



# ***2026-27 MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK***





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## Contact Information

| Middle School  | Athletic Director | Main Office | Attendance | Athletic Phone |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Divisadero MS  | Joey Chica        | 730-7661    | 730-7666   | 730-7660       |
| Green Acres MS | Athenia Freitas   | 730-7673    | 730-7677   | 730-7671       |
| La Joya MS     | Sean Hunt         | 730-7921    | 730-7924   | 730-7921       |
| Ridgeview MS   | Hubert Scott      | 931-8002    | 622-3308   | 931-8005       |
| Valley Oak MS  | Richard Guerrero  | 730-7681    | 730-7681   | 730-7681       |

| District Address     | Athletic Programs            | Main Office          | Phone                |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 5000 W. Cypress Ave. | John Perez<br>Johnny Freitas | 730-7300<br>730-7300 | 730-7469<br>730-7469 |

## VUSD Athletic Philosophy

The Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) believes that an athletic program provides opportunity for students to acquire tools for lifelong personal growth and fulfillment of potential. These tools include: self-discipline, commitment to team, self-sacrifice/dedication, perseverance, and sportsmanship.

VUSD hires coaches who demonstrate the core values that support our student-athletes' social and physical development. VUSD commits to providing the broadest range of competitive programs for our student-athletes. At all times, VUSD's athletic programs will be complementary and supportive of the educational goals at VUSD.

The VUSD, as a member of the California Interscholastic Federation Central Section (CIF-CS), is committed to the exhibition of sportsmanship and ethical behaviors in and around all athletic events. All contests must be safe, controlled, fair, courteous and orderly for all student-athletes and fans. It is the intent of the VUSD and the CIF that violence in any form will not be tolerated. In order to enforce this policy, VUSD has adopted rules and regulations which set forth the manner of enforcement of this policy and the penalties incurred when violation of the policy occurs. VUSD shall require that the following Code of Ethics be issued to each student-athlete annually and will require annual signing by the student-athlete, parent/guardian, and coaches prior to participation.

## VUSD Code of Ethics

All coaches, parents, and student-athletes will...

1. recognize and reinforce that academics are our student-athletes' top priority.
2. uphold the ideals of sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
3. show courtesy to visiting teams and officials.



4. respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
5. achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game.
6. uphold the standards of conduct and the standards of eligibility.
7. recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of all participants.
8. remember to keep athletics in perspective; an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life and death.

### **Expectations of Student-Athletes/In and Out of Season**

1. Participation in athletics is voluntary.
2. Participation is a privilege and not a right.
3. Student-athletes will adhere to the standards of conduct as defined in the Activity Code, and VUSD Code of Ethics.
4. Maintaining academic eligibility is the student's responsibility. Eligibility can also be lost because of poor attendance or citizenship.
5. The commitment a student-athlete makes to his/her team and coach requires that choices be made and priorities kept.
6. The student-athlete will show respect for all coaches, teachers, peers, officials, spectators, school facilities and equipment, and opponents at all times.
7. Student-athletes will be prepared physically and mentally for the upcoming sport's season. Preparation may include strength training, conditioning, and sport-specific skills training.
8. Student-athletes will arrive at all team practices on time, be ready to listen, and prepared to learn.
9. Student-athletes will communicate openly and honestly with coaches and school officials.
10. Student-athletes understand that coaches will make decisions based on what is best for the entire team/program.
11. Student-athletes will adhere to all team/program requirements set forth by the program's/team's coaching staff.

### **Expectations of Parents**

1. Emphasize that academics always come first.
2. Be supportive of your student-athlete, school, coaches, and program.
3. Understand the importance of the complete student-athlete which requires both mental and physical preparation.
4. Emphasize perseverance.
5. Attend all parent meetings that pertain to the team/program.
6. Consider scheduled practices and games when planning family appointments and/or events.
7. Parents will adhere to the standards of conduct as defined in the Activity Code, VUSD Code of Ethics, and the CIF Code of Ethics at all times.
8. Parents will understand the strengths and limitations of their student-athletes.



9. Parents will communicate openly, honestly, and at an appropriate time with coaches and school officials.
10. Parents will understand that coaches will make decisions based on what is best for the entire team/program.
11. Parents will accept all team/program requirements set forth by the program's/team's coaching staff.

### **Expectations of Coaches**

1. Coaches will emphasize that academics always come first. As such, practice times and duration will be reasonable, age-appropriate, and well-communicated. Players shall not be penalized for missing practice for graded co-curricular events.
2. Coaches will use good judgment in dealing with all things related to their program and VUSD.
3. Coaches will give each student-athlete an opportunity to try out for the team.
4. Coaches will communicate in a positive manner.
5. Coaches will have an informational meeting prior to the season.
6. Coaches will be well-trained in teaching all aspects of the sport.
7. Coaches will be positive and enthusiastic.
8. Coaches will determine playing time.
9. Coaches will use honest, clear, effective, and appropriate verbal and multimedia communication with students and parents.

### **Conduct on and off the Field**

At all times (on and off campus): Coaches and student-athletes represent their team, school, and community. Coaches and student-athletes should be conscious of their appearance, behavior, and citizenship at all times. Student-athletes can be held accountable for misbehavior in accordance with [VUSD Board Policy 6145](#), Student Activity Code and a coach's team policy.

### **Quitting a Sport**

The head coach may or may not allow a player that has quit the team to return. Student-athletes who quit a team may lose all rights of a team member including, but not limited to, awards or post season honors.

### **Responsibility for Equipment**

Student-athletes shall assume responsibility for all athletic equipment issued to him/her and parents/guardians will be expected to pay for any damaged or lost equipment.



## **Release to Parents/Guardians**

Student-athletes shall ride to and from all contests on school provided transportation. In special instances, student-athletes may ride home only with their parent(s) or guardian(s). In addition to visual contact, a parent release card must be signed by the parent or guardian.

Under no circumstances will a student-athlete be released to another student driving a vehicle.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Our athletic complaint procedure is intended to address concerns of student-athletes. It is our belief that a quick and honest discussion between all parties will result in the positive resolution of concerns and an improvement of the atmosphere for both student-athletes and coaches. It is the intent that problems be resolved at the lowest level.

The order of communication for the VUSD complaint procedure is as follows:

1. Current level Coach
2. Site Athletic Director
3. Site Principal
4. Coordinator of Athletic Programs
5. Director of Athletic Programs

Complaints against staff members will be investigated pursuant to the procedures set forth in BP 1312.1. Please contact your school's Athletic Director or access this link for more information: [Complaint Procedure BP 1312.1](#)

The coach has full discretion in the following areas and complaints regarding coaching decisions in these areas will not be entertained:

- Student-athlete not given enough playing time
- Student-athlete not playing the right position
- Strategies used by the coach
- Win/loss record of the team or coach

## **General Information**

### **Tryouts**

Tryouts are an audition and a platform to demonstrate the required athletic skills for a position on a team. Tryouts are seasonal, and student-athletes should come to tryouts prepared for competition as there is no entitlement for returning players to make a team. Tryouts are only open to students who are currently enrolled at the school for which they are trying out.



## Sports Offered

| Season | Sport                        | Tryouts Begin                                                                                          |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fall   | Girls Volleyball             | Tryouts, in accordance with VUSD guidelines, are conducted in the week/weeks leading up to the season. |
|        | Football                     |                                                                                                        |
|        | Boys'/Girls' Cross Country   |                                                                                                        |
| Winter | Boys'/Girls' Wrestling       | Contact your school's Athletic Director for more information.                                          |
|        | Boys'/Girls' Soccer          |                                                                                                        |
|        | Boys'/Girls' Basketball      |                                                                                                        |
| Spring | Softball                     |                                                                                                        |
|        | Baseball                     |                                                                                                        |
|        | Boys'/Girls' Track and Field |                                                                                                        |

## Levels of Play

The varsity team will be composed of 8th grade students only. The junior varsity team will be comprised of 7th grade students only. Wrestling is the exception as competition is determined by weight class. Seventh grade students may substitute for eighth grade players who are not able to participate for tournament play only as needed to complete a team or roster.

Students are limited to one sport per season (case by case basis determined by Athletic Directors for each season when rosters are limited for the following Cross Country or Volleyball/Football, Wrestling or Soccer/Basketball, Track or Softball/Baseball).

Once the first contest has been played, rosters are established for the season.

## Activity Code

### Period of Enforcement

This activity code takes effect with the initiation of school activities in August and terminates with the last activity in June. It is also in effect at any time in which students participate as representatives of the school. Ineligibility created by suspension from activities that are not completed by the end of spring semester will be carried over for completion at the beginning of the fall semester.

### Academics

In order to emphasize the importance of academic achievement, the following constitute minimum requirements for student participation in student activities.

- The student must maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average (with no more than one "F") on a 4.0 scale—calculated from grades in all enrolled classes—during the previous grading period. If a student-athlete falls below the 2.0 requirement,



- Should an individual fall below the above requirement, a six-week probationary period will be provided to allow the student to bring up his/her grades. If unsuccessful in bringing the grades up to the standard required, the student will not be eligible for participation in student activities during the next grading period (six-weeks) and until his/her grades meet the academic standards at the regular grade reporting period.

### Academic Eligibility Criteria

- Eligibility for participation is determined at the end of each six-week grading period using our Report Card GPA.
- Transfer students from within the district must meet all VUSD eligibility guidelines.
- Transfer students from outside the district have one grading grace period. Former VUSD students do not have this grace period.
- Athletic eligibility is limited to two (2) years in any one (1) sport.
- Students are not declared "re-eligible" or "off probation" until the computer printout is issued (approximately two weeks after each grading period).
- Students who are ineligible or on probation with grades in the eighth grade, will enter the ninth grade on probationary status. This includes all students who are required to attend eighth grade summer school as a condition of promotion.
- Seventh grade students finishing the school year ineligible or on probation will begin 8th grade year on probation.

### Previous and Current Grade Eligibility Scenarios

If a student **did not meet all requirements** for athletic eligibility on both the **previous six-week progress card/report card** and the **most recent six-week progress card/report card**, the student is **not athletically eligible**.

If a student **did not meet all requirements** on the previous report but **did meet all requirements** on the most recent report, the student is **athletically eligible**.

If a student **met all requirements** on the previous report but **did not meet all requirements** on the most recent report, the student is **athletically eligible but on probation**.

If a student **did not meet all requirements** on the most recent report and is **already on probation**, the student is **not athletically eligible**.

If a student is **on probation** and **meets all eligibility requirements** on the most recent report, the student is **athletically eligible**.



## **Attendance**

Student-athletes shall be in attendance for all periods of the day of the event/practice (or in attendance the day prior on a weekend event/practice) unless excused by the Principal or Athletic Director in advance or be ineligible for the first event following administrative contact.

## **Physical Education Class**

Students are expected to fully participate in their physical education class daily including the day of the event/practice in order to be eligible to participate.

## **Citizenship/Attitude**

Students are expected to display satisfactory citizenship and attitude as a participant in extracurricular activities. Every incident will be treated as an individual case and judged on its own merit. The seriousness of the offense, conditions under which it occurred, and the student's past school record are factors to be considered. The student's athletic director/administrator reserves the right to decide the course of action that will be taken. Situations that involve administrative intervention in compliance with the Secondary School Discipline Guidelines will result in suspension from participation in extracurricular activities.

## **Tobacco (Vaping, Chew, Cigarettes, Possession or use of)**

Each incident will involve action as prescribed by the Visalia Unified School District Conduct Code. Violations may result in suspension from participation in extracurricular activities.

## **Alcohol, Drugs, Narcotics**

Possession, use, sale, furnishing, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or narcotics, or any kind of controlled substance listed in Health & Safety Code 11053, will result in suspension from participation in extracurricular activities for a period of up to five (5) weeks.

## **Suspension from Participation**

Situations that involve administrative intervention in compliance with the Visalia Unified School District Conduct Code will result in suspension from participation in extracurricular activities for a period up to five (5) weeks. The athletic director will be consulted in all incidents by the Administrator directly involved. The athletic director/Administrator will then notify the student and parent of the suspension from participation.

Suspension from participation in extracurricular activities is in direct proportion to suspension from school:

- 1 day school suspension = 1 week suspension from extra-curricular activity



- 2 day school suspension = 2 weeks suspension from extra-curricular activity
- 3 day school suspension = 3 weeks suspension from extra-curricular activity
- 4 day school suspension = 4 weeks suspension from extra-curricular activity
- 5 day school suspension = 5 weeks suspension from extra-curricular activity

Note: 1 day In School Suspension = is same as out of school suspension

## **Appeals**

Appeals of a suspension from participation in extracurricular events other than academics and attendance may be made by the student to the school site administration. School site administration decisions are final.

Extracurricular is defined as those activities outside of the normal class time in which students represent the school in competition or travel.

## **Physical Assault**

Any student, coach, or parent who physically assaults a game participant, school staff, coach, or event official shall be immediately ejected from the athletic event and could be banned for the remainder of the season and/or year. A game or event official is defined as a referee, umpire or any other official assigned to interpret or enforce rules competition at an event.