced Meals: Proper nutrition is important to maintaining your body’s peak performance for endurance sports such as football, soccer, track and others. Eat plenty of carbohydrates such as bread, cereal and potatoes which turn into glucose and the energy you’ll need.
- Get plenty of rest: We all know (or should!) that we get stronger NOT by training more, but rather from our adaptations to that training which we get from rest and recovery. Adequate sleep is essential as it is our time to regenerate and rebuild. Adequate sleep is also vital for alleviating stress.

Concussions in Sports

BY-LAW 2.68 GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include, licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.

- a) No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.
- b) Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.
- c) It is mandatory that each coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
- d) Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course and shall keep a record of those who participate.

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus [MRSA] Q&A

What is MRSA?

MRSA is the acronym for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, an antibiotic-resistant strain of the common Staphylococcus aureus bacteria (staph). Staph is one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. The common staph bacteria itself is not always dangerous, but the antibiotic-resistant MRSA strain is hard to treat with commonly used antibiotic medications. Because of its antibiotic resistance, MRSA sometimes can lead to life threatening infections.

How common are MRSA infections?

Healthy people carry staph on their skin or in their noses. The majority of staph infections are minor; however, staph can cause more serious infections that require special antibiotic treatment. MRSA is almost always spread by direct, physical contact – such as openings in the skin (cuts or abrasions), crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene. Previously, MRSA infections were found almost exclusively in hospitals and nursing homes, but now they are becoming a rapidly growing problem in our communities, earning the name CA-MRSA – or Community-Acquired MRSA – because of how the bacteria spreads in public or community areas.

What is at risk:

Anyone who is in physical contact with other people on regular basis is at increased risk for acquiring MRSA and other potentially dangerous bacterial infections. It is estimated that 30-50% of the population carries CA MRSA bacteria on their bodies.

Why are athletes so susceptible to MRSA infections?

Athletes have to be particularly concerned about MRSA because it is easily spread from person-to-person due to close, physical contact in athletics. In addition, athletic facilities provide the ideal environment for bacteria to thrive, as they can be warm and humid. MRSA can be spread through touching objects such as towels, clothing, workout areas and sports equipment that have MRSA germs on them. MRSA can live in the skin and survive on objects and surfaces for more than 24 hours. Athletes are also thought to be more susceptible to staph infections because their immune system temporarily lowers after a hard workout.

What does MRSA infection look like?

MRSA can present itself in various forms of skin infections ranging from boils, blisters, rashes, pimples, or ingrown hairs. The often occur in the armpits, groin, neck, and buttocks. MRSA infection sometimes has the appearance of a spider bite, which can lead to misdiagnoses. Symptoms of MRSA infection may include redness, warmth at the site, swelling, pus, and pain. Unexplained fever, muscular pain and/or fatigue after a skin infection are symptoms that could be related to a MRSA infection. MRSA-infected skin

lesions (sores) can change from Skin or surface irritations to abscesses or serious skin infections. If left untreated, MRSA can infect the blood, bones, and other organs.

What is the treatment for an MRSA infection?

Once a staph infection is suspected, a doctor can take a sample/culture of the infection and send it to a lab for testing. If the staph germs being tested cannot be treated or killed with standard antibiotics, then the infection is diagnosed as MRSA. Many MRSA infections can be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. To prevent serious complications, only healthcare providers/doctors should drain abscess or boil. Most MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. However, in severe cases a very strong antibiotic must be administered in a hospital.

How can MRSA infection be prevented?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), good personal hygiene will help prevent skin infections. This includes:

(1) Showering and washing with soap and water immediately after practice, competition and training. (2) Not sharing personal care items such as bars of soap, towels and razors, uniforms, and sports equipment that directly touch the body. (3) Taking home practice clothes, towels, and other linens daily and returning clean practice clothes back to school. (4) Washing practice clothes, uniforms and other sports-related linens in hot water and laundry detergent. Using a hot dryer, rather than air drying also helps kill bacteria. (5) Wiping down athletic equipment and materials with sanitizer regularly. (6) Notifying coaches, athletic trainers and the school's clinic staff of any wounds that are potentially infected. (7) Keeping all wounds clean and covered and avoiding contact with others' open wounds, or anything that could possibly be contaminated by infection (boils, blisters, etc.). (8) Washing hands frequently with soap and water, especially after practice, competition and training.

What is Fulton County high schools doing about this problem?

- The above procedures are enforced in the Fulton County Schools high school athletic programs.
- Information also is shared with student athletes and their families.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to be on alert for any signs and symptoms of skin infections in their children. If MRSA is suspected, please contact your healthcare provider or the Fulton County Schools' Office of Student Health Services at 470-254-2177.

**Sports Related Skin Infections
Position Statement and Guidelines
National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)**

Skin-related infections in both the community setting and the sports environment have increased considerably over the past several years. While most of these infections are transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, a significant number are due to shared equipment, towels, or poor hygiene in general. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) has put forth general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases (See NFHS General Guidelines for Sports Hygiene, Skin Infections and Communicable Diseases).

The NFHS SMAC recognizes that even if these guidelines are strictly adhered to, skin infection will continue to occur given the nature of certain sports. For example, the risk of transmission is much higher in sports with a great deal of direct skin-to-skin contact such as football and wrestling. Therefore, the NFHS SMAC has developed specific guidelines for the skin infections most commonly encountered in sports. The guidelines set forth follow the principles of Universal Precautions and err in favor of protecting participants in situations where skin-to-skin contact may occur. Consideration may be given to the sport regarding risk of transmission, but these rules must be strictly adhered to in sports such as wrestling, football, and basketball where skin-to-skin contact is frequent and unavoidable.

Ringworm, Tinea Corporis

These fungal lesions are due to dermatophytes. As they are easily transmissible the athlete should be treated with an oral or topical antifungal medication for a minimum of 72 hours prior to participation. Once the lesion is no longer contagious it may be covered with a bio occlusive dressing.

Impetigo, Folliculitis, Carbuncle and Furuncle

While these infections may be secondary to a variety of bacteria, they should all be treated as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infections. The athlete should be removed from practices and competition and treated with oral antibiotics. Return to contact practices and competition may occur after 72 hours of treatment providing the infection is resolving. All lesions are considered infectious until each one has a well-adherent scab without any drainage or weeping fluids. Once a lesion is no longer considered infectious, it should be covered with a bio occlusive dressing until complete resolution. Since nasal colonization of these bacteria is common, treatment with intranasal topical mupirocin should be considered for recurrent episodes. All team members should be carefully screened for similar infections. If multiple athletes are infected, consideration should be given to obtaining nasal cultures of all teammates. This can identify carriers and allow for targeted treatment with intranasal mupirocin and daily body washes with chlorhexidine 4% solution for at least five days.

Shingles, Cold Sores

These are viral infections which are transmitted by skin-to-skin contact. Lesions on exposed areas of skin that are not covered by clothing, uniform, or equipment required the player to be withdrawn from any activity that may result in direct skin-to-skin contact with another participant. Covering infectious lesions with an occlusive dressing is not acceptable. Primary outbreaks of shingles and cold sores require 10-14 days of oral antiviral medications while recurrent outbreaks require five days of treatment as a minimum treatment time prior to returning to participation. To be considered "non-contagious," all lesions must be scabbed over with no oozing or discharge and no new lesions should have occurred in the preceding 48 hours.

Herpes Gladiatorum

This skin infection, primarily seen among wrestlers, is caused by Herpes Simplex Virus Type 1 (HSV-1). The spreading of this virus is strictly skin-to-skin with the preponderance of the outbreaks developing on the head, face and neck, reflecting the typical lock-up position. The initial outbreak is characterized by a raised rash with groupings of 6-10 vesicles (blisters). The skin findings are accompanied by sore throat, fever, malaise and swollen cervical lymph nodes. The infected individual should be removed from contact and treated with antiviral medications. They may return to contact only after all lesions are healed with well adherent scabs, no new vesicle formation and no swollen lymph nodes near the affected area. If antivirals are not used, the infected participant may return to contact only after all lesions are well healed with well adhered scabs, no new vesicle formation, and no swollen lymph nodes near the affected area. Even greater consideration should be given to prophylactic antivirals for the remainder of the current season and each subsequent season when a wrestler has suffered a recurrent outbreak.

As the HSV-1 may spread prior to vesicle formation, anyone in contact with the infected individual during the three days prior to the outbreak must be isolated from any contact activity for eight days and be examined daily for suspicious skin lesions. To be considered "non contagious," all lesions must be scabbed over with no oozing or discharge and no new lesions should have occurred in the preceding 48 hours.

Miscellaneous Viral Infections

Molluscum contagiosum and verruca are types of warts that are caused by viruses but are not considered highly contagious. Therefore, these lesions require no treatment or restrictions, but should be covered if prone to bleeding when abraded.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS HYGIENE, SKIN INFECTIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

Universal Hygiene Protocol for All Sports:

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice.
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice.
- Wash personal gear (knee pads and braces) weekly.
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others.
- Refrain from full body (chest, arms, and abdomen) cosmetic shaving.

Infectious Skin Diseases

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:

- Athletes must be told to notify a parent or guardian, athletic trainer and coach of any skin lesion prior to competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional should evaluate any skin lesion before returning to competition.
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of the infection.
- Coaches, officials, and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on “time until return to competition.” Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state and local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

Blood-borne Infectious Diseases

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:

- An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity.
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers need to wear gloves and take other precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash water.
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning.
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

Department of Interscholastic Athletics
Procedures for Extreme Weather and Air Quality Conditions Affecting Outdoor Interscholastic Athletic
ALL EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY THE FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS MUST BE FOLLOWED

Weather Condition: HOT and HUMID

Fulton County Schools shall have, use and maintain a digital Wet Bulb Global Temperature (WBGT) device for measuring environmental factors which contribute to extreme weather conditions. The digital WBGT device is used to measure the Wet Bulb Global Temperature which is derived by evaluating the combined dry air temperature, humidity, ground radiated heat, and wind speed at that particular location. Conditions are subject to change during practice/activity; therefore, measurements at the practice site should be taken at regular intervals throughout the practice/activity.

Commencing with the 2012-2013 school year all outdoor interscholastic athletic activities will monitor and follow all procedures. Interscholastic football teams will be required to measure and document the Wet Bulb Global Temperature (WBGT) prior to outdoor practices through the months of August, during spring practices in May, and at other times when conditions warrant. Measurement and documentation can be performed by the school's athletic coordinator, athletic trainer, or football coach. All on field coaches shall be first aid trained and be familiar with all heat related symptoms and corresponding treatments, be familiar with emergency and 911 procedures, and be familiar with the Wet Blub Global Temperature Chart and utilize the chart results when determining length of practice and rest periods.

The Fulton County Schools (FCS) and Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity is statewide policy for conducting practices and voluntary conditioning workouts in all sports during times of extremely high heat and/or humidity that will be signed by each head coach at the beginning of each season and distributed to all players and their parents or guardians. The policy shall follow modified guidelines of the American College of Sports Medicine regarding:

1. The scheduling of practices at various heat/humidity levels
2. The ratio of workout time to time allotted for rest and hydration at various heat/humidity levels
3. The heat/humidity level that will result in practice being terminated

A scientifically approved instrument that measures Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) reading must be utilized at each practice to ensure that the written policy is being followed properly.

LEVEL	WBGT READINGS	ACTIVITY GUIDELINES AND REST BREAK GUIDELINES	LEVEL
Low Risk	Under 82.0	Normal activities—Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of minimum duration of 3 minutes each during workout	As Desired
Low Moderate Risk	82.0 – 86.9	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of four minutes duration each	Cold Water
High Moderate Risk	87.0-89.9	Maximum practice time is 2 hours. For Football: players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice, and all protective equipment must be removed during conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts. For All Sports: Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.	Cold Water
Low High Risk	90.0-92.0	Maximum practice time is 1 hour. For Football: no protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. For All Sports: There must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.	Cold Water
Very High Risk	Over 92.1	No outdoor workouts; Cancel exercise; Delay practices until a cooler WBGT reading occurs	Cold Water
GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATION AND REST BREAKS - Rest time should involve both unlimited hydration intake (water or electrolyte drinks) and rest without any activity involved - For football, helmets should be removed during rest time. - The site of the rest time should be a “cooling zone” and not in direct sunlight - When the WBGT reading is over 86: - Ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available at the “cooling zone” - Cold immersion tubs must be available for practices for the benefit of any player showing early signs of heat illness. DEFINITIONS - Practices are defined as: the period of time that a participant engages in a coach-supervised, school approved sport or conditioning-related activity. Practices are timed from the time the players report to the practice or workout area until players leave that area. If a practice is interrupted for a weather-related reason, the “clock” on that practice will stop and will begin again when the practice resumes. - Conditioning activities include such things as weight training, wind-sprints, timed runs for distance, etc., and may be a part of the practice time or included in “voluntary workouts.” - A walk-through is not a part of the practice time regulation and may last no longer than one hour. This activity may not include conditioning activities or contact drills. No protective equipment may be worn during a walk-through, and no full-speed drills may be held. - Rest breaks may not be combined with any other type of activity and players must be given unlimited access to hydration. These breaks must be held in a “cool zone” where players are out of direct sunlight. When the WBGT reading is over 86, ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available at the “cool zone” to aid the cooling process AND cold immersion tubs must be available for the benefit of any player showing early signs of heat illness. PENALTIES: Schools violating heat policy shall be fined a minimum of \$500.00 and a maximum of \$1,000.00			

Cautions and Consideration for Hot and Cold Conditions

Practices and games should be held early in the morning and later in the evening to avoid times when environment conditions are generally more severe. Hydration and fluid replacement are a daily process. Athletes should hydrate themselves before, during, and after practice. Meals should include an appropriate amount of fluid intake and addition to a healthy diet. An unlimited supply of cold water shall be available to participants during practices and games. Coaches/supervisors shall inform all athletes participating during practices or games that cold water is always available or accessible and athletes will be given permission to hydrate themselves at any time.

Athletes shall be gradually acclimatized to the heat. Research indicates 80% acclimatization may be achieved in 7-10 days but could take up to 14 days. In some cases, it may take several weeks to become fully acclimatized. The length and intensity of practice should be adjusted according to the WBT until acclimatization occurs. Athletes should weight in before practice and weight out after practice in order to monitor water loss. Water loss can lead to symptoms of dehydration. Athletes should wear clothes that are light in weight or color. Adequate rest periods shall take place before practices sessions. Athletes shall remove appropriate equipment or clothing when possible. Removal of the appropriate equipment and clothing allows exposed skin to cool more efficiently. Football player shall remove their helmets during high risk conditions. Football shoulder pads shall be removed if conditions worsen.

Athletes who need careful monitoring include overweight participants, participants with weight control problems fluctuation of weight), participants taking over-the counter and prescription medication, and participants who previously have done absolutely no exercise at all.

Heat Illness: Symptoms and Treatment

(As recommended by the National Athletic Trainers Association)

Heat illness is used to define several types of afflictions suffered when an individual experiences a rising body temperature and dehydration. The following are the different forms identified by the National Athletic Trainer Association.		
Heat Related Illness	Symptoms	Treatments
Heat Cramps	Muscle spasms caused by an imbalance of water and electrolytes in muscles; usually affects the legs and abdominal muscles	Rest in cool area; drink plenty of fluids; proper stretching and massaging; application of ice in some cases
Heat Exhaustion	Can be precursor to heat stroke; normal to high temperature; heavy sweating; skin is flushed or cool and pale; headaches, dizziness; rapid pulse, nausea, weakness; physical collapse may occur; can occur without prior symptoms such as cramps	Get to a cool place immediately and out of the heat; drink plenty of fluids; remove excess clothing; in some cases, immerse in cool water
Heat Stroke	Body's cooling system shuts down; increased core temperature of 104° F or greater; if untreated it can cause brain damage, internal organ damage; and even death; sweating stops; shallow breathing and rapid pulse; possible disorientation or loss of consciousness; possible irregular heartbeat and cardiac arrest	Call 911 immediately; cool bath with ice packs near large arteries such as neck, armpits, groin; replenish fluids by drinking or intravenously if needed

Fluid Replacement

Weight loss during workout and Fluid amount needed to refuel your body

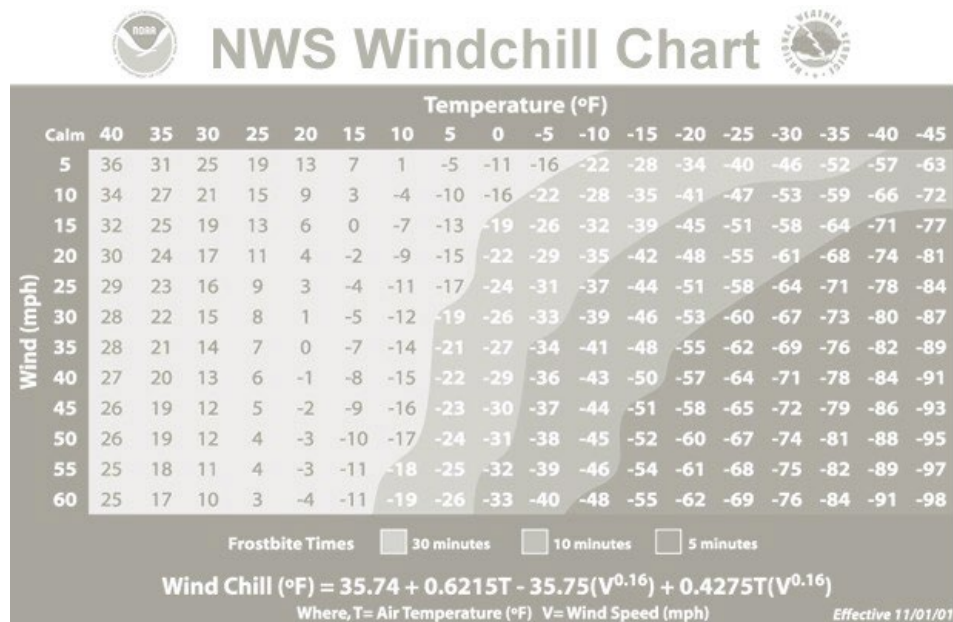
- 2 pounds (32 ounces) = 4 cups of water or one sports drink bottle
- 4 Pounds (64 ounces) = 8 cups of water or four sports drink bottles
- 6 pounds (96 ounces) = 12 cups of water or three sports drink bottles
- 8 pounds (128 ounces) = 16 cups of water or four sports drink bottles

Guidelines for Hydration During Exercise

- Drink 16 – ounces of water or sports drink one to 2 hours before workout or competition
- Drink 4-8 ounce of water or sports drink one to two hours before workout or competition
- Drink before feeling thirsty. When a person is thirsty, needed fluids are already lost.

Weather Conditions: COLD and FREEZING TEMPERATURES

The NWS Wind Chill Temperature (WCT) index uses advances in science, technology, and computer modeling to provide an accurate understandable, and useful formula for calculating the dangers from winter winds and freezing temperatures. The wind chill temperature is how cold people and animals feel when outside. Wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by wind and cold. As the wind increases, it draws heat from the body, driving down skin temperature and eventually the internal body temperature. Therefore, the wind makes it FEEL much colder. If the temperature is 0 degrees Fahrenheit and the wind is blowing at 15 mph, the wind chill is -19 degrees Fahrenheit. At this wind chill temperature, exposed skin can freeze in 30 minutes.



There are several factors influencing one's susceptibility or risk of cold related injury or illness. Those factors can be additive. This, it is essential to appreciate each of these factors, along with the associated signs and symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite. For example, exposure to 30°F-50°F temperatures under wet and windy conditions can be equivalent to sub-zero temperatures with no wind or moisture.

Risk Factors	Prevention
- Low air temperature – when cold exposure exceeds to overwhelms the body's ability to compensate for heat loss due to the external environment - Wind chill – Wind chill identifies the risks associated with the interaction of the wind speed and air temperature on the skin - Moisture – wet skin freezes at higher temperatures than dry skin - Exposed skin – heat loss occurs primarily through convection and radiation to the external environment but may also include evaporation if the skin is moist. This is a concern for those exercising and sweating in cold environments. - Insulation – the amount of insulation from cold and moisture significantly affects thermoregulation - Dehydration – negatively influences metabolism and thermoregulation; Caffeine – acts as a diuretic causing water loss and dehydration	- Dress in layers - Cover the head to prevent excessive heat loss from the head and neck - Stay dry by wearing a wicking fabric next to the body and a breathable, water repellant fabric outer layer - Stay adequately - Eat regular meals - Avoid caffeine - Educate athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators in recognition of cold related illness - Consider cancellation of athletic events if there is an outbreak

LIGHTNING and TORNADO SAFETY RULES

All thunderstorms produce lightning. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck. Move inside. It doesn't have to be raining yet since lightning can strike 10 to 15 miles away from the rain portion of the storm. These lightning strokes come out of the upper portions of the thunderstorm cloud which extends 5 to 10 miles into the atmosphere.

In general, lightning will travel the easiest route from the cloud to ground which means that it often strikes the tallest object. Therefore, a simple rule is to not make yourself the tallest object or stand near the tallest object in your immediate surroundings. For instance, do not stand in an open field, on a beach, or on a hilltop. Do not stand under an isolated or large tree or near a pole, and do not stay out on a boat. If you are in a forest, you should seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. If you are in a group of people, spread out keeping several yards apart from each other.

Stay away from metal objects such as fences, poles, equipment, pipes, etc. Get rid of metal objects on your body such as coins, money clips, hair pins, jewelry, etc. Stay away from water. Inside, stay away from electrical appliances, televisions, and telephones. Only use the phone in an emergency.

If you feel your hair stand on end, you are in immediate danger of being struck. Unless you can instantly jump inside a shelter, drop to a crouching position, bending forward and keeping your feet close together with your hands on your knees. The object is to be as low to the ground as possible, but with as little of your body surface touching the ground.

Persons struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely. Lightning often has a paralyzing effect that is temporary. Even though a person appears dead, he or she may be resuscitated. If a victim is not breathing, immediately start mouth to mouth resuscitation every 5 seconds for adults and children. If a person is not breathing **AND** there is no pulse, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR, must be administered. This is a combination of mouth to mouth resuscitation and external cardiac compression and should only be undertaken by persons with proper training.

WHAT TERMS ARE USED TO ALERT YOU?

WATCH: A Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued by the National Weather Service whenever conditions exist for severe weather to develop. Watches are usually for large areas of Georgia and are usually two to six hours long. Watches give you time to plan and prepare. Make sure your family and friends are aware of the watch and are informed about what to do if a tornado is sighted. Keep an eye on the sky and listen for further statements and warnings.

WARNING: a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued whenever a tornado or severe thunderstorm has actually been sighted or strongly indicated by radar. Warnings are for smaller areas, such as a county, and are usually 30 minutes to 1 hour long. You must act immediately when you first hear the warning. If the severe weather is reported near you, seek shelter immediately. If not, keep a constant lookout for severe weather and stay near shelter.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU RECEIVE A WATCH OR WARNING?

1. Monitor weather information by tuning your radio or your television, or NOAA Weather Radio at 162.400 (VHF).
2. Listen for weather sirens and know what their signals mean.
3. Notify friends and relatives and locate children or handicapped individuals who may not be able to seek shelter quickly.
4. Make sure your shelter is ready (check flashlight batteries, etc.)

WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID DOING?

1. Do Not Panic!
2. Do not call Emergency Services for information as your call may hold up information vital to all the county.
3. Use telephones only in case of Emergency. Lightning strikes are more common than tornadoes.
4. Do not attempt to leave a building during the approach of a tornado but rather seek the best cover in the building you are presently in. Sit in a hallway without windows with your back to the wall. Stay away from windows and doors.

WHERE SHOULD YOU SEEK SHELTER?

As a general rule the further into the interior of a building you can get and the closer to below ground level you can get the better.

AT SCHOOL:

Follow advance plans to move interior hallways or small rooms on the lowest floor. Avoid areas with glass and wide, free span roofs. Schools, factories and office buildings should designate someone to watch for severe weather and initiate an alarm.

IF DRIVING A VEHICLE OR CAUGHT IN OPEN COUNTRY:

Get into a sturdy building if possible or lie flat in a ditch or depression and hold onto something on the ground if possible. Do not try to outrun the storm or ride out your vehicle.

Weather Conditions: Air Quality

Millions of people live in areas where air pollution can cause serious health problems. Local air quality can affect our daily lives. Like the weather, it can change from day to day. EPA developed the Air Quality Index, or AQI, to make information available about the health effects of the five most common air pollutants, and how to avoid those effects. In the booklet, *Air Quality Index a Guide to Air Quality and Your Health*, you will find information about these common pollutants and the AQI.

Ground-level ozone and airborne particles are the two pollutants that pose the greatest threat to human health in this country. You can find information about these pollutants in the documents listed below. Ozone, also known as smog, can irritate your respiratory system, causing coughing, irritation in your throat or a burning sensation in your airways. It can reduce lung function, so that you may have feelings of chest tightness, wheezing, or shortness of breath. Ozone can aggravate asthma and trigger asthma attacks. People at greater risk from ground-level ozone are people with lung diseases, such as asthma, and children and adults who are active outdoors.

Particle pollution, also known as particulate matter, is composed of microscopic solids or liquid droplets that are so small that can get deep into the lungs and cause serious health problems. When exposed to these small particles, people with heart or lung diseases and older adults are more at risk of hospital and emergency room visits or, in some cases, even death from heart or lung disease. Even if you are healthy, you may experience temporary symptoms from exposure to elevated levels of particles. Symptoms may include irritation of the eyes, nose and throat; coughing; phlegm; chest tightness; and shortness of breath. At greatest risk from particle pollution are people with heart or lung disease, older adults (possibly because they may undiagnosed heart or lung disease), and children.

The [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) is a uniform way of reporting ambient concentrations of the major air pollutants (criteria pollutants) regulated by the Clean Air Act. The Air Quality Index converts pollutant concentrations to a common scale, so that they may be compared more easily. An Air Quality Index value of 100 or less indicates a pollutant concentration that should not cause adverse health effects for most people. An index value above 100 indicates a pollutant concentration that may cause adverse health effects. Air Quality Index values are calculated for each day for a county or metropolitan statistical area is the highest value calculated for the day among equivalent to that 500 value. Rarely, a concentration is reported that exceeds the 500-equivalent level. In those instances, the Air Quality Index chart shows the index value as 501, which means “higher than 500.”

A **daily** Air Quality Index chart shows daily index values for a county or metropolitan statistical area and identifies the main pollutant each day. The chart also displays qualitative health risk categories (good, moderate, unhealthy, etc.) that are associated with ranges of Air Quality Index values.

A **summary** Air Quality Index chart for a county or metropolitan statistical area shows how many days each pollutant was the main pollutant (bar chart), how many days were in each health risk category (bar chart), and percentiles of daily index values (boxplot). The EPA has assigned a specific color to each AQI category to make it easier for people to understand quickly whether air pollution is reaching unhealthy levels in their communities. For example, the color orange means that conditions are “unhealthy for sensitive groups,” while red means that conditions may be “unhealthy for everyone,” and so on.

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable, however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert; everyone may experience more serious health effects
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

WHAT IF YOU ARE A VICTIM?

Do your best to protect yourself, your family and your neighbors from further danger. Notify authorities. Photograph the damage to your property. Do not sign contracts for repair work or debris removal without consulting authorities and your insurance company.

WHAT IF A TORNADO TOUCHES DOWN NEARBY?

Do not go to the tornado scene. The area must be kept clear and secure for the victims and for emergency personnel.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER NATURAL DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH THUNDERSTORMS?

LIGHTNING is actually more common than tornadoes. When a thunderstorm threatens, get inside a home or building as quickly as you can.

HAIL also can be dangerous if you are out in the open. The larger the hail size the bigger and more destructive the storm is going to be.

FLOODING is also a product of thunderstorms. Torrential rainfall often accompanies severe storms and can quickly flood low lying areas, rivers and streams. Take extra precautions if you are in a flood prone area.

Fulton County Athletic Guidelines Pertaining to Recruitment and Undue Influence

It is the responsibility of the school leader and coach to become thoroughly familiarized with all rules/regulations pertaining to recruitment and undue influence. School leaders and coaches are encouraged to ask questions and to contact the District Athletic interacting with students who are not yet enrolled in your school:

Allowed:

1. Sell your school
2. Sell your community
3. Sell your athletic programs
4. Conduct a tour by selected staff (AD, Principal, or guidance department)
5. Refer the student/parent to the guidance department
6. Inform the family that they will be welcomed into your school if they make a bona-fide move into your district. A **bona-fide** move constitutes a move from one school district to another school district by the entire family residing in the previous residence.

Once the parent leaves your school, you should not have any further contact unless it is simple follow up questions initiated by the parent.

Not Allowed:

1. Discussion about playing time or roles in your program
2. Inviting students to attend a practice/game
3. Assessing an athlete's ability
4. Initiating follow up phone calls (It is ok to respond to simple questions but not allowed to build relationships)
5. Initiating follow up emails (It is ok to respond to simple questions but not allowed to build relationships)
6. Building a relationship with the student or family
7. Handing out housing information
8. Holding tryouts for students who are not enrolled in your school
9. Allowing the non-enrolled students to participate in workouts

Fulton County Board Policies can be found by accessing the Fulton County Website (www.fultonschools.org)

1. Click on School Board tab
2. Click on Board Policy
3. Click on Policies
4. Type in Policy letters

(Revised: 2/18)

**Receipt Acknowledgement for Athlete/Parent
Handbook for GHSA Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities
2026 - 27**

Student Name: _____ School: _____

I understand that I am responsible for reading and understanding the information in the Athlete/Parent Handbook for GHSA Sanctioned Interscholastic Athletic Activities (the "handbook"). Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their students understand this information.

I understand I am responsible for downloading or accessing a copy of the handbook from the school's website or from the District Athletic Office website, found at www.fultonschools.org. If I cannot access the handbook, I will ask for a copy from the coach, or the front office of the school.

I understand that this handbook contains required forms, and rules and behavioral expectations for student participants that students are expected to follow at school as well as off campus and in the community. I understand that failure to follow these rules may result in suspension from a team or activity, reduction in participation, and removal from a team or activity, as well as other school sanctions. I understand that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right, and student participants are expected to exhibit exemplary behavior and leadership skills at school and in the community, or that privilege will be removed.

I understand that the most up to date GHSA rules and information is available at www.ghsa.net.

I understand and agree that student directory information, as discussed in the Directory Information Statement in the Code of Conduct & Discipline Handbook which I received upon enrollment and each school year, may be released as discussed in the Directory Information Statement for purposes related to GHSA Interscholastic Athletic Activities.

If you disagree with this release, please contact _____ directly, but please note that activity participation may require public performances and public acknowledgement of student and his/her identity.

If I have any questions about information contained in this handbook, I will ask a school administrator or coach to discuss those questions with me. Failure to sign and return this form does not relieve me from complying with and understanding the information enclosed in the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

AND

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student-Athlete Social Media Guidelines

Purpose: The athletic departments in Fulton County Schools will continue to utilize social media to disseminate information, promote programs, and organize activities. There is a responsibility attached to the schools, coaches, and players when using these tools. At no time should a student be the designee for any official team web-pages, twitter accounts, or any other social media platforms. FCS athletics encourages the use of applications that send information out to the athletes without giving them the ability to reply (For example: Remind 101). Applications that allow the students to reply should not be used by school employees to convey information to the students

Due to the accessibility and use of social media in today's society, Fulton County High School's Athletic Departments are implementing guidelines to assist our athletes in developing the skills needed to make positive decisions while using social media outlets. The need to understand what is social media appropriate and what is not a paramount, as many employers and colleges now view potential candidate's social media activities before asking them to join their organization. This is specifically evident in collegiate athletics where students have had scholarships revoked, served suspensions and are occasionally removed from teams.

The below guidelines should be used to assist student athletes with deciding what to post on social media outlets. They provide a set of parameters to stay within when deciding to post statements and photos. Coaches will assist by being a resource the athletes can turn to for advice.

Coaches Responsibility:

1. Ensure their team members are aware of the guidelines
2. Explain potential consequences for inappropriate social media use.
3. Address any social media concerns brought to their attention.

Guidelines:

1. Social Media use should not violate the FCS Code of Conduct for students.
2. Post should not be demeaning or disrespectful to teammates, coaches, peers or other institutions.
3. Post should not contain profane, vulgar, obscene, racial/ethnic, or offensive language.
4. Photos should not contain nudity, be vulgar, obscene or offensive in nature.
5. Post should not cast a negative image or negative perception of the athlete, team, or school.

Consequences: Provided are a set of possible consequences for not adhering to the FCS Athletic Social Media Guidelines. Ultimately, the coaches/AD/School will determine consequence for their team(s). It is expected the consequences will be progressive if behavior is not improved through previous attempts

Potential Consequences:

1. Conference between the athlete and coach. The coach may or may not include the parent in the conference.
2. Extra practice time.
3. Game suspension.
4. Expulsion from the team.

FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sports Equity Grievance Form

It is the policy of the Fulton County Board of Education to prohibit discrimination based on sex in any athletic program operated or sponsored by the District. Any student or student's parent or guardian may file a complaint using the following form if he or she feels that the school system has violated the Riley Gaines Act of 2025 or Board Policy IDFA: Equity in Sports.

Date: _____

Name of individual filing complaint: _____

Address of individual filing complaint: _____

Telephone number of individual filing complaint: _____

Name of student: _____

Name of parent or guardian: _____

Student's school: _____

Expedited preliminary determination requested: _____YES _____NO

Note: Requests for expedited preliminary determination must be accompanied by additional justification, including facts outlining the immediacy of the request. See Section III of this form.

I. ALLEGED ACTION BY SCHOOL SYSTEM IN VIOLATION OF GEORGIA'S RILEY GAINES ACT:

[illegible]

[illegible]

This form must be completed in its entirety and submitted to:

Administrative Center
Athletic Department
6201 Powers Ferry Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30339

Date received by Sports Equity Coordinator: _____

5 TIPS TO HELP ATHLETES STAY SAFE IN INTENSE HEAT



1. ALLOW FOR ACCLIMATION

It takes about **10-14 days for an athlete's body to adapt to the heat**, so if possible acclimation should start about two weeks before team practices begin.

2. ADOPT A HYDRATION STRATEGY

Maintaining hydration (within ~2% body weight change) helps reduce an athlete's risk of heat illness and can help the athlete maintain a high level of performance. Proactive steps athletes can take to stay hydrated include:

- **Check urine color before practice. If it's like pale lemonade, that's a sign of good hydration.**
- **Weigh in and out before and after activity.**
- **Drink enough fluid to minimize weight loss during practice – for each pound that is lost, add an additional 16 oz. of fluid during the next practice.**
- **After practice, consume 20-24 oz. for each pound lost to rehydrate for the next training session.**

ARE YOU HYDRATED?



3. DRINK UP

Athletes should drink enough fluid to **maintain hydration without over-drinking**. Flavored, cold, lightly salted sports drinks like Gatorade Thirst Quencher are important because sodium helps maintain the physiological desire to drink and helps retain the fluid consumed.

4. FIND TIME FOR RECOVERY

Rest and recovery are an essential part of avoiding heat illness. Athletes should work in times for breaks when active throughout the day, attempt to get **six to eight hours of sleep a night** and sleep in a cool environment, if possible.

5. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

Athletes need to think about **fueling before, during and after physical activity**. They should be fully hydrated with fluids and fueled with foods that contain electrolytes to maintain fluid levels. Fluids lost through sweat and breathing should be replaced by fluid consumption.



¹ Maughan, R.J. and Murray, R. Sports Drinks: Basic Science and Practical Aspects, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2001; 7-8: 183-224.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION HEAT INDEX MEASUREMENT AND RECORD

SCHOOL:

SPORT:

[illegible]

WBGT READING	ACTIVITY GUIDELINES & REST BREAK GUIDELINES
UNDER 82.0	Normal activities – Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of minimum duration of 3 minutes each during workout.
82.0 – 86.9	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of 4 minutes duration each.
87.0 – 89.9	Maximum practice time is 2 hours. <u>For Football</u> : players restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts. <u>For All Sports</u> : provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of 4 minutes each.
90.0 – 92.0	Maximum length of practice is 1 hour. <u>For Football</u> : no protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. <u>For All Sports</u> : there must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.
OVER 92	NO OUTDOOR WORKOUTS. Delay practice until a cooler WBGT level is reached.

GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATION AND REST BREAKS:

1. Rest time should involve both unlimited hydration intake (water or electrolyte drinks) and rest without any activity involved.
2. For football, helmets should be removed during rest time.
3. The site of the rest time should be a "cooling zone" and not in direct sunlight.
4. When the WGBT reading is over 86:
 - a. Ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available at the "cooling zone" to aid the cooling process.
 - b. Cold immersion tubs must be available for practices for the benefit of any player showing early signs of heat illness.