

The Hernando County School District

2023-2024

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS AND THE ATHLETIC COMMUNITY



Superintendent

John Stratton

School Board

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If you do not have access to a computer and need a copy of this handbook, please contact your school.

Vision:

To inspire and support the pursuit of individual greatness.

Mission:

The Hernando County School District collaborates with students, parents and other community stakeholders to effectively prepare all students for a successful transition into a diverse and changing world.

Guiding Principles:

We believe:

- ◆ Education is the foundation for a better future.
- ◆ Family and community involvement are critical to a high-quality educational system.
- ◆ Diverse individuals, ideas, talents, and learning styles strengthen our communities.
- ◆ All stakeholders share in the responsibility and decision-making as part of supporting student success and school improvement.
- ◆ Individuals and organizations are accountable for their behaviors and actions.
- ◆ Commitment to teaching methodologies that foster student engagement, critical thinking, and content mastery will prepare all students to graduate ready for work and postsecondary education.
- ◆ Shared purpose, collaboration, commitment to continuous improvement, and an innovative spirit are essential in effective teaching cultures.
- ◆ Safe, caring environments are essential for learning and the well-being of all students.
- ◆ High expectations and recognition empower individuals and lead to improved performance.
- ◆ Aligned expectations and policies that reflect best business practices are essential for success.

All Hernando County High School Athletic Departments are proud members of the Gulf Coast Eight Conference.



1. Foreword

This handbook has been prepared to present in brief form, the purpose and content of the athletic program and its compliance with state governing body rules. It includes those general areas that will help the reader become acquainted with the rules and regulations of the program. Specific rules and regulations will differ from sport to sport. Its intent is to lay a standard foundation so that parents and athletes will know what is expected regardless of what sport in which the student athlete participates. Final interpretation of the rules will be made by the coach, athletic director, and principal of the school. This handbook is designed to set forth minimum standards for athletes in all of the Hernando County Schools. A complete copy of all state governing body regulations is available at each school in the principal's office and the athletic director's office.

2. Athletic Philosophy

The philosophy of athletics in Hernando County is such that athletics is considered an integral part of the school's educational program that provides experiences which are beneficial to boys and girls physically mentally, socially and emotionally. The element of competition and winning, though it exists, is controlled to the point that it does not determine the nature of the program. This is considered to be educationally and psychologically sound because of the training it offers for living in a competitive society. Students are stimulated to want to win and excel, but the elements of good sportsmanship prevail, at all times, to enhance the educational values of competition.

3. Objectives of the athletic program are to develop:

- A. knowledge of the values that athletics has for the individual and for society;
- B. understanding of the rules essential to playing the game in order to be an intelligent fan;
- C. the ability to think, both as an individual and as a member of a group;
- D. improved motor skills;
- E. better health and physical fitness;
- F. the desire to succeed and excel;
- G. moral and ethical standards;
- H. self-discipline and emotional maturity;
- I. social competence;
- J. the ability to conform to rules and;
- K. respect for the rights of others and for authority.

Requirements of this handbook

The provisions stated in this Student Athletic Handbook are in effect on a 24-hours per day, 7-days per week basis all year. Additional procedures and guidelines governing sports may be developed by the principal and/or their designee. Individual coaches' specific rules must be submitted to the principal and athletic director for approval.

Parent/guardian meetings will be scheduled with coaches before each season begins. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask for interpretation of the material in this handbook and coach's expectations. Copies of practice schedules and athletic contests will be distributed to parents/guardians. These meetings will be scheduled at times for the largest attendance possible and advertised by the coach.

GENERAL RULES for PARTICIPATION

All interscholastic athletics and school activities are meant to contribute to the overall academic excellence achieved by a student participant. The following rules and consequences are seen as the basic conditions that must be met by a student who wishes to represent his or her school through interscholastic competitions or performances:

1. Athletic Eligibility/Transfers: Current information relative to athletic eligibility and transfers can be found on the Florida High School Athletic Association website at <http://www.fhsaa.com/>. Other provisions regarding eligibility shall be as provided by applicable Board Policy, the Code of Student Conduct, and Florida Statute.
2. All high school students must maintain an overall cumulative unweighted 2.0GPA. Middle school students must maintain a 2.0GPA each semester.
3. A student must be reported as present for the entire school day in order to participate in interscholastic competitions or performances. Exceptions may only be approved by the principal or designee. Based on the number of unexcused absences, students in **Middle School Students grade (6-8)** must maintain a 90% attendance rate in all class periods throughout the school year to maintain privileges and participation to include but not limited to field trips, performances, athletics, and school dances. **High School Students grade (9 – 12)** must have less than 10 unexcused absences per semester in order to maintain privileges and participation in extracurricular events to include but not limited to: athletics, homecoming events, grad night, prom, and school dances.
4. If a student is assigned to In-school Suspension (ISS) for the entire school day or during the school day for a referable offense, he or she will be unable to participate in interscholastic competitions or performances on the day(s) on which he or she is assigned. If the assignment to ISS includes a Friday and Monday, the student will be unable to participate in interscholastic competitions or performances on the weekend. Students may attend practices while assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS) with approval of school administration.
5. Students assigned to Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be ineligible to participate in practices and interscholastic competitions or performances on the day(s) on which he or she is assigned. If the assignment to OSS includes a Friday and Monday, the student will be unable to participate in interscholastic competitions or performances on the weekend.
6. A student who is arrested on a felony charge will be suspended from interscholastic competitions and performances until Hernando County School officials complete an investigation and rule on further participation. If a student is arrested for any other offense they will be suspended pending a determination by administration at the school.
7. A student found in possession, using, or buying tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, or drugs in any form will be suspended from all interscholastic competitions or performances for a minimum of three to five days not to exceed 10 school days. They must be enrolled and complete the approved substance abuse program through the Hernando County Public School's Substance Abuse Educator. Failure to attend and complete the substance abuse program will result in dismissal from all athletics for the remainder of the school year. A second offense will result in dismissal from all athletics for the remainder of the school year. (Please note, if scheduled time for student athlete's attendance to substance Abuse Education Program is after the minimum suspension has been served, student athlete may return to competition and performance. However, the above consequences do apply for student's failure to attend Substance Program at scheduled time. These programs are not **rescheduled** and student athlete must attend on scheduled dates). **Students caught selling drugs/alcohol will be removed from participation for one year.**
8. A student athlete who checks out school equipment is responsible for the equipment. The athlete is expected to keep equipment clean and in good condition. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation. Failure to pay for any lost or damaged equipment will result in the issuance of a notice of obligation that must be satisfied prior to graduation.
9. A student will be ineligible until deemed eligible by administration and/or FHSAA when it is found that the student or parent falsifies documents or accepts a prohibited benefit. Hernando County School officials reserve the right to verify residence and investigate allegations.

COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT ATHLETES: College-bound student athletes must meet rigorous academic rules to be eligible for scholarship opportunities. For information on the rules, visit <https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/links?linksSubmit=ShowActiveLinks>

TRANSPORTATION

Bus/Van Departure and Procedures

1. Athletes must conduct themselves in a proper manner while on the provided transportation. Hands and arms shall stay inside the windows, there shall be no littering, athletes will stay in designated seats, and there shall be no clowning or boisterous behavior or other lewd or inappropriate behavior, i.e. mooning, flashing, etc. Changing of clothes will not be allowed on the provided transportation.
2. Players must ride the team provided transportation to all out of county games. A parent/guardian may request to have a player ride home from an event with them. In such a case the parent must speak with the coach, provide proof of identity and sign the player out. If, for some reason, it is necessary for an athlete to ride to or from an away event with their parent/guardian, a written request from the parent/guardian must be brought to the attention of and approved by the principal or designee.
3. All athletes must have transportation home within 30 minutes after the end of the game, after practice, or upon arrival back from an away game. Athletes should discuss this requirement with parents/guardians. After 30 minutes a child may be released to the Sheriff's Department and held until the parent arrives. If this is a continuous problem an athlete may be dismissed from the team. Coaches are required to follow Board procedures on transportation of athletes. Athletes will not be allowed to drive to away athletic events without proper approval from the principal or designee.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Dedicated Athlete

A student who participates in interscholastic competitions and/or performance groups should demonstrate high standards of ethics and promote the development of good character and other life skills. A model student participant should exhibit a high degree of decorum demonstrating respect for self, family, and all people regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or physical condition. As a representative of Hernando County Public Schools, students are asked to commit to the following pledge:

I understand it is a privilege to join a team and wear the uniform. Therefore, I will represent the school in a positive way.

I accept the responsibility to show pride in the traditions of my team, maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle, and model appropriate behavior on and off the fields/courts.

I recognize that academics come first. Therefore, I commit to studying by budgeting my time and maintaining a 2.0 GPA.

I will work hard, to build strength and improve skills each year I participate.

I will always put the team ahead of myself. I am willing to obey the training rules and raise the status of the team.

I will show respect for my teammates, opponents, and coaches.

I will take care of all equipment and facilities. I will THINK SAFETY!

I am thankful to my parents/guardians for all their support during the athletic seasons.

A) CONDUCT – BEHAVIOR ON THE PLAYING FIELD

1. Athletics requires good sportsmanship and conduct; this is a must! If unsportsmanlike conduct is observed and reported to the coach, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. In all cases, unsportsmanlike conduct will be reported to the principal and to the state governing body which is required when a game official reports unsportsmanlike conduct to the school principal. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by administration at the school.
2. The state governing body may enact up to a six-week suspension. Athletes will be held financially responsible for any fines levied by FHSAA for ejection from a contest.

B) HAZING

Hazing will not be tolerated by the Hernando County School Board in any form or manner and will be referred to a local law enforcement agency for prosecution. The person[s] responsible will be removed immediately from the sport in which the hazing occurred for the remainder of the season.

C) DISCIPLINARY ACTION:

The Hernando County Schools Student Code of Conduct is hereby incorporated into this handbook. With the exception of the areas noted above disciplinary action will follow the guidelines therein.

D) POLICY ON CROWD CONTROL: FHSAA policy requires the home school administration be responsible for the control of spectators during athletic contests and recommends that the home schools secure uniformed security to assist with this responsibility. However, the assigned officials are responsible for the conduct of the contest.

Since athletics must operate within the framework of sound educational principles, it follows that athletic teams at each school come under the jurisdiction of and are required to abide by the rules of the FHSAA, so that all athletes may compete under identical standards. Those who take advantage of the privilege of athletics either as a participant or spectator are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not detract from the educational principles which direct the basic organization. Athletes and officials are human beings—they are not perfect and never will be. Everyone involved in a contest may make a mistake. Competitors, coaches, officials, and spectators enter into competition knowing that errors are a normal part of an activity and are likely to happen. Even though winning is certainly an admirable goal, it is hollow if it comes at the expense of morals, ethics, and just plain common sense. As the preceding points are kept in mind, the following spectator behavior will be adhered to:

FANS AND SPECTATORS ARE EXPECTED TO:

1. Stand during the National Anthem.
2. Cheer *for* their team rather than against their opponents.
3. Maintain self-control at all times while conducting themselves as responsible citizens.
4. Show RESPECT for opponents in every way possible.
5. Always be *positive* in support of their teams.
6. Recognize and acknowledge good performances made by *both* teams.
7. RESPECT officials and accept their decisions.
8. Be humble and not boastful in victory and gracious and not bitter in defeat.
9. Leave the site of an activity—including the parking lot—as soon as possible after the activity is completed.
10. Disruptive fans will be asked to leave the game and may be subject to being barred from future school events.

Athletic Fees and Ticket Prices for Secondary Schools

| Middle School | | |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Football | Other Sports | |
| \$5.00 | \$4.00 | |
| (Children in grades K-4 are free when accompanied by their parent/guardian) | | |
| ALL HERNANDO COUNTY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ARE ADMITTED FREE WITH THEIR COUNTY IDENTIFICATION BADGE (Employees Only) | | |
| High School | | |
| Football | Other Sports | |
| \$7.00 | \$5.00 | |
| \$4.00 parking fee | | |
| (Children in grades K-4 are free when accompanied by their parent/guardian) | | |
| ALL HERNANDO COUNTY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ARE ADMITTED FREE WITH THEIR COUNTY IDENTIFICATION BADGE (Employees only) | | |
| Athletic Fees | | |
| | Middle School | High School |
| First Sport | \$40.00 | \$50.00 |
| Second Sport | \$25.00 | \$30.00 |
| Family (Same School) | \$90.00 | \$110.00 |
| Individual Cap | \$65.00 | \$80.00 |

100% of the money collected will go to the school's athletic fund.

Athletic fees must be paid prior to competing in interscholastic competition.

General Provisions:

District, Region, Section and State events, including ticket prices, are subject to the rules of the state governing body to which the schools belong.

General Forms and Paperwork Needed for Participation

Physical Evaluation (FHSAA Form EL2 - Revised 4/23 – Pre-participation Physical Examination)

Consent and Release (FHSAA Form EL3 – Revised 3/23 – Consent and Release from Liability Certificate page 1 & 4 of 4; For Concussion, page 2 of 4; for Cardiac Arrest and Heat Related Illness, page 3 of 4). **Student athletes must watch all required videos with team or submit to coach certificate(s) showing completion of viewing video(s).**

All forms may be found online at:

<http://www.fhsaa.com>

(Two additional copies are required when using downloaded forms from website.)

(Some of the forms are triplicate page forms and can only be obtained at the school.)

Consent for Private Transport – (Hernando County School Board SEC-Adm-021)

Other forms may be needed and the collection of forms may vary from school to school. Please speak with your coach or Athletic Director.

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely challenging vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of each other, providing greater benefit to our students. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

As your children become involved in their school's athletic program, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. Communication is the key to a successful resolution, as well as support of the coach.

Pre-Season Athletic Meeting

Communication You Should Expect From Your Child's Coach

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Tryout expectations/evaluations
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation

Parent/Coach Appropriate Methods of Communication

1. Concerns, expressed directly to the coach:
 - Parent to Coach with an appointment
 - Parent, Coach, and Athletic Director with an appointment
 - Parent, Coach, Athletic Director and Principal with an appointment
2. Prior notification required of any schedule conflict
3. Support of the coach

There are situations that may require a conference between coach and parent. Conferences are highly encouraged as they provide a clear understanding of the situation from both the coach and parent perspective.

1. Call the school to set up an appointment with the coach.
2. If the coach does not return your call in a timely fashion, call the school for the Athletic Director to set up an appointment.
3. Please do not attempt to confront the coach before, during, or right after the contest or practice. Meetings are designed for resolution of any concerns that may exist. Appropriate spectator behavior is expected at all contests

It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals and they make decisions based on what is best for the team and all students involved. Playing time is the decision of the coach.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coach

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior or academics
4. Concerns regarding injuries

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss With Coach

1. Playing time
2. Strategy and/or personnel
3. Play calling
4. Other student athletes and/or parents

Parent Conduct at Games

Good sportsmanship is the goal for all fans. Behavior that does not support sportsmanship is not appropriate. If you have an issue please schedule an appointment with the coach the next day to discuss your concerns. Inappropriate behavior at a game can result in your removal from the game and or a trespass warning being issued. We want you to support our athletes and coaches in a way that benefits the team and leads to your enjoyment as a fan.

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of Student Athlete (Print): _____ | |
| School: _____ | Sport(s): _____ |
| Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ | Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ |
| Name of Parent/Guardian (PRINT): _____ | Name of Parent/Guardian (PRINT): _____ |
| Date: _____ | Date: _____ |

**THE POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION OF
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HERNANDO COUNTY**

GENERAL: It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or other legally protected status in its educational programs or employment practice.

EMPLOYMENT: Neither the Hernando County School Board nor its employees shall illegally discriminate in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or other legally protected status as defined by applicable law.

STUDENTS: The Hernando County School Board prohibits exclusion of any student from participation in or the denial of the benefits of any educational program or activity as well as any and all forms of illegal discrimination against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or other legally protected status as provided by applicable law.

PRECEDENCE: This policy shall take precedence over any other statement in the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Hernando County School Board wherever such may appear unless in conflict with any collective bargaining agreement.

Any questions concerning compliance should be addressed to:

Jill Kolasa, Director of Student Services
The School Board of Hernando County, Florida
919 North Broad Street
Brooksville, Florida 34601

**Statutory Authority: Florida Statute 1001.42; Florida Statute 1001.43;
Florida Statute 1000.05; Florida Statute 1001.01;
Article 1, Section 2 Florida Constitution, F.A.C. 6A-19001 et.seq.**