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INTRODUCTION
This material is presented to you because your son/daughter has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete. Your family’s interest in our program is gratifying to the entire staff. We believe that participation in athletics or in any extracurricular activity provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences that will prove to be very beneficial to everyone involved. A student who chooses to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice to develop self-discipline and to put the program or team above their personal ambitions. Athletics is a privilege, not a right. We are striving for excellence and do not want our student-athletes to compromise proper training methods or to accept mediocrity.

In order for any successful athletic department to run smoothly, all students, coaches, teachers, and administrators must be aware of all Board approved rules and guidelines that apply to the athletic department. Therefore, this handbook has been prepared in order to present an outline of the athletic policy of the Texarkana Independent School District. Members of the community, student-athletes, and the parents of those student-athletes are encouraged to read and become familiar with the contents of this athletic policy.

While this handbook cannot cover every instance that will arise in the day to day activities of the athletic program, it represents a good faith effort to inform all of those involved in the athletic program about the guidelines that will govern their participation. The coaches of the individual sports reserve the right to issue additional sport specific requirements as needed. Please be advised that participation in this program is dependent on strict adherence to the policies found in this handbook. Communication is the key to resolving most conflicts. Therefore, all policy questions need to be directed to the head coach of the sport in question. If the head coach fails to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, all questions need to then be presented to the Athletic Director.

TISD believes that athletics play a vital role in the educational system. In athletics students learn the values of good citizenship, integrity, honesty, commitment, leadership, unity, confidence, and discipline. Participation in sports also allows our student-athletes to experience social growth and emotional maturity. Athletic competition teaches our young men and women how to be gracious winners or to be dignified in defeat.

Athletic participation truly complements the academic goals of the district. It is only proper that student-athletes take the best possible care of school property. If damage to equipment or facilities is intentional or if school issued items are lost, the student-athlete involved will be expected to pay for their repair or replacement. Student-athletes should take care of all uniforms, equipment, and facilities as if those things belonged to the student-athlete.

All students who are eligible under UIL rules may participate in all sports offered. Student-athletes must have the following forms on file to participate in athletics:
1. Physical Evaluation (Medical History Form completed annually)
2. Tiger Oath
3. Acknowledgement of Rules
4. Parent and Student Notification/Agreement Form Illegal Steroid Use
TIGER ATHLETIC MISSION STATEMENT

I. Our goal is to promote the personal growth of our players.
   a. Players should leave the program as better people and should be more prepared to live life.
   b. We want to take our players to a level that a student-athlete cannot get to by himself by maximizing each player’s academic/athletic talent and character.
   c. Our approach is based upon the core values of TRUST, CARE, RESPECT, and ENTHUSIASM.
   d. The primary lesson to be gained from athletic is a commitment to excel, which requires DEDICATION, HARD WORK, COOPERATION, and the SUBORDINATION of the individual for the good of the team.

II. We believe in a strong work ethic that leads to being thorough and prepared.
    a. A work ethic applies during the season, during off-season, and during the summer.
    b. Students should understand that success requires people to work for it.
    c. Students should work to have a WINNING SEASON, TO WIN DISTRICT, TO PLAY IN THE PLAYOFFS, AND ULTIMATELY TO WIN THE STATE TITLE.

III. We will represent TISD in a positive way.
     a. We will do our best to operate our program PROFESSIONALLY and with INTEGRITY.
     b. We will require players to fit into the ACADEMIC mission of the school.
     c. We will give our players every opportunity to GRADUATE.

IV. We will promote the elements of teamwork and leadership.
    a. We will develop a “FAMILY” atmosphere between our players and from coach to players.
    b. We will promote UNITY, PRIDE, CONFIDENCE and a feeling of ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE TEAM.
PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

The primary goal of Texas High athletics is to foster the physical, academic, and moral development of all student-athletes in the program. It is our belief that the benefits of athletic participation extend beyond the courts and fields of athletic competition into the challenges of life; therefore, we must strive to instill the self-discipline, character, work ethic, and cooperative skills that will give our student-athletes the best chance to succeed in any endeavor and to develop a positive and healthy self-esteem.

We feel that this can best be achieved through a fair and impartial implementation of the Athletic Handbook; through establishing and conveying clearly defined expectations; through the use of achievement oriented, enthusiastic coaching methods; and through an organized and collective approach to coaching.

We believe that coaches must be teachers, motivators, and positive role models, and that they must demonstrate that they genuinely care about their student-athletes and their profession. We recognize the importance of professional development; of a close relationship with administrators, teachers, and the community; and of the provision of clean, well maintained facilities and equipment. We advocate the equality of all students, regardless of race, gender, and economic condition. Winning will always be an important catalyst for our program, but our most important benchmark for success is the development of student-athletes who will be prepared to face any competition or challenge with their best efforts.

OBJECTIVES OF ATHLETICS

1. To learn teamwork - In order to work with others in our society, one must develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and understand the value of hard work and sacrifice.
2. To be successful - One must develop a desire to excel; the desire to win is everything.
3. To be a good sport - One must be humble in victory and dignified in defeat.
4. To be physically fit - One must develop physical fitness and a desire to maintain this to a high degree.
5. To set goals - One must properly set goals and strive to reach them. One should always try to improve.
6. To enjoy - One should enjoy participation in athletics and should gain the rewards it has to offer.
THE TIGER OATH

I have read the athletic handbook and understand the policies of the athletic program. I agree to follow all rules and guidelines expressed in the handbook.

I have visited the following website and have read or requested a copy:

I am ready to make the sacrifices and to provide the effort necessary to make myself and THS the best we can be.

I will strive to follow the following guidelines that exemplify the Tigers’ behavior.

1. I will follow all Texarkana ISD and UIL rules and policies.
2. I will be a leader and will handle all of my academic responsibilities.
3. I will have respect for myself and for those in authority.
4. I will not lie or steal.
5. I will not use alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco or other harmful substances.
6. I will give my best effort at all times.
7. I will not use profanity.
8. I realize the importance of practice, and I will personally strive to participate in 100% of the workouts. I am aware that missed workouts result in make-ups the day I return.
9. I will never be out-worked or out-competed.
10. I will always put the interests of the team above my individual interests.
11. I will treat the locker-room as if it were my home away from home. I will keep it neat and always pick up after myself.

12. I realize the terms and consequences of quitting.

STUDENT-ATHLETE’S NAME: _____________________________________________

STUDENT-ATHLETE’S SIGNATURE: _____________________________________________

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____________________________________________
RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

1. Transportation: To provide transportation to and from athletic contests
2. Facilities, Supplies, and Equipment: To provide supplies, equipment, and facilities essential for our student-athletes to compete
3. Student safety and development: To employ and teach proper training methods, to provide properly fitted safety equipment, to provide first aid to injuries, and to seek the care of a trained medical professional for emergency injuries

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COACHES

1. To provide first and foremost the safety of the participating student-athletes
2. To encourage the student-athletes to give maximum effort in the classroom and to periodically monitor student grades to ensure academic success
3. To schedule games and to make travel arrangements
4. To carry out any needed discipline for infractions within the athletic program.
5. To complete eligibility forms and to adhere to all UIL rules
6. To teach the skills necessary for the student-athlete to successfully participate in sports
7. To teach sportsmanship and respect for officials
8. To set the proper example of sportsmanship
9. To take care of equipment and facilities

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS

1. To give moral support to their son/daughter for their participation in athletics. This could include verbal encouragement; going to practices, games, or meets whenever possible; or participating in the Texarkana Athletic Booster Club.
2. To encourage the student-athlete to attend all practices, games, and meets and not to miss these events other than for illness or circumstances beyond his/her control
3. To furnish transportation to and from school for practices, games, and meets
4. To furnish that equipment which the school does not furnish
5. To work with the coach in identifying and correcting potential problems
6. To encourage the student-athlete to maintain passing grades in all subjects and to attend tutorials when necessary or scheduled due to unsatisfactory grade reports

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES

1. To represent the school and the community with character and good sportsmanship. Other communities, as well as our own, judge our school by the conduct and attitudes of our student-athletes, both on and off the field.
2. To be responsible to the other members of the team. Giving less than his/her best effort is letting their teammates down.
3. To be responsible to his/her family. The student-athlete should not do anything that will bring shame or dishonor to his/her parents.
4. To be responsible to the younger students in the school system by providing an example to follow. He/she should always remember that they are important role models to younger student-athletes.
5. To strive for academic success along with athletic success. To continue to participate and remain eligible, the student-athlete must meet all eligibility standards set by the school and the state.

6. To adhere to all school policies and all athletic policies.

7. To train properly and refrain from activities that are potentially harmful to their bodies.
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

PLAYING TIME FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES
At Texas High, coaches will try to play as many students as he/she can. The object is to win the game while playing as many students as possible. Playing time is a decision reserved for the head coach of each sport.

MEETINGS WITH COACHES
We strongly encourage communication between parents and coaches; however, we believe there is an appropriate time to do this. To set up a meeting with a coach, parents should contact the Athletic Secretary, who will schedule the day and time of the meeting. If the meeting with the coach does not result in a satisfactory resolution, parents should then contact the Athletic Secretary to set a date and time for a meeting with the Athletic Director. If the meeting with the Athletic Director does not result in a satisfactory resolution, parents should then contact Jo Ann Rice, Assistant Superintendent, at Central Office to set up a meeting with her. Approaching a coach before or after team competition or practice is not appropriate.

When meeting with a coach, please keep the following information in mind as to what is and what is not appropriate to discuss with the coach. This information is contained in the University Interscholastic League Parent Involvement Manual.


Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:
1) The mental and physical treatment of your child
2) What your child needs to do to improve
3) Concerns about your child’s behavior

We know that it is very difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe is in the best interest of all students participating in the sport. As you can see from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child’s coach. Other things, such as those listed next, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues NOT appropriate for discussion with your child’s coach:
1) How much playing time each athlete is getting
2) Team strategy
3) Play calling
4) Any situation that deals with other student-athletes

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES
1. Physical Examinations — Physical exams are required the 7th, 9th, and 11th grade year or the first year enrolled at TISD (unless a physical form signed by a doctor is submitted to our department from the previous school) before a student-athlete may participate in any sport. Parents should advise the coach if a student-athlete possesses any physical disabilities and/or limitations.
2. **Insurance** — Texarkana ISD has purchased an insurance policy that covers all U.I.L. activities, field trips, and vocational activities. Our insurance company, for a minimal fee per student, offers additional 24 hour or school time policies. It is important to note that our U.I.L. coverage is SECONDARY to any policy that the parents might have on the student-athlete. However, if the student is not covered by a parent policy, this policy becomes the primary policy. Every insurance policy has deductibles and limits on benefits. Therefore, please be advised that we cannot guarantee that our policy will pay for all medical expenses incurred during the treatment of an athletic injury. With the exception of emergencies, the athletic department must be notified and the proper claim forms picked up before any treatment or doctor visit is scheduled for an athletic related injury. Otherwise, the insurance company may not pay the claim. Likewise, Texarkana ISD is not personally responsible for any medical expenses received while competing in an athletic activity. Feel free to schedule a time to meet with the athletic trainer to review the policy if you have any questions.

3. **Emergency Release Form** — This form allows the coach to seek emergency medical treatment for an injured student-athlete should a parent not be available for consultation.

**AGE REQUIREMENTS (UIL RULE)**

1. Junior High - To participate in athletics at the junior high level, a student must not have turned 15 by September 1.
2. High School - to participate in athletics at the high school level, a student must not have turned 19 by September 1.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

A student is eligible to participate in a UIL varsity contest if the student:

1. Is less than 19 years old on September 1 preceding the contest
2. Is not a high school graduate
3. Is a full-time, day student in a participating high school
4. Has been in regular attendance at the participant school since the sixth class day of the present school year or has been in regular attendance for 15 or more calendar days before the contest or competition
5. Is in compliance with state law regarding grades and credit requirements as well as rules of the Texas Education Agency and has signed an Acknowledgement of Rules form indicating this compliance.
6. Is enrolled in a four year, normal program of high school courses
7. Initially enrolled in the ninth grade not more than four years prior to participation nor was enrolled in the tenth grade no more than three years prior to participation
8. Was not recruited to play professional or collegiate sports
9. Did not represent a post-secondary institution in a contest or has not participated in a college training session or try-out to demonstrate his/her ability to colleges before completion or participation in his/her senior year in the sport or sports for which he/she is trying out for a scholarship
10. Meets the specific eligibility requirements for UIL athletic competition in Section 440 of the Constitution and Contest Rules
11. Lives with parent/legal guardian inside the school district attendance zone his/her first year of attendance or has been in attendance at the school for one calendar year
12. Has not enrolled in or audited a post-secondary athletic or physical education course
13. Has not moved for athletic purposes
14. Has not accepted money or any other valuable consideration for teaching or participating in any sport, has not competed with a paid player or been paid for allowing his/her name to be used for the promotion or any product, plan or service; has not accepted “expenses paid” college visits for recruiting purposes until his/her senior year and then within dates specified by UIL rules with a visit permit and without missing any school time
15. Was eligible according to the fifteen day rule and the residence rule prior to district certification

**Off Season**

All student-athletes must participate in an organized weight training and conditioning program during the athletic period throughout the school year to enhance and develop their athletic ability.

**Equipment**

School equipment checked out by the student-athlete is his/her responsibility. All equipment will be taken care of and kept in good condition. School issued equipment and practice clothing is to remain at school. Students should not wear practice clothing or practice equipment home. The athletic department will launder equipment when possible. Game uniforms are not to be taken home unless instructed to by the head coach.

**Scholastic Requirements (No Pass/No Play)**

To be eligible to compete in extracurricular activities, a student must pass all subjects in which the student is enrolled. A failing grade (below 70) will eliminate a student from competition for a three-week period. At the end of the three-week period, all grades will be checked, and if all grades are above a 70, then the student-athlete will regain eligibility. During a period in which the student-athlete is ineligible, he/she will be required to work out after school.

To be able to participate in the first six weeks of the school year, the following criteria must have been met:

1. At the beginning of the 7th grade year, he/she must have been promoted to the 7th grade.
2. At the beginning of the 8th grade year, he/she must have been promoted to the 8th grade.
3. At the beginning of the 9th grade year, he/she must have been promoted to the 9th grade.
4. At the beginning of the 10th grade year, he/she must have 5 credits toward graduation.
5. At the beginning of the 11th grade year, he/she must have 10 credits toward graduation.
6. At the beginning of the 12th grade year, he/she must have 15 credits toward graduation.

**Player Participation Policy**

If ever needed, the TISD athletic department will have organized tryouts for determining varsity and junior varsity rosters. The head coaches may conduct tryouts, and after a period of evaluation, they will determine their rosters. This participation policy will be in effect for all sports but will only be used when there are too many students to participate at only one level. The decision as to which team the student represents rests entirely with the head coach of the sport.
ATHLETIC TRIPS
Students who participate in school-sponsored trips shall be required to ride in transportation provided by the school to and from the event. Exceptions may be made if the student’s parent or guardian personally requests that the student be allowed to ride with the parent or presents a written request to the athletic director or head coach for approval before the scheduled trip that the student be allowed to ride with an adult designated by the parent. The adult who is to take the student home must personally check with the sponsor/coach at the event before leaving with the student. Parents taking their own children home must personally check with the sponsor/coach at the event and notify him/her that the child is riding with them and will not ride the bus.

POLICIES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES
The basic principle of conduct under which TISD students will operate is to conduct themselves in such a manner that will bring credit to themselves, to their teammates, to their families, and to Texarkana ISD. Student-athletes should be mindful of these facts:

- Athletics is a privilege, not a right.
- Student-athletes should never engage in any activity that can be construed as inappropriate for a Texarkana ISD athletic team member.
- Tigers and Lady Tigers will act in such a manner that will bring pride and honor to Texarkana Independent School District. This includes school trips, competitions, restaurants, classrooms, and any other time that they are representing Texarkana Independent School District.
- While coaches and teachers will make every effort to promote their students to collegiate programs, participation in TISD athletics does not ensure athletic scholarships.
- The coaches, in the best interest of the team, determine playing time. Classification, practice participation, etc., are important but not the only determining factors.
- Communication is essential to the success of any team. The athletic department’s policy is as follows:
  A. If students are going to miss practice, they must contact their head coach prior to that practice or game, and inform him/her why they will be absent.
  B. Failure to do so and/or repeat offenses may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.

  Note: School related absences will not result in a make-up session (ex. Student-athlete participates in Student Council activity – no make-up session)

- All clothes and equipment issued to a student-athlete are property of TISD. They must be returned or replaced if lost or damaged.
- All athletic equipment lost will be replaced at the full value of the item. Replacement cost will be paid for any equipment not returned.
- Missing practice due to school discipline may result in reduced playing time or suspension from a contest as well as make-up drills, as this will be considered an unexcused absence.
- The TISD dress code will be strictly enforced. (Student-athletes will not participate in games until they comply with the dress code.) This includes following dress code throughout the school day and while going to and leaving games, practices, etc.
- Stealing may result in dismissal from the team. The first offense will result in probation, and any other offense could result in dismissal from the team or program.
- It is the TISD athletic policy that all student-athletes should exemplify model behavior in the classroom and community. Failure to act accordingly will result in disciplinary action taken by the athletic department.
- The athletic staff will practice policies designed for the protection of all student-athletes.
• It is the belief of the district that TISD sports competitions and practices must take precedence over all other teams or leagues. Participation on non-school teams will be consistent with the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules Handbook.
• If student-athletes start one sport, they are obligated to complete that sport before starting another sport.
• It is the student-athlete’s responsibility to follow the practices established by his/her coaches.

CONSEQUENCES
The head coach of a sport and the athletic director may determine the consequences for failure to follow the policy as outlined above. Consequences are to be equally enforced, and continued non-compliance can result in being suspended from athletics for a full year. Repeat offenses will result in a disciplinary action that is progressively stricter.

Since circumstances surrounding each action may vary greatly, the coaching staff will make every effort to allow the punishment to fit the offense. Punishments extended in similar cases will help guide coaching decisions, but each case will stand independently, and comparisons to punishments extended to other student-athletes are not valid. Parents may schedule a conference with the coach of the sport to discuss punishment assigned to their student-athlete.

QUITTING
Quitting a sport is highly discouraged. Once a student makes a commitment to a team, that student is expected to finish the season; however, if a student does quit after a season has started, then the student will not be allowed to participate in another sport until the season of the first sport has ended, unless mutually agreed on by the head coach of the respective sport and the Athletic Director. (This includes play-off games.) If a student-athlete finds it necessary to drop a sport, the procedure for dropping a sport is the following:
1. Meet with the head coach of the particular sport and discuss the situation.
2. Meet with athletic director and parents (if necessary).
3. Check in all equipment issued.

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED SPORTS AND/OR OTHER ACTIVITIES
School sport participation must take precedence over other non-school activities in which the student may be involved. If the student-athlete misses practice, a game, or just is not able to perform up to their potential due to their participation in non-school activities, the coach of the school sport in which that student is participating, with the concurrence of the athletic director, should decide the appropriate actions. A season extends from the first day of the activity until the last game is completed, unless the student is released from the sport by the head coach of the sport on the last day of the regular season.

HAZING
Hazing is prohibited in TISD. Hazing is any act, occurring on or off the campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization. Consent to the hazing activity does not absolve the student of responsibility for the misconduct. Any student involved in hazing will be disciplined at the discretion of the head coach and Athletic Director.