

**SOUTHERN HUNTINGDON COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**STUDENT
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK
2022-2023**

It is the policy of the Southern Huntingdon County School District not to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, or national origin in its education programs, activities or employment. Services and facilities area accessible to and usable by disabled persons as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.

PRE-SEASON POLICIES

1. **PARTICIPATION:**
 - A. Students in grades 7-8 may participate only in junior high activities.
 - B. Head Coaches of each sport will make recommendations regarding 9th grade students.
 1. A 9th grade student is eligible for athletics, but not eligible for Junior High, because of age or semesters of attendance.
 2. A 9th grade student will be eligible for JV/Varsity athletics at the recommendation of the Head Coach and:
 - a. The student's parents agree to the move.
 - b. The move is made according to PIAA rules.
 - C. Students in grades 10 through 12 must participate in senior high programs.
 - D. A student loses eligibility in the following situations:
 1. Turns 19 years of age before July 1st of the up-coming school year.
 2. Has attended school for more than 12 semesters beyond their 6th grade year.
 3. Any athlete not passing 4 full credit subjects, or the equivalent, will be ineligible. On any Friday at 8:00 a.m. that a student is found to be ineligible, that student shall be ineligible from the succeeding Sunday through the following Sunday.
 4. No student will be permitted to change from one sport to another during the same season after the 1st week of the legal pre-season practice times.
 5. An athlete who quits an in-season sport will not be able to work-out for another sport, unless he/she has permission of the coach from which team he/she quit.
2. **PARENT PERMISSION:** No student shall be eligible to practice or play until the school district has a permission form properly completed and signed by a parent/guardian on file.
3. **PHYSICAL:** No student shall be eligible to practice or play until the school district has certification on file that the player passed a comprehensive physical examination given by the doctor. A student may at his/her expense, be examined

by their family doctor, who shall complete and sign the comprehensive physical form. The student will obtain the physical form from the school and return them to the school after the doctor has completed the examination.

4. **ORIENTATION MEETING:** An orientation meeting shall be held with all players, prior to the first practice, in accordance with PIAA regulation, to explain expectations required of each player. Individual coach's regulations will be signed, and in writing, and will need prior approval from the building principal. Every potential athlete will receive a copy of the Student Athlete Handbook. Each student athlete must sign off to verify that they have received the handbook.
5. **EQUIPMENT ISSUE:** All athletes will be provided with all school issued equipment. This does not necessarily include all needed equipment such as (shoes, socks, etc.).
 - A. All athletes will be held responsible for the care and return of all school issued equipment. Athletes could be billed for damaged or lost school equipment.
6. **WEARING EQUIPMENT:** Athletic equipment/uniforms issued by the school may not be worn except for practice or game situations unless the player has received permission from the coach. Under no circumstances should anyone other than the athlete be wearing school issued equipment.

SEASON POLICIES

1. **ATTENDANCE:** A student is ineligible if he/she has been absent from school twenty (20) or more days in a semester. The student will remain ineligible until he/she has been in attendance forty-five (45) days following the twentieth (20th) day of absence. Exceptions are where there are five (5) or more consecutive days of absence due to illness, as certified by a doctor, or other reasons as specified by the PIAA and the absence is waived by the district committee.
2. **ABSENCES ON DAY OF PRACTICE/GAME:** A student shall not participate in athletics on the day he/she has been marked absent without just reasons (dr. appts., educational field trips, etc.) (doctor/dental excuse required) and/or prior approval as determined by the building principal. Athletes will follow the same tardy policy as non-athletes. An athlete must be in attendance at least half a day (8:10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. to 2:50 p.m., with an excuse) to be able to participate that day. If a student is too ill to attend class, he/she is too ill to participate in athletics. Permission to participate under special circumstances may be granted by the principal.
3. **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO:** A student shall not use, distribute, nor have in his/her possession, tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs. Violations will result in immediate actions by the principal in regards to school

policy. Participation privileges can be taken away according to school policy. Other penalties may be imposed on the athlete by the head coach of that sport.

4. **SCHOLARSHIP:** Any student not passing four (4) full credit subjects, or the equivalent, at the end of a grading period will be ineligible for the first fifteen (15) days of the new grading period commencing on the day report cards are issued. Weekly eligibility is cumulative from the beginning of a grading period, and runs from Sunday to Sunday of the week following his/her ineligibility. At the end of the year, the final grades will be used to determine eligibility for the next school year. Also, see Pre-Season Policies (Participation D, No. 3).
5. **DISCIPLINE:** The school administration reserves the right to revoke the privilege of participation at any time for disciplinary reasons. Flagrant misconduct, poor sportsmanship, excessive absenteeism or failure to meet scholastic standards are some examples. When an athlete is give out-of-school suspension, that athlete may not participate in extracurricular activities on the day of the suspension. If an athlete accumulates multiple hours of detention in an academic eligibility week, that athlete shall meet with the Athletic Director and Principal to discuss a team suspension from 1 to 3 competitions. All student athletes are also responsible for following all rules of the individual programs. Athletes must adhere to all student handbook policies. Flagrant misconduct, whether on or off school property, whether or not such misconduct occurs during a school function, or is posted on social media is cause for embarrassment for our teams and school. Provisions for such misconduct should be included in each coach's player contract. Any violations should be addressed by the coach, athletic director and administration to determine what consequences are deemed appropriate.
6. **INJURIES:** The coach is responsible for the welfare and safety of his/her players. If an injury/accident occurs, the coach shall take immediate steps to care for the injured player. All injuries should be reported to our certified athletic trainer or EMT. The athletic trainer or EMT or private physician will become responsible for the immediate and follow-up care of our athletes. If the athletic trainer or EMT is not available, the coach should immediately attempt to contact the athlete's parents. If a parent is not available the coach should call for a doctor/ambulance. Each coach should have an emergency procedure card from each parent on file for each player. Emergency procedure cards should be part of the equipment take to away games. The coach and athletic trainer or EMT are responsible for maintaining these records.
7. **ACCIDENT REPORTS:** The coach or athletic trainer will fill out an injury report regarding all injuries.

8. **POSTPONED GAME:** The principal and/or athletic director will postpone games. Factors to be considered in making the decisions are:
 - a. Playing conditions
 - b. Safe travel
 - c. Financial losses
 - d. Damage to equipment and facilities

The athletic director will reschedule all postponed events.

9. **PRACTICES:** The practice schedule for the season will be set up and approved by the principal. Students are expected to attend all practices unless their absence has been previously discussed with the Head Coach.
 - a. Should poor weather cause cancellation (Early Dismissals) of classes, no practices or games will be held.
 - b. On a day when school is cancelled, practices and games may be held if there is administrative approval (Superintendent and/or Principal), as per School Board Policy. If this happens during a District playoff period, it will be at the discretion of the Administration as to whether a team travels to an event that will not be rescheduled.
 - c. Students are not required to attend "optional" practices.
10. **STUDENT ACCESS TO BUILDING:** Students are not permitted to enter the school building after scheduled practices or events. Students should refrain from coming to practice and games before the required time, and should have their transportation arranged so that all rides are available thirty (30) minutes after the completion of a scheduled game or practice. Students are not permitted to be in the building unless under the supervision of a coach or advisor.
11. **VARSITY LETTERS:** An athlete must have met the minimum requirements, as set by the Head Coach of an individual sport, to be eligible for a Varsity letter. These requirements should be on file with the Athletic Director. Head coaches may deny a letter to an athlete who fails to follow the Code of Conduct and Rules for Players.
12. **FUNDRAISING:** Student athletes may be asked to participate in fundraisers to raise money for their various teams/groups. No student athlete will be denied school issued items due to not participating in a fundraiser. Items purchased through the fundraisers can be withheld if a student athlete does not participate. All athletes are responsible for turning in all money and the delivery of fundraiser items to the appropriate people.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND GENERAL RULES FOR PLAYERS

A code of conduct is a set of ethical principles and standards designed to guide the athlete in taking acceptable and approved actions. They are regarded not only as recommendations but also as rules governing conduct.

As a member of the Southern Huntingdon County High School/Middle School athletic team, you are expected to understand that the real athlete:

1. Understands that drinking, use of tobacco products, or use of drugs or steroids are harmful to the body and hinders maximum effort and performance.
2. Does not use profanity.
3. Realizes that officials do not lose a game, but insure that both teams abide by the rules for the game. For this they deserve courteous respect.
4. Plans his/her time so that he/she devotes sufficient energy to his/her studies to insure grades, which represent his/her true abilities.
5. Has good attendance and truant record.
6. Works for the betterment of the school.
7. Obeys the training, practice and game rules of the coach.
8. Understands that he/she represents the community and school and should conduct himself/herself properly at all times.
9. Does not employ illegal tactics to gain an undeserved advantage.
10. Is neat and well-groomed at all times.
11. Appreciates that coaches and school authorities have the best interest of the participants in mind as they plan and conduct athletic programs.
12. Appreciates the importance of proper rest, diet and exercise.
13. Complies with the standard of this code or be subject to dismissal from the squad or other disciplinary actions as it may be necessary.
14. Complies with all school discipline codes as well as team rules.
15. All athletes must abide by all regular school policies as designated in this policy. All athletes must adhere to these policies during the full duration of their season, including all conditioning sessions and post-season competition.

16. Athletes who engage in any criminal activity or violations of civil law may be denied participation in an extra-curricular program. Recognizing the varying degrees of the severity of the violations (misdemeanors vs. felonies), consequences for such involvement may result in a minor reprimand or denial of participation, depending upon the nature of the offense.
17. Athletes shall abide by additional rules and regulations presented normally to all team members of a particular sport by the coach of that sport. It is the policy of the Athletic Department to prohibit the use of any tobacco or alcohol products and the use of drugs not prescribed by a physician. For a violation, the following consequences will be assessed:
 - a. First Offense: The athlete will be denied participation from competitions (with required practices) beginning with the first scheduled competition following the offense and concluding after 20% of that season's competitions have taken place.
 - b. Second Offense: Dismissal from that sport season without gaining awards or recognition.
 - c. Third Offense: The athlete will be denied participation in all athletic programs for the academic year.
18. The Athletic Department also identifies the following stipulations:
 - a. The use of alcoholic beverages shall also be enforced under the code on student suspensions, expulsions and removals.
 - b. Since state law prohibits the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors, law enforcement and legal ramifications may exist.
 - c. It is either a misdemeanor or felony in the state to use, buy or sell illegal drugs. Law enforcement personnel will be notified and legal ramifications may exist in the use or sale of and purchase of illegal drugs.
19. It is the policy of the Athletic Department and coaching staff that any action taken by a coach under the general rules and regulations, against an athlete can result in an indefinite suspension of the athlete from that team. An infraction must be observed by a teacher, coach, chaperone, school administrator, school board member, a member of any law enforcement agency, or the parent of the athlete in violation. In the event of any infraction of these policies or rules, the following procedures will take place:
 - a. The coach/advisor must inform the athlete either verbally or in writing about any infraction and the subsequent consequences. The coach/advisor will then conduct an informal hearing to allow the athlete to explain

his/her actions.

- b. The coach/advisor must contact the athlete's parents, athletic director and principal, either verbally or in writing, that the athlete is being denied participation. The coach must also explain the appeal process.
- c. In keeping with due process procedures, if requested by the parent, a hearing involving the athlete, his/her parents, the coach, the athletic director, and the high school principal may be held. At that hearing the denial of participation may be given definite duration or it may be lifted.

Code of Conduct

We have read and understand the aforementioned rules and regulations related to the Athletic Department's Code of Conduct and will abide by them. We also understand the consequences and penalties for the violation of these rules and regulations.

Student Athlete's Signature: _____

Student Athlete's Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Parent's Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

TEAM RULES

Participation is at the discretion of the coaching staff.

Players may be denied participation for disciplinary reasons.

Players who quit the team are responsible for notifying the Head Coach ASAP.

Practice is necessary for team and individual success. Players are expected to attend every practice unless they are absent from school due to illness/injury or contact the coach prior to that practice. Failing to do so results in an unexcused practice.

Be on time for practice.

Only the coaching staff can cancel a practice.

Report any injury to a coach or trainer immediately.

If you see a physician or the trainer for an injury, you are not permitted to practice or compete until the head coach is given a written release from the doctor or trainer, stating that you are physically able to participate.

You are expected to work diligently toward earning good grades in your school courses.

You are responsible for all equipment and uniforms issued to you. You will be charged for the full replacement cost for any equipment or uniform that is lost, damaged or stolen.

There is zero tolerance on the team for violence, the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or criminal activity. Violations will result in players being denied participation.

Treat all coaches, officials, spectators and other players with respect and courtesy.

You are expected to follow all rules as approved by the School Board while on this team.

You are expected to follow all rules as established by the NFHSA while on the team.

Students are expected and required to adhere to the team rules as set forth in the athletic handbook and any additional team rules formulated by the coach for their individual sport.

I have read these team rules and agree to follow them during the season. I also understand the consequences for any violations.

Player's Signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES

Since a group effort is required in most practices and games, group rules are needed. The individual athlete, therefore, becomes responsible to the group, and a key to teaching that responsibility, is to teach discipline.

Steps toward effective discipline:

Discipline should not be intimidation or anger. It does not necessarily refer to a set of rules and regulations. Discipline simply suggests the standards by which the group is going to operate. Consider for a moment the coach who trains five athletes and the coach who trains fifty. Both will have different responsibilities for their athletes and different rules.

Effective discipline, gets athletes ready to handle the stress of competition. The coach should follow these steps toward establishing effective discipline.

1. Explain what behavior is acceptable and what is not.
2. Reward behavior that lead to successful performances.
3. Get the athletes to believe that rules are important.
4. Modify inappropriate behavior individually, but stress continually that you are operating under the premise of what is best for the team and the program.

Each coach of a particular sport may have rules that are sport-specific. Coaches may have rules that are above and beyond what have been listed here. These rules need to be on file with the Athletic Director. These additional guidelines are often needed for athletes to follow that govern their behavior and conduct as members of a particular team.

When athletes violate team rules, the coaching staff must be prepared to administer consequences. Consequences should be designed to not only benefit the athlete but also the entire team. For infractions that involve the destruction of, or the leaving of excessive messes within school facilities, appropriate consequences could include the cleaning the practice area, locker room, gym, etc. Consequences for breaking team rules, PIAA rules or for poor sportsmanship should be taken very seriously. The biggest deterrent to the violation of team rules ultimately is playing time, which is what matters most to players. Coaches must be willing to withhold playing time when respect for the rules and team integrity are on the line. Disciplinary actions should be fair and consistent with all players, regardless of whether or not a player is a starter.

The athlete must be notified directly when he/she has violated a team policy or rule. The athlete must be instructed as to the consequences. Any disciplinary action contemplated by an assistant coach should be cleared through the head coach.

If a consequence involves a suspension from practice or a contest, the coach must directly inform the parent(s) of this disciplinary action. A written report should also be filed with the Athletic Director within twenty-four (24) hours of meeting with the athlete.

If an athlete still does not change his/her behavior or actions, a conference with the athlete and parents should be scheduled.

As a last resort, the Principal and Athletic Director will mediate between the coach, athlete and parent(s).

COMMUNICATION

Coaches must provide, in writing, their policies that relate to their coaching philosophy, disciplinary measures for athletes and team management. It is expected that the philosophy and rules are also transmitted to the athletes and parents.

Coaches must avoid contributing to gossip about athlete or other coaches.

Coaches must be willing to have an open dialogue with the athletic director about their concerns.

Coaches are expected to establish an open line of communication with athletes, parents, other coaches, the athletic director and administrators about any matters that involve the athletic program. Such discussions should always be characterized by a professional demeanor by all participants.

Any communication generated by an athlete or a parent must begin with the head coach. If necessary and if requested, the athletic director may join this initial discussion.

The second step to achieving a resolution to any problem is to involve the athletic director.

If the matter still remains unresolved after these initial dialogues, the third step is to involve the building principal.

The fourth and fifth steps include the involvement of the Superintendent and possibly the School Board if a satisfactory resolution is not reached beforehand.

Coaches should arrange a "Meet the Team" event at the beginning of the season where they can explain to parents and athletes their policies and standards.

TRANSPORATION RULES

The purpose of the following is to insure that the health, safety and welfare of every student is protected and that the school district can continue to economically provide efficient, adequate and safe transportation to athletic events. It is the duty of each coach and/or driver to enforce each rule and regulation.

1. The coach and/or driver are in charge of all students.

2. Students are to be at their designated pick up spot on time.
3. Classroom conduct is to be observed on the bus.
4. Students may eat and/or drink soda on the bus with the driver's permission. All waste is to be deposited in the trash container on the bus.
5. Students are not to open windows unless granted permission by the driver. Under no condition are students to shout, yell or throw things out the windows.
6. Ipods, etc. will be permitted on the bus.
7. Any and all damage to a bus is to be reported immediately to the driver.
8. Any student, who causes damage to a bus while on or off the bus, intentionally or unintentionally, will pay for the damage.
9. No student is permitted to open the emergency door except upon direction of the driver, or in an emergency when the driver is incapacitated.
10. All students must travel to and from the athletic contest in the transportation provided by the school. Only in a matter of extreme, extenuating circumstances may an athlete travel to an away game by private transportation with prior approval from the principal. A coach may grant permission for a student to return home with his/her parents when the request is made personally by the parent, or written permission has been given previously and approved by the administrator. All athletes are expected to stay with the team the entire event. (JV & Varsity). A sign-off sheet will be made available to any parent asking to provide transportation for their child.
11. Any conduct deemed unacceptable and not specifically covered in these regulations or the Southern Huntingdon High School/Middle School Handbook will be referred to the principal.
12. Athletes driving to the school for practices and games must adhere to all the driving regulations of the Southern Huntingdon County School District. No athlete is permitted to utilize a vehicle in anyway, without the permission of a coach, while the vehicle is parked at the school when an athlete is participating at a practice or game.
13. Violations will be acted upon the same manner as stated in the Southern Huntingdon County High School Handbook.

HAZING/HARASSMENT

A main objective of our athletic program is to provide a safe and positive environment for our students to participate in extra-curricular activities. Hazing activities and/or incidents of harassment are not considered to be consistent with our extra-curricular goals. Any activity of hazing, or acts of harassment are prohibited at all times.

The Southern Huntingdon County School District does not condone any form of initiation, harassment or hazing as part of any school sponsored activity. No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.

The Southern Huntingdon County School District prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of employees, students and third parties by all district students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers and third parties in the schools.

Hazing: For the purpose of this policy, hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation in or affiliation with any organization recognized by the Southern Huntingdon County School District.

Endanger the physical health shall include but not be limited to any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping; beating; branding; forced calisthenics; exposure to the elements; forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage, drug or controlled substance; or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

Endanger the mental health shall include any activity that would subject an individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.

Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates.

The Southern Huntingdon County School District encourages students who have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to the athletic director or building principal.

The Southern Huntingdon County School Board directed that no administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall permit, condone or tolerate any form of hazing.

Students, administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers and district employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the building principal.

The Southern Huntingdon County School District will investigate all complaints of hazing and will administer appropriate discipline to any individual who violates this policy in accordance with School District policy.

Harassment: For the purpose of this policy, harassment shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion when such conduct:

Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that affects an individual's ability to perform school functions or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive school environment.

Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's school performance.

Otherwise adversely affects an individual's school opportunities.

Sexual Harassment: For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, texting, sexting, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to sexual flirtations, advances, touching or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body; sexually degrading words to describe an individual dress or body; sexually degrading works to describe an individual; jokes; pin-ups; calendars; objects; graffiti; vulgar statements; abusive language; innuendoes; references to sexual activities; overt sexual conduct; or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's ability to work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

The Southern Huntingdon County School District will investigate all complaints of hazing and will administer appropriate discipline to any individual who violates this policy in accordance with School District policy.

PROCEDURES FOR OVERNIGHT TRIPS

The Southern Huntingdon County School Board has always supported our athletic teams when requesting overnight trips. These trips many times allow for greater competition and the opportunity for our athletes to improve their skills. We also understand that there are many more risks for our student's safety. In order to help keep our student athletes safe, the following guidelines will always be in effect.

On any overnight trip, all coaches, bus drivers, chaperones and others shall observe the following guidelines to help insure the student's safety. The head coach is responsible for securing the necessary supervision for the trip and providing orientation regarding what is required of all making the trip.

1. **Rules.** All school rules apply during overnight trips. Review these rules with students before the trip departs. Remind students that they must respect each other and that there must be no bullying, harassment, hazing, fighting or other misconduct. Ask all students to report any misconduct immediately to a coach. Warn students that the staff will be even more vigilant about enforcing school rules on the trip and that students will face serious disciplinary action for any misconduct. Warn everyone that their property can be subject to searches.
2. **Supervision.** The head coach and their assistants/chaperones must supervise students whenever possible during the trip, including in the middle of the night. Do not schedule any unsupervised time for students.
3. **Searches.** You may conduct searches of student's personal property, purses, briefcases, backpacks and bags if you have reasonable suspicion that a student is violating school rules or the law. These searches may occur at any time during the trip, including in hotel rooms or before boarding buses. Only school employees (coaches) may conduct a search.
4. **Release of Student.** If a student violates school policy or the law, notify the school immediately. If this is not possible you will notify the parents. If a student has violated the law, such as by possessing drugs or a weapon, also call the police. Under no circumstances should you ever release a student from your trip to anyone other than a school official or his/her parents. Never send a student home alone.

Required Forms. The following forms are required to be completed and on file before a student is permitted to accompany a trip.

1. Parent consent
2. Medical history
3. Medication permission
4. Consent to search
5. Itinerary/contact information
6. Trip roster

