

**GAINESVILLE ISD  
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK  
2016-2017  
Revised March 2017**

**Dear Leopards & Parents,**

**We are pleased to have you as a part of the Gainesville Athletic Program. We sincerely hope that the experience you have in the athletic program will be both enjoyable and successful. Your coaches are looking forward to helping you grow through athletics.**

**The information contained herein has been provided for you to read and study carefully, as it is your responsibility to know the rules and regulations of the Gainesville Athletic Program. This handbook is used as a guide for our athletic programs. However, your coach in each sport may give additional rules, under these guidelines.**

**Any questions that you may have should be brought to the attention of your coach. He or she will be happy to assist you in any way possible. Once again, we want to welcome you to our team.**

**"If anything in this manual (Athletic Handbook) is in contradiction with the Student Code of Conduct or Gainesville ISD Board Policy, the Code of Conduct or Policy shall prevail."**

**"RESTORE THE ROAR"**

**James Polk  
Athletic Director/Head Football Coach**

## **PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS**

- Student-Athletes are number one priority outside of family
- Increase participation numbers
- Develop lifelong friendships and positive lasting impressions
- Develop positive role models and citizens
- Coach athletes the way I want my own children coached
- Consistency in all happenings
- Become a voice, and face in the community
- Teach how to win, and how handle losing as a teaching tool
- Increase numbers of multiple sport athletes

## **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A COACH?**

- A genuine and updated knowledge of the sport
- A fair and unprejudiced relationship with all players
- Firm disciplinary action if an athlete displays un-sportsman like conduct or breaks the team rules
- 100% effort to help each student reach his/her potential
- Genuine concern with all areas of the athletes' growth
- Informative

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETICS**

Each student-athlete participating in athletics must have on file approval sheet signed by his or her parent(s) or legal guardian. Because the school is a member in good standing with the UIL all rules and regulations will be strictly enforced. There are specific requirements for participating in athletics. Each coach and the players will review the explanation of all team rules. There will be parental and athlete consent form to sign and return. By signing this form all parties will agree to abide by the rules and allow the coach to make decisions in the best interest of the team. This form will remain on file in the Athletic Directors office.

All High School student-athletes must participate in off-season workouts in their particular sports. An exception to this is among the discretion of the Athletic Director.

## **SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY**

In order for a senior to be eligible to play he or she must have a minimum of 15 credits as a senior, 10 as a junior, 5 as a sophomore, and a freshman has to have been promoted not placed from Jr. High.

In all classroom work a student must pass with a score of 70 and above. If a student fails one or more classes the student becomes ineligible. A student not eligible for failing classes can regain eligibility by passing at 3 weeks, or 6 weeks grading periods. There is a one week waiting period after a report card (six weeks), or (3 weeks) before a student can start playing again. Athletes have to be passing all classes including the class they failed

\* Student athletes may not travel with team, participate in any games, pep rallies, parades be on the bench or sideline during games, or act as a manger or statistician if they are not eligible.

## **PRACTICE SESSIONS**

The head coach of that sport will schedule all practices. Athletes are expected to attend every practice. When circumstances warrant one being excused from practice, permission should be requested from the head coach in advance. Injured athletes should make every attempt to observe practice. All squad or team members are expected to be dressed and at the designated area at the appropriate time. Missed practices can and will result in a loss of playing time and or removal from the team. Each sport may have their own regimen for making up missed practices. There will be no mandatory practices or contests held on Sunday. Parents/spectators are welcomed at practice sessions at all times; however no coaching or berating of players will be tolerated.

## **SPECIALIZATION/RECRUITING**

- Specialization in any one sport is “discouraged” by the Athletic Department
- All athletes are encouraged to participate in all sports in which they have an interest
- Athletes will not be restricted to any one sport by a coach

- Athletes will not be encouraged by any coaches to specialize in any one sport
- Any athlete, parent, or coach suspecting a violation of these rules is asked to notify the Athletic Director at once.

## **TRANSPORTATION OR TEAM TRAVEL**

- Team members will travel to and from contests on school provided transportation. Students will only be released to the parents with a written request, or at the discretion of the coach.
- The coaches will see that teams return to Gainesville as soon as possible after a contest, especially on school nights. Parents should be told when to expect the team home but keep in mind that circumstances come up.
- Athletes should help keep the bus as clean as possible. Coaches will expect them to pick-up around their seat before leaving the bus
- Athletes should be on time or be left behind. Unless the head coach has prior knowledge of the situation and prior approval,
- Parents will not be allowed to drive athletes to a contest and participate in any UIL events, unless approved by the coach.
- Parents can sign a player out after a game. Parent/Guardian only can take an athlete home and must come talk to the coach face to face and get signed out

## **GAME DAY ATTIRE**

The Athletic Department desires to project an image of unity and uniformity, and non-individualism. The Athletic Department game day attire policy could be for example: a designated team shirt and khaki pants on game day could be required for girls/boys. Gainesville ISD athletes are held to a higher standard and wearing specific game day attire would aid in reinforcing this concept. Game Day Attire could be worn the entire school day, or out-of-town but ultimately its up to the head coach of that sport. The attire that is chosen by the head coaches will be the standard of game day attire for each sport and up to the discretion of the Head Coach.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Athletes will be issued equipment through the school year. Each athlete will be responsible for the return of the equipment or payment if lost or stolen. An athlete will also be required to return all issued equipment upon the request

of the coach. Prices of all equipment will be replacement costs. All athletes will be issued a locker and a combination lock. Athletes should lock their belongings in their designated locker before, during, and after practice. If a lock is lost a replacement fee will be charged. The athletic department is not responsible for lost, or stolen personal items if the locker was left unlocked.

## **ATHLETIC AWARDS**

- **Must be academically eligible, and not missed games due to discipline the entire season**
- **Letter jackets are ordered twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The head coach will have the final decision on who gets a letter jacket**
- **Managers must complete two seasons of service before they will receive a letter jacket, they will receive an athletic award**

## **CHANGING SPORTS**

- **From the time a team plays its first scheduled real contest, a student cannot quit or be dismissed from that team and join another team until the first teams season is over**
- **Exceptions to this rule may be permitted under these conditions:**
  - A. **If the athlete has a doctors statement that he/she drop the first sport for medical reasons and permitting participation in the second sport**
  - B. **If both coaches involved and the Athletics Director agree that a mid-season change would be beneficial to the athlete and teams without being unfair to the individuals of either team**
- **Before an athlete is cleared to go to another sport, he/she must turn in all equipment and pay for lost or damaged equipment**
- **An athlete must not change classes or stop reporting to a sport until notified that the change has officially been made through the coaches involved and Athletic Director.**

## **OFFSEASON/PRESEASON**

**It is the goal of the athletic program to protect the integrity of each sport, and continue to strive for excellence. All student athlete(s) will have to be an active participant in offseason before they can play that particular sport. The only way this does not apply is if an athlete is in a current sport, which causes missing offseason for the next sport. The**

offseason prepares athlete(s) for the in season, besides its also not a safe thing to do not being physically/mentally ready

## **QUITTING A TEAM**

- When a player decides to quit a team, every effort should be made by the coach to prevent any harassment by players or coaches
- Coaches should take the following steps:
  - A. Discuss reasons for wanting to quit
  - B. Collect all equipment
  - C. Inform the Athletic Director and parents.
  - D. Keep the student on the roll until the change has become official
- Athletes who quit the team will not be allowed to go to another team until the first teams season is complete

**\*\* An athlete will have seven calendar days from the time quitting was an option to finalize his/her decision to quit. During that time frame all workouts missed will be made up and additional work may be added before return. All work will be made up before the athlete will be eligible to participate in a game or contest.**

## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

The conduct of an athlete at Gainesville ISD is closely observed in many areas of everyday life. It is important that actions at all times be above reproach. Therefore, some guidelines must be followed by all athletes in our program.

- A. **Conduct in competition:** The athlete must be gracious in defeat, modest in victory, and maintain complete control at all times
- B. **Conduct at school:** The student-athlete should set examples for all students by following rules set forth by the administration and individual teachers
- C. **Conduct on trips:** The athlete represents not only him/herself, but also the community, school, coaches, and parents. Therefore it is expected that the athlete will dress and behave in an acceptable manner.

## **VIOLATIONS**

Violations can be designated as “MINOR” or “MAJOR”.

**Minor** violations are generally thought of as mistakes made from time to time. While these mistakes may not pose a problem if they are isolated cases, it is the concern of the Athletic Department that these violations or infractions do not repeat themselves. **Examples** of “MINOR” violations include, but are not limited to:

- Dress Code, Tardiness, Talking in Class
- Receiving discipline referrals at school
- In School Suspension (ISS)
- Disobedience towards school employees
- Cheating, Lying, Vandalism, Theft and Conduct That Causes Harm to Property
- Any other listed in the extra student code of conduct
- Profanity

**Major** violations demonstrate a problem, which needs to be addressed by the Athletic Department immediately. Examples of “MAJOR” violations include, but are not limited to:

- Off-Campus Suspensions
- DAEP Placements
- Failure of School Mandated Drug Tests
- Being Cited or Proven Guilty of: Drug Possession, Drug Usage, Drug Distributing
- Being Cited or Proven Guilty of: Alcohol Possession, Alcohol Usage, Alcohol Distributing
- Tobacco Possession, Tobacco Usage, Tobacco Distributing
- Bullying
- Racism
- Sexual Harassment
- Being Arrested
- Threatening to use a firearm, or any other object determined as a weapon in a manner that is in violation of the law
- Defiance

- **Fighting Repetitive minor violations could be labeled as defiance which is a major violation**

## **PROCEDURES**

**The Athletic Director will determine whether a Minor or Major violation of the Athletic Handbook has occurred. Upon determination of an Athletic Handbook violation, the following individuals will be notified:**

- **The student and parent(s), or guardian(s)**
- **The appropriate school official or counselor to provide support and guidance in dealing with issues associated with alcohol, drugs, mood altering chemicals, and other prohibited activities**

**Nothing in this Athletic Handbook limits the authority of a coach to impose reasonable sanctions, including extra workouts, for student-athletes who break team rules or conduct expectations but do not engage in prohibited conduct**

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

**Coaches will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Coaches will strive for consistency in handing out punishment for Athletic Handbook violations, but will also exercise sound professional discretion when dealing with disciplinary actions. Violation of any of the aforementioned rules be a student-athlete participating in any sport will be subject to the following disciplinary action: All violation will fall under “MINOR”, or “MAJOR” and the guidelines of those infractions will be followed as outlined under each section. The athletic director will handle major violations**

- **1<sup>st</sup> Offense – 14 Calendar Day Suspension from the date the offense occurred, and parent contacted**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – 30 Calendar Day Suspension from the date the offense occurred, and parent contacted**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Offenses – One calendar year from the date the offense occurred, and parent contacted at the Athletic Director discretion**

## **DUAL PARTICIPATION**

All athletes participating in Gainesville Athletics make a commitment to the team, their teammates and their school. Each program demands the dedication of time and energy of the athlete. Part of this commitment is to be a student first and strive for academic excellence. Another integral part of that commitment is to place the Gainesville Athletic teams above participation in any non-school sanctioned activity and attend all practices and games scheduled by Gainesville coaches.

If an athlete chooses to miss a Gainesville Athletic practice because of participation in an activity not under the auspices of Gainesville, the student-athlete will follow the guidelines of a “Major” violation of the athletic handbook and parents contacted.

If an athlete chooses to miss a Gainesville Athletic game the “first” time because of participation in an activity not under the auspices of Gainesville, the student-athlete will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. The student-athlete will not be allowed to start another sport until the suspended sport is finished. The athlete will not be allowed to receive any accolades.

## **PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIPS**

Both parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding between coaches and parents, both are better to accept the actions of the other and provide a more positive experience for everyone. Parents have the right to know, and understand, the expectations placed on the and their children. Coaches have the right to know that if parents have a concern, they will discuss it with the coach at the appropriate time and place.

### **1. Communication parents should expect from the coach:**

- Coaches Philosophy
- Expectations
- Location and times of practice
- Team requirements
- Injury procedures

### **2. Communication coaches expect form parents:**

- Concerns concerning their child only, set up by a meeting
- Specific concerns in regard to the coaches philosophy/expectations
- Schedule conflicts

3. **Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:**
  - Treatment of your child
  - Improvements needs for your child
  - Behavior concerns
  
4. **Issues NOT appropriate for discussion with your child's coach:**
  - Strategy
  - Play calling
  - Any situation dealing with other athletes
  - Stats
  
5. **If a parent has a concern to discuss with the coach, the following procedures should be followed:**
  - Call the coach to set up an appointment
  - If the coach cannot be reached call an assistant coach
  - If no coach can be reached call the Athletic Director/ Coordinator
  - Think about what you expect to accomplish as a result of the meeting
  - Stick to discussing facts as you understand them
  - Do not confront the coach before, during or after a practice or contest. These can be emotional times for both parties. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalates it
  
6. **What should a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?**
  - Call the Athletic Director/Athletic Coordinator and set up a meeting with the athlete, coach, and parents need to be present
  - At this meeting, an appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary

It's difficult to expect when your child is not one the best athletes, or performing at the level needed. We all need to understand the coaches first priority is the team, your child is second. Students' involvement in extracurricular activities has been proven to increase their chances of success later in life. We hope this information helps make the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF SPECTATORS**

Remember that you are at the contest to support and cheer for your team, and enjoy the skill and competition-not to intimidate or ridicule the other team or its fans.

Remember that school athletics are a learning experience for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to

**improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people, just as you would praise a student working in the classroom.**

**A ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or be generally obnoxious.**

**Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.**

**Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups.**

**Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.**

**Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team**

**Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before, during, and after the game or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating)**

**Use only cheers that support and uplift the teams involved**

**Be a positive role model at events through your own actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming**

**Game officials can ask that school administrators have unruly fans removed from a contest facility**

**There is no such thing as a “right” to attend interscholastic athletics. Interscholastic athletics are considered a “privilege” and the spectator who avails himself or herself of it is expected to conduct him or herself accordingly**

**Parents and spectators should be aware that the school can (and will) remove them from the premises due to any type of disruptive behavior. (Disruptive behaviors can be defined as but not limited to foul or abusive language, berating of officials, taunting of opposing fans, players, or coaches, lack of cooperation with school officials, not remaining in the bleachers, refusing to leave a restricted area, etc...) Spectators may be removed from Gainesville events for violating any of these rules. **Spectators removed from one contest will be prohibited from attending Gainesville contests for 30 days of that season. Spectators removed a second time will be prohibited from attending Gainesville contests for one calendar year all sports.** Severe violations (fighting, refusal to leave and cops called, etc..) may result in an immediate ban from all events for the remainder of the year.**

Keep in mind that you are a guest of the school, and that while winning is certainly an admirable goal; it is hollow if it comes at the expense of morals, ethics, and just plain common sense.

The school is responsible for the behavior of their spectators. The school district can be and will be punished for actions of patrons in violation of UIL standards and rules.

## **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

The district shall excuse student-athletes from attending school and extracurricular activities for the purpose of observing religious holy days when it is a tenet of their faith that they must be absent from school during such time and if, before the absence, the parent, guardian, or person having custody or control of the student submits a written request for the excused absence. The district shall excuse the student-athlete for days on which religious holy days are observed and for days on which the student-athlete must travel to and the where the holy days will be observed. Excused days for travel shall be limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day of travel from the site where the student-athlete will observe the holy days. Student-athletes excused under this provision shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up the contest(s) or practice(s) missed during the absence. The absence will count as an excused absence with a reasonable amount of time given to make up for any missed practices or contests

## **DRUG TESTING**

All student-athletes will be subjected to random testing during the school year. Drug testing will follow the school board district approved policy. All medical issues must be addressed with the Athletic Trainer.

## **PROPER CHAIN OF COMMAND**

The Gainesville Athletic Department encourages that a chain of command is followed by all involved when problems do arise. Out of respect for all parties involved the proper chain of command goes as follows:

- Jr. High Girls: Position Coach, Head Coach, Coach Hendricks, Coach Weese, Coach Polk
- Jr. High Boys: Position Coach, Head Coach, Coach Hendricks, Coach Polk
- High School Girls: Position Coach, Head Coach, Coach Weese, Coach Polk
- High School Boys: Position Coach, Head Coach, Coach Polk

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

A condition for participation in the Gainesville ISD Athletic Program is to sign an acknowledgment that the student-athlete has read and understands the Athletic Handbook. The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must also sign an acknowledgment. The acknowledgment states that the signing party understands the consequences for engaging in prohibited conduct.

## **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN**

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Gainesville ISD Athletic Handbook and agree to these rules as a condition for my voluntary participation in Gainesville ISD Athletics. I understand that failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures related to my athletic participation.

**Students Name**

**Printed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students Signature**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Gainesville ISD Athletic Handbook and understand the requirements for my child's voluntary participation in Gainesville ISD Athletics. I understand the consequences that my child will face if he or she fails to adhere to these rules and agree to such terms. I am aware of the sections dealing with Parent/Coach Relationships and Behavior Expectations of Spectators. I agree to abide by the conditions stated therein. I agree to allow my child's name and photo to be used in the newspaper, or any other social media network to be recognized for their accomplishments.

**Parent(s) or Gaurdian(s) Name**

**Printed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) or Gaurdian(s) Name**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

***"RESTORE THE ROAR"***