

Union County Public Schools

Athletic Guidelines

Welcome to Union County Public Schools Athletics

While academics are the primary focus, participation in an athletic program affords opportunities, training, and experiences outside of the regular curriculum. The Interscholastic Athletic Program is an integral part of the total school program, and, as such, is designed to help our students become better school, community, state, and national citizens.

Mission Statement: To provide meaningful activities that develop sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, commitment, responsibility, respect and pride in our community through participation on a team.

Vision Statement: We envision a school system that offers an athletic program for its students that is considered a model for all other districts in North Carolina. Athletic activities should be considered an asset to the academic mission of the schools and enhance all aspects of school life. We envision a program that offers quality and user-friendly facilities which will house quality coaches. Ultimately, we envision a program of which all of its participants can be proud and one that promotes lifelong personal and community wellness and contributing, productive citizens.

BELIEFS:

- We believe that athletic activities are an integral and unique part of the total education program.
- We believe athletic activities teach students many invaluable, intangible traits which are necessary for productivity in our society such as, but not limited to, self-discipline, personal commitment, loyalty, sportsmanship, teamwork, the value of preparation, a hard work ethic, a spirit of competition and the will to excel.
- We believe participation in athletic activities enhances student academic performance and attendance.

CONDUCT:

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege, not a right. The Union County Board of Education expects all students who represent their school through participation in extracurricular activities to be good representatives of their school community. Students should dress, act and conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on their school. Each student is expected to display good citizenship at all times. Any student who fails to conduct him or her appropriately may have the privilege of participation limited or revoked.

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To the Parent/Guardians:

We feel that a properly controlled, well-organized interscholastic activity program meets the students' needs for self-expression, mental alertness and physical growth. It is our hope to maintain a program that is sound and will further each student's educational maturity. *Students who elect to participate in the interscholastic athletic program are voluntarily making a choice to follow the behavioral and academic expectations of a representative of their school. Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct while at school and participating in athletic activities. Students are also expected to comply with the rules included herein and any rules established by their coach. Failure to follow any of these rules may result in immediate dismissal from the team.*

Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct will result in exclusion from participation. There is no place in interscholastic competition for students who will not discipline their minds and bodies for rigorous competition. We strive for excellence and expect all participants to do so.

Student Athlete's Parent Pledge

As a parent, I acknowledge that I am a role model. I will remember that school athletics is an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for the students. I must show respect for all players, coaches, spectators, and support groups. I will participate in cheers that support, encourage, and uplift the teams involved. I understand the spirit of fair play and the good sportsmanship expected by our school, our conference and the NCHSAA. I hereby accept my responsibility to be a model of good sportsmanship that comes with being the parent of a student athlete. I also understand that I may be removed from the practice or contest, and prohibited from future attendance, for failing to maintain appropriate behavior.

To the Student Participant

Being a member of a UCPS interscholastic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great competitive tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work from many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic team, you will be faced with either the task of maintaining an already successful tradition or the task of establishing a successful tradition. It is not easy to build a great tradition in interscholastic competition in either athletics or other activities. When you represent your school, we hope that you gain an understanding of our goals and traditions, but we expect that you assume the responsibilities that go with them.

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Student Athlete Pledge

As a student athlete, I understand and accept that I am a role model. I understand the spirit of fair play. I will refrain from engaging in all types of disrespectful behavior, including but not limited to inappropriate language, taunting, trash talking, and unnecessary physical contact. I understand the behavior expectations of my school, my conference, my coach, and the NCHSAA. I hereby accept the responsibility and privilege of representing this school and community as a student athlete.

1) RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF:

The most important responsibility is to yourself. This responsibility provides you an opportunity to broaden your character and obtain many experiences during your school career. Your academic studies, your participation in extracurricular activities as well as athletics, will prepare you for life endeavors.

2) RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR SCHOOL:

A responsibility that you assume as a participant of athletics is to your school. Your school cannot build or maintain an outstanding reputation unless you do your best in whatever activity you choose to engage. By participating in interscholastic completion, you are contributing to the reputation of your school. You assume a leadership role when you are on an interscholastic team. The student body, your family and friends, and citizens of the community will be aware of you and your choices. Perceptions of your school are developed by your choice of conduct, behavior and attitudes, both in and out of school. You have a responsibility and accountability to represent your school at all times. As you represent school spirit and community pride, ensure that your school and your community are proud of you and your ideals.

3) RESPONSIBILITIES TO TEAM:

As a team member, you have a responsibility to your teammates. During each practice, exhibition and completion, you should strive to compete to the best of your ability while maintaining self-control and respect for yourself and your teammates. You are an example to the members of your team as well as students watching you.

GOVERNANCES

The Board of Education - The Board of Education governs UCPS Athletics. Its responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Interpreting the needs of the community;
- Developing policies in accordance with state statutes and mandates and in accordance with educational needs and wishes of the people of Union County;
- Approving means by which professional staff may make these policies effective; and

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- Evaluating the interscholastic athletic program in terms of its value to the community.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) - The primary role of the NCHSAA, which is empowered by the North Carolina State Board of Education, is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the students and a balance with other educational programs. The NCHSAA solicits input and responds to requests for modification of rules from member schools, appointed committees, and coaches' associations.

All schools are voluntary members of the NCHSAA and compete only with member schools or out-of-state schools that are approved by the NCHSAA. As a member school system, UCPS agrees to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations set forth by the NCHSAA.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

NCHSAA Physical Examination - A yearly physical examination is required. The physical must be completed by a medical doctor and submitted to the coach prior to participation. The physical covers all sports for one calendar year. The form will be kept on file in the high school athletic office. This form must be the approved NCHSAA form. **Note: Due to Covid 19 all physical examinations given after 3/1/2019 will be valid through the end of the 2020-21 athletic season.**

Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act – In June of 2011, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act. This Act requires that all athletes receive information of concussions and head injuries on an annual basis.

NCHSAA Sport Participation Form – Medical history required by NCHSAA.

UCPS Athletic Participation/Eligibility Form – Eligibility verification required by UCPS.

Emergency Medical Authorization - Each athlete's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall complete an Emergency Medical Authorization Form giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not available. The form will be kept by the athletic department.

Insurance - The school district does provide an opportunity to purchase insurance to cover student athletic injuries. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required (at some schools) to sign a form stating that they either have purchased school insurance or possess a family insurance plan that covers athletic injury. If a family insurance plan is used, the family must provide the school with the name of the insurance company and the policy number on the appropriate form.

****If your athlete plays Forest Hills or Monroe please check with your Athletic Director or coach for more information about insurance at those schools.**

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Residence: A student is eligible to participate at the school to which he or she is assigned by the local board of education, within the administrative unit of residence. “Residence” as used for athletic eligibility purposes is defined as the equivalent of the term “domicile” as applied by the courts of North Carolina.

Reporting of Injury

All injuries that occur while participating in athletics should be reported to the trainer/coach. If the injury requires medical attention by a doctor or treatment center, it will be necessary to have an injury report form completed. Once a physician treats a student, the athlete must obtain written permission from the doctor to return to the activity.

Scholastic Eligibility—To be eligible to participate in an interscholastic activity, each athlete must have satisfied all of the scholastic eligibility requirements prior to participation.

NCHSAA Eligibility Regulations

Before practicing with ANY team, the following must be verified and/or fully completed:

- 1. The athlete meet all NCHSAA Eligibility Requirements;**
- 2. The athlete has provided a current medical exam; and**
- 3. The athlete has read and signed the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act information sheet.**

Before participating with ANY team the following must be completed:

- 1. An athlete must have registered through the UCPS FamilyID registration system**

UCPS Attendance Requirements – To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activity, each athlete must have attended 85% of the academic days during the preceding semester. Attendance for a day is counted when a student has been in attendance for a minimum of 2 blocks during any given day. (Due to Covid 19, this requirement has been waived for the 2020-21 school year.)

Code of Conduct

Because of the public nature of the athletic programs sponsored by UCPS, student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect the high standards and ideals of their school and community. The student-athlete becomes subject to the Code of Conduct upon the student’s signature and date on his/her registration for a UCPS sport and continues until

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graduation from high school. Student-Athletes are subject to this code at all times during the calendar year, including summer months, whether on or off campus.

Special Note: The head coach of a program, while they cannot be any less strict with regards to the policy outlined below, does have the discretion to carry out additional consequences/reprimands if warranted, including immediate dismissal from the team due to other misconduct detrimental to the team and the school. Rules that are stricter must be approved by the principal and must be delivered to the team members and parents in writing.

1. TOBACCO, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

No student-athlete shall possess, use, distribute, sell, possess with intent to distribute or sell, or conspire or attempt to distribute or sell, purchase or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, THS, anabolic steroid, other controlled substance, any unauthorized prescription drug or any other chemicals or products with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration, euphoria, or of other altering the students mood or behavior. No student-athlete shall possess, display, or use any tobacco product. This restriction applies if the student is on school system property or at any school sponsored activity as a visitor or spectator. For the purpose of this policy a tobacco product includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vape, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping, vaping or any other use of tobacco products.

Any student found guilty will be subject to the following athletic consequences:

First offense in Student- Athletes Career: The principal will suspend the student-athlete for 14 days (including weekend days) of the sports season from all athletic contests. The suspension will begin on the 1st day of the offense. If the offense occurs out of season, the suspension will begin on the 1st day of the next season in which the athlete participates. The suspension will carry over into the next sports season in which the suspended-athlete participates if at least 14 days have not been served.

Second Offense within 365 days: If found guilty within 365 days of the previous suspension, the student-athlete will be suspended for 30 days (including weekends) from the 1st day of the 2nd offense. If the offense occurs out of season, the suspension will begin on the 1st day of the next season in which the student athlete is participating. The

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suspension will carry over into the next sports season in which the suspended student-athlete participates if 30 days have not been met.

Third Offense within 365 days: If found guilty within 365 days of the previous suspension, The principal will suspend the student-athlete from all athletic activities for a period of 365 school days from the 1st day of the 3rd offense. Any day between the last official day of school and the 1st official day of the next school year does not count.

2. SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

In School: A student-athlete serving a disciplinary in-school suspension for a full day or days will not participate in any athletic activity on the particular day(s) the student-athlete is serving the suspension. At the discretion of the head coach, the student athlete may practice with the team during this suspended time frame and be allowed to travel with the team. Also, at the head coach's discretion, the student athlete may be on the sideline or bench with the team, but NOT in uniform.

Out of School: A student-athlete serving a short or long-term suspension for less than the remainder of the year will not participate in any athletic activity for that suspension period. Furthermore they may not be on campus or travel with a team to any away location. A student-athlete serving a long-term suspension for the remainder of the school year, a 365-day suspension, or disciplinary assignment either with or without the option of attending the alternative school, will be suspended from all athletic activities for the period of the suspension.

3. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

A student-athlete who engages in any conduct or behavior, which is inconsistent with the student's position as a role model or representative of UCPS, is subject to disciplinary action, including suspension as determined by the Principal. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to bullying, sexual harassment, hazing, physical aggression/fighting, inappropriate social media behavior and other infractions that impact the overall milieu of the school. Coaches or school officials may also establish additional training regulations and rules of conduct. These situations will be dealt with one a case-by-case situation. All student-athletes shall comply with the UCPS Board of Policy for Discipline & Student Code of Conduct.

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Criminal Charges:

Any student athlete charged, cited, petitioned by or referred to Juvenile Services, and/ or arrested for committing any crime (or any offense that would be a crime if the student were an adult), other than a minor traffic violation (NOTE: driver's license not subject to suspension or revocation; Driving While Impaired [DWI] is NOT considered a minor traffic violation), shall report such fact in writing to the athlete's coach and principal. The report shall be made within 24 hours. If it is impossible for the athlete to make a timely report due to hospitalization or incarceration, the report shall be made as soon as possible and in no event more than 24 hours after his/her release. The report shall include all pertinent facts concerning the offense. The Coach, Principal, School Athletic Director and District Athletic Director shall carefully review the situation along with any recommendations from the school staff as to what action, if any, is appropriate at that time. A failure to self-report charge or arrest will result in suspension and/or removal from the team and could result in additional athletic ineligibility.

Any student who is charged with a felony, Class A1 misdemeanor or a Class I misdemeanor, Class II or III misdemeanor or if a juvenile and receives a petition for an offense that would be any of the above if committed by an adult must notify the school within 24 hours of receiving notice.

Upon notification by student athlete/parent guardian and/or notification to school by other means:

- Student athlete(s) will be removed from participation in all school sponsored team(s) and/or activities for a **minimum** of twenty (20) calendar days. The suspension will begin on the date of notification to the school (not the date of the charge or petition).
 - Out of Season Sports: students whose team is not currently in season will be ineligible to participate in organized activities such as but not limited to weight lifting, skills sessions, training, etc.
 - Summer Months: Students are still subject to these prohibitions.
- Student athlete(s) will remain ineligible until:
 - Charges have been resolved through the court system
 - Pleas of “No Contest” or as part of a deferred prosecution or “Prayer for Judgment Continued” (PJC) will be considered convictions
 - Charges have been dismissed **and** twenty (20) calendar day suspension has been served

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It is the responsibility of a student athlete and/or guardian to self-report incidents such as but not limited to charges filed against a student athlete.

Convictions:

Felonies – Any student athlete who is convicted of a felony or is adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult is barred from participation in interscholastic athletics for the **remainder of his/her high school career** per the NCHSAA guidelines

Misdemeanors – Students found guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor, a Class I misdemeanor or are adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a misdemeanor if committed by an adult are not eligible to participate for 90 school days. If 90 days are not reached in one school year the suspension extends into the next school year.

Students found guilty of a Class II or III misdemeanors or are adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a Class II or III misdemeanor if committed by an adult are not eligible to participate for 45 school days. If 45 days are not reached in one school year the suspension extends into the next school year.

SECONDARY CONVICTION

A second unrelated misdemeanor conviction or a juvenile petition for an offense that would be a misdemeanor if committed by an adult, will automatically result in removal from all teams and/or activities for 180 school days.

*Middle School Students: These guidelines also apply to middle school students; however, eligibility is restored once the student first enters ninth (9th) grade per NCHSAA guidelines.

Notification to Student Athlete/Guardian:

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Upon notification from a student athlete, guardian or other means, the principal and/or their designee will complete a notification to the guardian associated with the above referenced eligibility.

Appeal Process:

As outlined in the notification regarding eligibility, a parent/guardian has the ability to request an appeal of the Eligibility Letter in writing.

The process for the appeal is as follows:

1. Parent/Guardian submits written appeal to the principal.
2. The Principal will notify his/her School Performance Director or designee of the request for an appeal.
3. The Assistant Superintendent of Student Support or designee will review the case details with the building principal, athletic director, coaches, etc. as deemed appropriate by him/her for circumstances associated with the case.
4. A determination of appeal will be made to the parent/guardian in writing within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the request for an appeal. In the event that additional time is needed to complete a thorough review of the circumstances, the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support may notify the parent/guardian of the need for additional time to review the appeal.

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Appendix A: TEMPLATE LETTER FOR NOTIFICATION TO PARENT REGARDING ELGIBILITY

INSERT ON UCPS LETTERHEAD

Name and Address

Dear Ms. /Mr.:

On <Insert Date>, I was notified that <insert student name> has been charged with <insert charge title> by the following means: < Insert notification method>. In accordance with the UCPS Athletic Guidelines, the following will take place effective <Insert Date>:

<Insert Student Name> will:

- Be ineligible to participate in any athletic activities effective <Same Date as notification date> and will remain ineligible until at least <insert calendar date>.
- The student athlete will remain ineligible to participate until charges have been resolved through the court system or dismissed and the twenty (20) calendar day suspension has been completed.
- If the student athlete is convicted of a crime, please reference the UCPS Athletic Guidelines for additional guidance associated with his/her eligibility to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

If you would like to appeal the period of ineligibility for your student athlete, please notify me in writing of such within ten (10) calendar days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

Principal

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Appendix B: Appeal Considerations

If a parent/guardian requests an appeal of the eligibility of their student athlete, the following should be considered:

Mitigating circumstances may include:

- o The student was a passive participant or played a minor role in the offense;
- o The student reasonably believed the conduct was legal;
- o The student was acting under strong provocation; or
- o The student was aiding in the discovery of another offender.

The following are expectations for all student athletes, but may be considered when making this decision (NOTE – the following factors do not hold as much weight as those above):

- o The student has no history of disciplinary problems, or a significant amount of time has passed since the student's last disciplinary problem;
- o The student made a full and truthful statement admitting guilt at an early stage in the investigation of the offense; and
- o The student displayed an appropriate attitude and was cooperative during the investigation and discipline process.

Under no circumstance is prowess in a sport or the potential of scholarships or grants in aid a mitigating circumstance.