

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

The following packet has been put together in an effort to clearly put forth, explain, and determine the requirements for participating in CIF-sanctioned sports while enrolled as a student at **VENTURE ACADEMY**. The following guidelines will remain consistent across the board for all sports on all grade levels. This resource is made available so that all administration, staff, teachers, coaches, and students can use it as a source of consolidated information to ensure both consistent and fair standards.

To be ELIGIBLE:

- A student-athlete must currently possess a 2.0+ GPA, or equivalent.
- A student-athlete must have all proper paperwork *(physical form, athletic packet, athletic agreement form, etc.)* signed and turned-in prior to participation.
- For ***Independent Study*** students, they must meet with their designated I.S. staff member/teacher for each mandatory check-in and maintain at least 5.0 credits per month.

GRADE CHECKS throughout the school year:

The Administrative Assistant and Athletic Director will determine athletic eligibility by running official grade reports at the end of each quarter. There will be 4 quarter grade checks on approximately the following dates:

- October 16, 2026
- December 22, 2026 (First Semester Final Grades)
- March 12, 2027
- May 2027 (Final date TBD)

These official reports are the only grades used to determine athletic eligibility. THERE WILL NO LONGER BE GRADE CHECK FORMS FOR THE STUDENT-ATHLETES OR COACHES TO COLLECT GRADES.

Although coaches are encouraged to regularly print and review student grades throughout each grading period, coach-generated grade reports will not be used to determine official eligibility.

Incoming Ninth-Grade Students

All incoming ninth-grade students entering Venture Academy at the beginning of the school year will automatically be eligible for athletic participation. Since these students do not yet have Venture Academy grades upon which to determine eligibility, they will remain eligible until the first official eligibility grade check of the school year.

Beginning with the first official grade report, all incoming ninth-grade students will be held to the same academic eligibility standards as all other student-athletes.

Returning Student-Athletes

Eligibility for all returning student-athletes at the start of the school year will be determined by the **final official eligibility grade report from May of the previous school year**.

- Fall sports for returning students grades 10-12:
    - Eligibility to start the year in the fall will be determined based on final grades from the end of the year in the previous school year (2nd semester final grade in previous year).
        - **ONLY IN EFFECT for Fall 2026**: because this is a newly implemented process, we want to make sure and give all Fall athletes a proper notice. Therefore, we will give all fall athletes an extra opportunity to become eligible to start the new school year instead of waiting until October to become eligible. As a result, ALL student grades will be checked on Sept. 1st to determine eligibility from Sept. 1-Oct. 15, then all grades will be checked once again for the first official grade check on Oct. 16.

- All incoming 9th graders will have full eligibility until first grade check when all students will be checked on Sept. 1st. Beginning in the 2027-28 school year this date will only be on Oct. 16th for 9th graders.

Ineligible Student-Athletes

Student-athletes who do not meet the academic eligibility requirements at an official grade check will be declared academically ineligible.

Ineligible student-athletes may not participate in athletic contests until they regain eligibility through the procedures outlined below.

Academic Probation

- If anyone doesn't meet the 2.0 requirement at any of the grade check dates, they will be given a grace period of 2 weeks to work on their grades and become eligible. If a student-athlete is able to get their GPA back above a 2.0 during the grace period, the student must take a grade check form and have each of their teachers complete it with a current grade and signature. This form must then be turned into the Athletic Director's office before being cleared.

- A student-athlete may only use 1 grace period per school year. For the 2nd & 4th grade check dates, because they are final grades, a student-athlete must wait until the deadline date to re-evaluate new grades.

- Grace period dates are as follows:
    - 1st Grade Check: Oct. 16; Grace Period deadline date: Oct. 30.
    - 2nd Grade Check: Dec. 22; Grace Period deadline date: Feb. 1
    - 3rd Grade Check: March 12; Grace Period deadline date: March 26
    - 4th Grade Check: May final grades; Grace Period: students will not be re-evaluated for grades until Sept. 1 of the next school year to determine 2027 Fall eligibility.

During Academic Probation:

- Student-athletes are **NOT** allowed to play in games, while working to improve their grades.
- Students should work closely with teachers to improve grades and complete missing assignments, as academics is still the priority.
- New students/transfers that are coming from a school where a grade period has been established must meet all CIF and 2.0 GPA requirements. If they transfer into Venture Academy below these requirements, then they must wait until Venture Academy's next official grade check date to establish eligibility good-standing.

Attendance & Behavior notes:

School Class Credits:
Student-athletes who successfully complete the entire sports season will receive 5 credits for "Team Sports" on their transcripts. The Athletic Director will work with the Head Coach to confirm all eligible student-athletes and then forward those names to the Registrar's Office.

Discipline:
If suspended from school, the student-athlete in question will not be allowed to participate in the team's next contest/match at the minimum. Depending on the severity of the school suspension, the student-athlete in question could be served with a longer sit-out period from athletics, as determined by an administrator and/or coach.

Behavior Issues & Expectations:

These circumstances will be handled internally on a case-by-case basis amongst administration and/or coaches. If a teacher is having behavior issues with a student-athlete there is the option to set-up a meeting with parents, student, athletic director, and/or coaches to establish an action plan. If continued behavior issues persist the end result could be suspension from athletic participation.

Participation in Venture Academy Athletics is a privilege that carries the responsibility of representing our school, teammates, coaches, and community with integrity and respect. Student-athletes are expected to demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship, leadership, and character both on campus and in the community.

The following behaviors will **not** be tolerated at any time, whether during practices, contests, team events, on campus, or through electronic communication and social media:

- Hazing or initiation activities of any kind
- Bullying, intimidation, harassment, or cyberbullying
- Fighting, physical altercations, or threats of violence
- Discrimination or hateful conduct based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or any other protected characteristic
- Profanity, disrespectful language, or inappropriate behavior toward teammates, opponents, officials, coaches, staff, or spectators
- Any conduct that compromises the safety, dignity, or well-being of another individual

Every student-athlete is expected to:

- Treat all individuals with dignity, kindness, and respect.
- Be a positive role model for fellow students and younger athletes.
- Lead by example through honesty, accountability, and self-discipline.
- Display good sportsmanship in both victory and defeat.
- Encourage teammates, promote unity, and help create a positive team culture.
- Follow the directions of coaches, game officials, and school personnel.
- Make decisions that reflect positively on themselves, their family, their team, and Venture Academy.

Student-athletes who engage in hazing, bullying, fighting, harassment, or other conduct unbecoming of a Venture Academy athlete may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from athletic participation, in addition to any school disciplinary consequences.

Our goal is to build championship teams founded on respect, character, accountability, and service. Every athlete is expected to contribute to a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where teammates can compete, grow, and succeed together.

If there are any questions, please contact the Venture Academy Athletic Director, **Jim Sells**:

*209-227-2287 (office) * 515-570-1963 (cell) * jsells@sjcoe.net (email)*

Required Forms & Packet for Participation

The "*Athletic Participation Packet*" can now be found on-line at the Venture Academy website. Go to the ***ATHLETICS*** homepage and click on the link towards the top of the page to fill out all forms electronically. When completed it will be emailed automatically to the AD and the only other forms needed will be a current **physical** as well as the "***Athlete Agreement***" form requiring student-athlete signatures regarding expectations, concussions, heat illness, jerseys, etc. Proof of physical can be a hard copy print out from the doctor's office stating patient name, date of exam, and doctor's signature. Or, a school physical form can be found at the bottom of the ***ATHLETICS*** homepage.

****If competing in more than 1 sport during the school year, this on-line packet only needs to be turned in once for the first sport of the school year.*

Multi-Sport Participation & Completing a Season

Here at Venture Academy, we encourage, support, and understand the important role being a multi-sport athlete can provide not only the student, but also the school community. Participating in multiple sports within the same school year and for some in the same season, can be a challenging task that requires buy-in and communication from all stakeholders. If a student-athlete has the desire to compete in multiple sports in the same season, we ask the student-athlete is proactive with the communication piece by taking it upon themselves to speak with all coaches involved. From there the student-athletes and coaches should be communicating a weekly or season plan on how to approach practice and game obligations that meet the satisfaction of all coaches. The student-athlete and parents should keep in mind that by committing to two separate teams on campus in the same season could impact playing time. For example, while the multi-sport athlete is committing to 50% of practices with two separate teams, the other athletes on the same teams are typically committed 100% to the one team.

In addition, whether you are playing multiple sports in the same season, or just participating with one team per season, there is the requirement to commit and complete that full season before moving onto the next season of sport. Any student-athlete who fails to complete the season with a team or quits a team after reaching 50% of the current season will not be able to move onto the next season of sport until the current season has finished. For example, if a student-athlete is participating in cross country in the fall, but then decides to quit with 3 weeks left in the season because soccer pre-season workouts have started, they will not be allowed to do so. Student-athletes must wait to join the next sport (*i.e. soccer*) until the sport they started (*i.e. cross country*) has ended. Same goes for a student-athlete that has become ineligible due to grades at the end of the season – they must wait to join the next sport until the current sport is done for the season and they earn the required grades to do so.

Athletic Uniform & Jersey Consent

One of the many requirements that comes with choosing to be a member of any athletic team here at Venture Academy is the obligation of the team uniform, jerseys, etc. that are needed to compete as a Mustang. While these pieces of school-owned merchandise are in your possession from the time of receiving until returning the unform at the end of season, the student-athlete acknowledges and agrees to take on responsibility for caring for the uniform, keeping it clean and up to standard, as well as not losing it while in your possession.

In the case any pieces of the uniform are lost, not returned, and/or damaged to the point of not being able to be worn again, the student-athlete is responsible for a fee of $75 for jerseys and $50 for shorts/pants (if applicable). Anyone who does not meet these requirements or fails to reimburse the school the applied fees, their records will be noted and high school graduation diploma will be withheld. If a student transfers, this will also impact their eligibility at the new school and their transfer file will be noted to prevent playing eligibility if their balance has not been taken care of with Venture Academy.

Injury and Incident Form Process

Whenever there is an injury that takes place, whether it's at a game, practice, field trip, traveling, etc., the student-athlete and coach must work together to complete an incident report within 24 hours. It is the coach's responsibility to gather the information, complete the form, follow-up with parent, and submit to the AD and school staff assigned to such reports.

Expectations & Acknowledgement
for Parents/Guardians & Student-Athlete

The following form and below signatures acknowledge that the parents/guardians and guests of every student-athlete at Venture Academy athletic-sponsored events are in agreement with the expectations and policies put in place in regards to conduct at events. By signing this document, the parent/guardian and student-athlete acknowledge they are responsible for their own actions and those actions of any guests associated with them at school events (home or away). By signing this document you also acknowledge as a parent/guardian and player that you have read the Athletic Handbook either on-line at the school's website or been given a hard copy, while also agreeing to the policies described in this Handbook. It is also the responsibility of the parent/guardian and/or student-athlete to relay these expectations and policies to any of their guests attending school events.

The following is a list of general expectations and rules for anyone attending Venture Academy athletic events (games, scrimmages, practices, etc.):

- Any parent/coach disagreements or related conversations should ***NOT*** take place immediately after a game or contest. These types of discussions should be set-up for a later date & time at least 12 hours after the conclusion of the game. Also, team practices are structured as "*closed-door* " and only players and coaching staff are allowed inside the gym during such times. Parents should wait either in the gym lobby or in the parking lots for their child.

- The coach has the right to limit discussion regarding playing time, decision making/play-calling, who makes the team, etc. at his/her own discretion. Also, these types of conversations are parent-coach conversations and should be taken up with the coach before involving the Athletic Director.

- The conduct of our spectators at games is of high importance, as you not only represent yourself, but also your son/daughter, other fellow Mustang fans, and the school as a whole. Harassment, cursing, and/or taunting of officials, opponents, other fans, or players/coaches will NOT be tolerated at all! Parents, fans, and all spectators will be held to the same standard as our own players and coaches. By rule, if a coach or player is ejected from a game they must sit out the next contest at the minimum. This same rule will be applied to fans at both home and away contests. For example, if you are asked to leave by an official or school administrator during a game (home or away), then you will not be allowed to attend the next game at the minimum. A "second strike" will result in a follow-up meeting with the Athletic Director and suspension from attending games anywhere from a week to the remainder of the year.

- Absolutely no parents or spectators should be approaching the team bench area or scorer's table during the game to confront a player, coach, staff member, volunteer worker, or official. This also extends to the court or field of play, as spectators should remain in the stands at all times no matter the situation and allow the officials, coaches, administrators, and staff members to resolve any issues during the course of a game. Anyone found not adhering to this policy will be subject to severe punishment by school officials and could also affect the status of your own son/daughter on their respective team.