

Welcome to Union County Public Schools Athletics

Welcome to the Athletic Program for Union County Public Schools. You are about to join a program that has a long history of academic and athletic excellence. Many athletes who have preceded you have provided UCPS with a reputation that is highly regarded in high school athletics. We hope your involvement in this program will provide you with many rewarding and worthwhile experiences and that perhaps you, too, can make a contribution that will further enhance the reputation of the UCPS athletic program. The Interscholastic Athletic Program of the Union County Public School System 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.

While the academic area is the primary focus of our school system, participation in an athletic program affords opportunities, training and experiences not ordinarily available in the regular curriculum.

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. The 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.

Each school is expected to have an athletic director and coaches who are familiar with the expectations of the Board of Education and NCHSAA. Coaches and athletic directors are responsible for complying with the rules established for participation and with disseminating the rules to each student participant.

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.

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

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. Taunting is expressly prohibited. Taunting includes actions or comments which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Any student who fails to conduct him or her appropriately may have the privilege of participation limited or revoked.

INTRODUCTIONS:

To the Parent

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 program are voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. These are the reasons we place such emphasis on good training habits. Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct means exclusion from participation. This concept of self-discipline and self-denial is tempered by our responsibility to recognize the rights of the individual within the objectives of the team or activity. There is no place in high school interscholastic competition for students who will not discipline their minds and bodies for rigorous competition. We strive for excellence and do not want our students to accept mediocrity.

We feel that you have committed to certain responsibilities and obligations. All high school sports' teams in the Union County Public School system are self-supported through gate receipts and fund raisers. We encourage you to join our Booster Club(s) to help provide the financial support essential to our program, and we would like to take this opportunity to acquaint you with the specific policies that are necessary for a well-organized program.

It is the role of the department of athletics to make rules that govern the spirit of competition for the school. These rules need a broad base of community support, which is achieved only through communication with the parent. We hope to accomplish this objective through this publication for students and parents.

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.

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 assume that you not only understand our goals and traditions, but also are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them. We hope that the contributions you make are a satisfying accomplishment for you and your family.

Student Athlete Pledge

As a student athlete, I know I am a role model. I understand the spirit of fair play while playing hard. I will refrain from engaging in all types of disrespectful behavior, including inappropriate language, taunting, trash talking, and unnecessary physical contact. I know the behavior expectations of my school, my conference, and the NCHSAA and hereby accept the responsibility and privilege of representing this school and community as a student athlete.

1) **RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF**: The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden character. You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible “good” from your high school experiences. Your academic studies, your participation in other extracurricular activities as well as sports, will prepare you for life.

2) **RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR SCHOOL**: Another responsibility that you assume as a participant is to your school. Your school cannot build or maintain an outstanding school unless you do your best in whatever activity you wish to engage. By participating in interscholastic completion, you are contributing to the reputation of your school.

You assume a leadership role if you are on an interscholastic team. The student body and citizens of the community know you. You are on stage with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitudes, both in and out of school. Because of your leadership role, you can contribute to school spirit and community pride. Make your school and your community proud of you and your ideals.

3) **RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHERS**: As a team member, you have a responsibility to your home. You should never give your family anything to be ashamed of. When you know that you have lived up to all of the training rules, to the best of your ability every day, and that you have played the game “all out”, you can maintain self-respect. Your family can be proud of you and your accomplishments.

Also, remember that students are watching you and will copy you in many ways. Do not do anything to let them down. Set a good example for them.

GOVERNANCES

The Board of Education - The Board of Education is the ruling agency for UCPS Athletics. Its responsibilities include:

- 1) Interpreting the needs of the community.
- 2) Developing policies in accordance with state statutes and mandates and in accordance with educational needs and wishes of the people of Union County.
- 3) Approving means by which professional staff may make these policies effective.
- 4) Evaluating the interscholastic athletic program in terms of its value to the community.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association - All schools are voluntary members of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and compete only with member schools or out-of-state schools that are approved by the NCHSAA. As a member school system, the secondary schools of Union County agree to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations set forth by the NCHSAA.

The primary role of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, 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.

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.

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 the necessary 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.

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 completed:

- 1. Meet all NCHSAA Requirements**
- 2. Have a current medical exam**

Before participating with ANY team the following must be complete:

- 1. Turned in a signed Parental/Athletic Participation**
- 2. Turned in signed emergency form**
- 3. Turn in signed Parental Information Form**

**Union County Public Schools
Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities Guidelines
for Middle and High School Students**

1. Any student who is charged with a felony or a Class I misdemeanor or is petitioned for an offense that would be a felony or a Class I misdemeanor if committed by an adult, will be removed from all current teams and/or activities for a minimum of twenty (20) school days, and will remain ineligible until such time as the courts render the findings in the case. Pleas of “No Contest” or as part of a deferred prosecution or “Prayer for Judgment Continued” (PJC) will be considered convictions for purposes of these guidelines. In the case of co-curricular activities, the student will attend class and complete work related to the class, but cannot represent the school in any manner during an extra-curricular component of the class. If there are mitigating circumstances, the student may request a review of the evidence surrounding the charge by the Superintendent or his designee. The student is ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities until a final decision is rendered by the Superintendent or his designee.
2. 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 NCHSAA guidelines. Students involved in other extracurricular or co-curricular activities who are found guilty of a felony or are adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult are not eligible to represent the school in such activities for the remainder of their high school careers. Students found guilty of a Class I misdemeanor or are adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult are not eligible to participate in teams and/or activities for the remainder of the school year. These guidelines also apply to middle school students; however, eligibility is restored once the student first enters ninth grade per NCHSAA guidelines.

3. Any student charged with a Class II or III misdemeanor or is petitioned for an offense that would be a Class II or III misdemeanor if committed by an adult that takes place on school grounds, during a school sponsored event, or in the course of representing the school will be removed from all current teams and/or activities for a minimum of twenty (20) school days, and will remain ineligible until such time as the courts render findings in the case. Pleas of “No Contest” or as part of a deferred prosecution or “Prayer for Judgment Continued” (PJC) will be considered convictions for purposes of these guidelines. In the case of co-curricular activities, the student will attend class and complete work related to the class, but cannot represent the school in any manner during an extra-curricular component of the class. If there are mitigating circumstances, the student may request a review of the evidence surrounding the charge by the principal. 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 for Middle and High School Students eligible to participate in teams and/or activities for the remainder of the semester.

4. Mitigating circumstances may include:
 - a. having no history of disciplinary problems;
 - b. having a significant amount of time pass since the student’s last disciplinary problem;
 - c. being a passive participant or playing a minor role in the offense;
 - d. reasonably believing the conduct was legal;
 - e. acting under strong provocation;
 - f. aiding in the discovery of another offender;
 - g. making a full and truthful statement admitting guilt at an early stage in the investigation of the offense;
 - h. displaying an appropriate attitude and giving respectful cooperation during the investigation and discipline process; or mitigating circumstances do NOT exist solely because of demonstrated prowess in a sport or activity or the potential of scholarships or grants in aid.

5. A second unrelated felony or misdemeanor charge or a juvenile petition for an offense that would be a felony or misdemeanor if committed by an adult, will automatically result in removal from all teams and/or activities for the duration of the school year.

6. Any student suspended out of school six (6) days (for a single offense) for high schools on block schedule or ten (10) days (for a single offense) for high schools on traditional schedule will receive a ten (10) school-day suspension from any extracurricular activity. Any middle school student suspended out of school for ten (10) days for a single offense will receive a ten (10) school-day suspension from any extracurricular activity. Per middle school sports

guidelines, a second out-of-school suspension during the sports season will result in the student being removed from the team/squad for the remainder of the season.

7. National and state organizations, school clubs, and athletic teams with rules or by-laws that prescribe stricter consequences for student misconduct will supersede the above guidelines.
8. It is expected that all athletic teams will have team rules that address the off campus behavior of students/athletes regarding drugs and alcohol. These rules should outline consistent consequences that limit and/or prohibit participation by students/athletes involved in such activities.
9. Students who are found not guilty will be eligible for reinstatement to the team or activity immediately. Pleas of “No Contest” or as part of a deferred prosecution or “Prayer for Judgment Continued” (PJC) will be considered convictions for purposes of these guidelines, and students must serve the 20 day suspension from activities.
10. Students involved in co-curricular activities with a required extra-curricular component, such as band, chorus, vocational clubs, etc., will be given alternative assignments to avoid a negative impact on their academic standing in such classes.
11. Principals are asked to communicate and collaborate in dealing with such situations. This is especially important in charges and arrests involving more than one school. All schools are expected to follow these guidelines.
12. Students charged with crimes during the summer months shall be subject to these guidelines beginning the first day of the school year if the charges are still pending at that point.
13. Affected students and their parents will be informed in writing regarding all decisions and actions taken relative to these guidelines.
 - Must be properly enrolled as a student at the time they participate.
 - Must have been in attendance for at least 85% of the previous semester.
 - Must not have exceeded eight consecutive semesters of attendance or have participated more than four seasons in any sport since entering the ninth grade
 - No student may participate on an athletic team if his/her 19th birthday comes on or before August 31st.
 - Must live with parents or legal custodian within the school district (exceptions must be approved by the principal and the NCHSAA)

- Must have passed a minimum load of work (3) during the preceding semester to be eligible at any time during the present semester. Students must also meet local promotion standards set by the LEA.
- Must have received a medical examination by a licensed physician within the last 365 days. Students absent from athletic practice for five or more days due to illness or injury shall receive a medical release before re-admittance to practice or contests. Players and coaches are encouraged to carry adequate medical and accident insurance.
- Must not have been convicted of a felony, or an offense that would have been a felony if committed by an adult.
- Must not participate in unsanctioned All-star or Bowl games.
- Must not be guilty of Unsportsmanlike conduct, or ejected from the previous contest
- Must not play more than three games in one sport per week, and no more than one contest per day (exception baseball, softball and volleyball).

ATHLETIC CODES OF CONDUCT

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department and school. The community, school administrators, and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program. The welfare of the student is our major consideration and transcends any other consideration. All students shall abide by a code of ethics that will earn them honor and respect that participation and competition in the interscholastic activity program affords. Any conduct that results in dishonor to the athlete, the team, the school, or the community will not be tolerated.

Ethics Rule

Acts of unacceptable conduct, such as, but not limited to, disruption of school, theft, vandalism, disrespect, immorality, or violations of the law tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the program and will not be tolerated. Due to the serious nature of violations of the Ethics Rule, the appropriate coach, the athletic director, and the principal shall meet and determine the penalty according to the degree of the infraction.

Training Rules and Regulations

We cannot compromise participation in interscholastic activities with substance abuse. The student who uses tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or any type of mood altering substance found in legal over-the-counter products jeopardizes team morale, team reputation and team success and does physical harm to himself/herself. Students have to decide for themselves whether or not they want to participate in our interscholastic program. If you wish to participate, you must make a commitment. A big part of this commitment is following a simple set of training rules that the school system believes to be fair.

- 1) Use of Tobacco - Research emphasizes that use of tobacco is physically harmful to young adults. The harm done is not only a health problem. The community follows the progress of young competitors, and any deviation from accepted training rules marks one

as unwilling to pay the price of competition and commitment. If one squad member breaks the rule, the whole team's reputation is damaged. **This rule means no use of tobacco all year, in or out of season.**

2) Use of Alcoholic Beverages—There is no way to justify competitors' use of alcoholic beverages, even though social pressure may be hard to resist. **This rule means no use of alcoholic beverages all year, in or out of season.**

3) Use of Illegal Drugs or Mood-Altering Substances—Simply stated, drug abuse will not be tolerated. The use or misuse of drugs or chemicals is a social problem. Students with a strong sense of purpose have no need for mood modifiers. **The rule for drugs/chemical abuse is in effect all year.**

Individual Coaches' Rules

Coaches may establish rules and regulations with the approval of the athletic director and principal for their respective activities. These rules, as pertaining to a particular activity, must be given by the coach in writing to all team members and explained fully at the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will be in writing and shall be administered by the coach. Copies of all additional team rules by coaches are on file in the athletic office.

BASIC INTERSCHOLASTIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES:

Dropping or Transferring Sports

1) Quitting is an intolerable habit. A quitter may lose the privilege of participating in the interscholastic program. On occasion, however, a student may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:

- 1) Consult with immediate coach and then the head coach
- 2) The coach will report the situation to the athletic director
- 3) Check in all equipment issued to you

2) If the student wishes to change activities during a season, he/she shall consult with both coaches concerned and the athletic director. If both coaches fail to agree, the student cannot begin a new sport until he/she completes the regular season of the sport in which he/she is currently involved. This procedure assures a smooth transfer, which is in the best interest of all involved.

Equipment

School equipment issued to the student/athlete is the student's responsibility. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation, and failure to meet that obligation can result in the denial of participation in our program.

Missing Practice

A student should always consult his/her coach before missing practice. Missing practice or a game without good reason will be dealt with at the discretion of the coach.

Absences From Participation During Holiday Breaks

Coaches along with the Athletic Director will evaluate special/unique circumstances with the parent and athlete regarding absences from practices or games during school holiday breaks. Parents and athletes must fully understand this may affect their playing status on the team from this point forward per the coach's discretion.

Conflicts in Extracurricular Activities

An individual student who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities will be in a position of a conflict of obligations.

- 1) The athletic department recognizes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities and will attempt to schedule events in a manner that minimize conflicts.
- 2) Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts happen. It also means notifying the faculty sponsors/coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise.
- 3) When a conflict does arise, the sponsors/coaches will work out a solution so the student does not feel caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the principal will make the decision based on the following:
 - 1) The relative importance of each event
 - 2) The importance of each event to the student
 - 3) The relative contribution the student can make
 - 4) How long each event has been scheduled
 - 5) Talk with parents

Once the decision has been made and the student has followed that decision, he/she will not be penalized in any way by either sponsor/coach. If it becomes obvious that a student cannot fulfill the obligations of a school activity, he/she should withdraw from that activity.

Attendance

Students who miss more than two periods of the school day due to illness or any other reason, will not be able to play in a contest or practice on that date. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the principal or his/her designee.

In-school and Out-of school Suspension

Students will not be allowed to participate until they have served their suspension. There should be no adjustments made in the assignment of suspension days to allow a student to participate in any activities.

The suspension last through midnight of the day of the suspension. The suspension is not over when school dismisses for the day.

Release from Class

It is the responsibility of the student to see his/her teacher(s) the day before he/she is to be released to participate in an interscholastic activity. All work shall be made up at the convenience of the teacher.

Squad Selection

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to see as many students as possible participate in the interscholastic program while at our school, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without compromising the integrity of their program. Time, space, facilities, equipment, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular activity. Choosing the members of athletic squads is the responsibility of the coaches.

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.