

Tennessee School for the Deaf
Athletics Handbook



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Tennessee School for the Deaf Athletics Handbook

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Tennessee School for the Deaf

Athletics Handbook

Article I Administration of the Interscholastic Athletics Program

A. Philosophy and Expectations

1. The interscholastic athletics program at the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD) is a positive part of the total educational system and exists to enhance the total school experience for the students and staff.
2. Participation in athletics is a privilege. It is separate from the IEP process and is not mandatory or a right.
3. The responsibilities and expectations of coaches and student-athletes are greater than those of other staff and students.
4. The expectations of the athletic program, including coaches and student-athletes, are:
 - a. To provide the opportunity for students to participate in athletic activities on the interscholastic level.
 - b. To emphasize with each coach and student-athlete sportsmanship and respect for contest officials, coaches, visiting teams, and fans.
 - c. To develop, in each student-athlete, a sense of responsibility to be a valuable, contributing member of an athletic team.
 - d. To emphasize that each coach and student-athlete will represent himself/herself and his/her school in a manner which sets a positive example for the younger people in our school and community.
 - e. To teach each student-athlete that athletics are a meaningful, valuable community activity that can foster loyalty, school spirit, and healthy competition.
 - f. To instill in all coaches and student-athletes a desire to improve themselves at all times.

B. Administrative Organization

1. The final decision and responsibility for all educational programs rests with the Superintendent.
2. The interscholastic athletics program is operated under the administration of the Athletic Director who is under the direct supervision of the Director of Instruction.
3. The Athletic Director will have the specific duties of implementing the responsibilities outlined in the Athletics Handbook of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) Handbook.

C. Affiliations

1. TSD is a member school of and is governed by the rules and regulations of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA). www.tssaa.org
2. TSD is a member school of the Mason Dixon Schools for the Deaf Athletic Association. www.masondixon.org
3. TSD is a member school of the National Deaf Interscholastic Athletic Association (NDIAA). www.ndiaa.us

D. List of Varsity Athletic Teams and Programs

1. Strength and Conditioning
 - a. This program is required for all varsity student-athletes and available to all TSD students.
2. Fall Sports
 - a. Cheerleading
 - b. Girls' Volleyball
 - c. Football
3. Winter Sports
 - a. Cheerleading
 - b. Girls' Basketball
 - c. Boys' Basketball
 - d. Girls' Swimming
 - e. Boys' Swimming
4. Spring Sports
 - a. Girls' Track and Field
 - b. Boys' Track and Field
5. Adding and/or removing varsity athletic teams may be recommended by the Athletic Director to the Director of Instruction and the Superintendent, who will make the final decision.

Article II General Information

A. Parent Permission and Concussion Form

1. Any student who wishes to participate in varsity athletics must have the following completed during registration **PRIOR** to participating:
 - a. Parent permission to participate in athletics.
 - b. Complete an Interscholastic Sports Examination.
 - c. Complete the TSSAA Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Forms.
 - d. Proof of insurance.

Article III School Policies Concerning Athletics

A. School Policy

1. The Interscholastic Athletics Program at TSD follows first and foremost the policies laid out in the school handbook.
2. The Athletic Director, coaches, and student-athletes are expected to adhere to all school policies while participating in athletics.

B. Eligibility Requirements

1. Any potential student-athlete must be a student of TSD and adhere to all school policies as outlined in the current School Handbook.
2. Any student in grades 8-12 who is eligible, according to TSSAA requirements, will be eligible to try out for varsity athletics.

C. Academic Requirements

Revised 7/31/19

1. The TSSAA Academic Rules to remain eligible are outlined in the TSSAA Handbook.
2. Academic expectations outside of those outlined by the TSSAA are as follows:
 - a. Any student-athlete who receives an Incomplete in one class for a nine-week period will be suspended from all athletic activities until a letter grade is posted.
 - b. All student-athletes are responsible for making arrangements with their teachers to make up classwork and assignments missed due to early departures and missed class time. Athletics will not be used as an excuse for not completing assignments.

D. School Attendance

1. All student-athletes are expected to abide by the official attendance policy of TSD.
2. Student-athletes may not participate in any athletic contest if he/she was absent from school the day of the contest.
3. Student-athletes may not participate in any athletic contest on Saturday if he/she was absent from school on the preceding Friday.
4. Student-athletes may be allowed to play if the absence from school is excused by the Principal and/or the Director of Instruction.
5. Student-athletes must be in attendance at least 50% of the school-day to be eligible to participate in competitions/games.

Suspension from Class and/or School Student-athletes must attend but not participate in any athletic contest during their suspension for classroom or school related incidents. Student-athletes must attend and participate in practice sessions during their suspension.

Article IV Areas Concerning Coaches and Student-Athletes

A. Tryouts

1. Any potential student-athlete must be a student of TSD and adhere to all school policies as outlined in the current School Handbook.
2. Any student in grades 8-12 who are eligible, according to TSSAA requirements, will be eligible to try out for varsity athletics.
3. All varsity athletics tryouts will be scheduled and managed by the coaches of their respective sport.
4. All varsity rosters will be decided on by the coaches of their respective sport.
5. The final roster will be announced by the next school day after the final day of tryouts.

B. Participation in More Than One Sport

1. Student-athletes may have the opportunity to play more than one sport at a time.
2. Coaches are expected to work together to plan practice and contest schedules to satisfy the needs of both teams equally.
3. If both coaches are not satisfied with the arrangement, they may meet with the Athletic Director and student-athlete to discuss resolutions. The Athletic Director will make the final decision using the input of the coaches and student-athlete.
4. Student-athletes may move to another team only when coaches of both sports agree to the move. If no agreement is made, the student-athlete may not move. *For example, a student-athlete would like to join the volleyball team after joining the cheerleading squad. This would require that the volleyball and cheerleading coaches agree to the move.*

5. Student-athletes are not required nor encouraged to participate in any meetings, practices, or contests in the second sport until the conclusion of the first sport. *For example, student-athletes will not be required or encouraged to begin spring practice of another sport until the Track and Field season concludes.*
6. The beginning and ending dates for each season are regulated by the TSSAA and outlined in the TSSAA Handbook.

C. Practice

1. Practice during and outside of the regular season is addressed in the TSSAA Handbook. All varsity teams will abide by those regulations.
2. All student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices.
3. Student-athletes may be excused from practice by the request of a parent or guardian and with permission from the team coach.
4. Student-athletes may be excused from practice and/or a contest by the Clinic due to illness that requires an overnight stay and/or injury requiring a doctor's release.
5. Student-athletes must notify the coaches, in person or in writing, of their absence prior to a practice or contest to be excused. If the student-athlete fails to do so or the excuse is not acceptable to the coach, the absence will be unexcused.
6. Unexcused absences will result in the following:
 - a. First – suspension from the next scheduled contest
 - b. Second – suspension from the remainder of the scheduled contests including postseason; student-athlete will remain on the team
 - c. Third – dismissed from the team

D. Strength and Conditioning Program

1. The Strength and Conditioning Coaches will work with each team's coaches to develop a plan for each individual and team for the entire season.
2. All coaches are expected to supervise and follow the plan laid out for each season.
3. All student-athletes are expected to participate in team strength and conditioning sessions under the supervision of coaches. Failure to do so will be handled by coaches and the Athletic Director.

E. Service Project

1. Each team will perform, as a team, at least one service project during their season.
2. The coaches will submit the team service project idea to the Athletic Director for approval prior to completing the project.
3. The Athletic Director will approve/deny the request within twenty-four hours of receiving the request.

F. Uniforms and Equipment

1. Student-athletes and managers are expected to care for all team uniforms, apparel, and equipment.
2. Student-athletes will return all equipment and uniforms, purchased by the school, to the coaches at the end of the season.
3. Student-athletes will be required to pay for or replace, within two weeks, any item that is lost or damaged while in their possession.

4. If a student-athlete fails to pay for or replace any item he/she will not be able to participate in any athletic activities until payment or replacement is received by the coaches or Athletic Director.
5. The Athletic Department is not responsible for any missing valuables and/or personal items. Combination locks will be provided to the student-athletes upon request.

G. Letter Requirements

1. Student-athletes will not be eligible to receive a letter or bar if he/she is dismissed from the team or quits.
2. The following are the criteria for student-athletes and managers to earn a letter or bar (after first year) in varsity athletics:
 - a. Represent the Tennessee School for the Deaf, the team and coaches with respect and pride.
 - b. Attend all practices, contests, and team functions unless excused.
 - c. Have no more than one suspension during any given season.
 - d. Be recommended by the coaching staff.
3. "T" letters and sport emblems/pins will be awarded at the All-Sports Banquet each year to first year letter winners.
4. Bars will be awarded at the All-Sports Banquet each year to those student-athletes who have lettered in a sport for more than one year.

H. Travel

1. When traveling as a team, all student-athletes are expected to dress in TSD Vikings/Lady Vikings attire displaying our team colors.
2. When available, all teams will be transported together, with coaches and staff, to and from away athletic contests via bus.
3. For those times when vans are necessary for transportation, a coach or staff member will be responsible for driving to and from the contest.
4. Student-athletes may leave from the contest with a parent or guardian with prior permission.

I. Medical

1. It is the responsibility of the head coach to submit, to the Athletic Director, a completed Incident Report and/or Accident Form for any injury during athletics requiring a visit to the Clinic within 24 hours of the incident.
2. All medical decisions, including participation restrictions, are made by the Clinic and/or the student-athlete's doctor.
3. Coaches are expected to follow the recommendations of the Clinic and/or the student-athlete's doctor.
4. Student-athletes will not be permitted to participate in team activities after an injury without a release from the Clinic and/or the student-athlete's doctor.
5. Coaches will handle and administer all necessary medications for student-athletes during all away trips. All unused medicine and supplies must be returned to the Clinic upon arrival back on campus.
6. Medical treatment for student-athletes from teams other than TSD will be referred to the Clinic. They will make the treatment decision. A coach or staff member from the team must accompany the student-athlete to the Clinic.

Article V Areas Concerning Expectations and Discipline

A. Sportsmanlike Conduct

1. All coaches and student-athletes are expected to show sportsmanship during all practices and athletic contests.
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct during athletic contests is unacceptable and is addressed in the TSSAA Handbook.
3. As a member school, TSD will adhere to the regulations put in place by the TSSAA.

B. Hazing

1. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and are prohibited at any time in school facilities, on school property, and at any school sponsored event.
2. Hazing is any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

C. Personal Appearance and Conduct

1. All student-athletes are expected to be well-groomed and dressed appropriately, according to the coach, at all practices and contests. Any kind of head decoration, jewelry or poorly groomed facial hair is not allowed during any athletic event.
2. Student-athletes who show up inappropriately dressed or groomed, according to the coach, will be sent back to the cottage or home to change before returning. Failure to return will result in an unexcused absence.

D. Social Media and Online Expectations

1. All coaches and student-athletes have the responsibility, as representatives of the Tennessee School for the Deaf, to portray the school, the team, and themselves in a positive manner at all times.
2. The following website is helpful for coaches, parents and student-athletes to educate themselves on the inherent risks associated with social media and internet use.
<http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/protect-kids-online>
3. All student-athletes' social media accounts are subject to monitoring without notice or consent if these sites are accessed on school issued devices or on personal devices using the school's internet connections at any time.
4. Examples of inappropriate use of social media and the internet may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Post material, including videos, pictures, comments, or posters that may be determined by others as profane, threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity including the Tennessee School for the Deaf, the Athletic Department, team uniforms and/or the official Viking logo. *For example: posting "star signs," gang signs, profanity, obscenities, etc.*
 - b. Post material, including videos, pictures, comments, or posters that may be determined by others as unsportsmanlike or demeaning to an individual or an opposing team.

- c. Post confidential information such as phone numbers, email addresses, etc. of anyone other than yourself. If you do choose to post you own information, it is important to remember that it could be misused by others.
 - d. Allowing any other individual to use your identification for posting material.
5. Consequences for misuse of social media and the internet include the following for each season:
 - a. First offense – Suspension from the next scheduled athletic contest
 - b. Second offense – Dismissal from the team

E. Suspension from Class and/or School

1. Student-athletes must attend but not participate in any athletic contest during their suspension for classroom or school related incidents.
2. Student-athletes must attend and participate in practice sessions during their suspension.

F. Dismissal and Quitting

1. Any student-athlete placed on “1:1 restriction” or “eye contact” will be immediately dismissed from the team.
2. Any student-athlete who is placed on “twenty-four hour watch” will not be able to participate in any athletics practice, contest, or event until the watch has been lifted.
3. If a student-athlete is dismissed from a team by the coaches for underage tobacco use, use of alcohol and/or drugs, sexual misconduct, fighting, possession or use of any weapon, he/she will not be eligible to participate in varsity athletics for a twelve-month period from the date of being dismissed.
4. Student-athletes may appeal the dismissal and/or the twelve-month suspension after six months from the date of dismissal in writing to the Athletic Director.
5. If a student-athlete wishes to quit a sport, he/she must notify the coaches in person by the next school day.
6. If a student-athlete quits a team without notifying the coaches by the next school day, he/she will not be eligible to participate in the immediately following sport season as well as the next season of the sport in which he/she quit. *For example: A student-athlete would not be eligible in basketball if she quit the volleyball team without the required notice as well as being ineligible the following volleyball season.*
7. If a student-athlete quits the team with the required notice, he/she will not be eligible to participate in the immediately following sport but will be eligible to participate in the following season of the sport in which he/she quit. *For example: A student-athlete would not be eligible in basketball if she quit the volleyball team with the required notice but would be eligible the following volleyball season.*
8. The Athletic Director and/or Head Coach will send a letter to the parents of any student-athlete who is dismissed or quits, explaining the decision. This letter will be sent via the bus chaperones on the next homegoing immediately after dismissal/quitting.

G. Disciplinary Action

1. Any disciplinary action for athletic related incidents will be made by the team coaches and reported, in writing, to the Athletic Director. The coaches will explain, to the student-athlete, the violation and consequence of the violation.
2. The student-athlete will have the opportunity to explain the incident to coaches before a consequence is decided.

H. Disciplinary Appeals Process

1. The process for a student-athlete to appeal a disciplinary decision by the coaches is as follows:
 - a. The appeal of a disciplinary action must be initiated by the student-athlete, in writing, to the Athletic Director by the next school day. The Athletic Director will meet with the coaches and student-athlete by the next school day after receiving the appeal to discuss the incident before rendering a decision. The decision of the Athletic Director will be submitted to the coaches and student-athlete, in writing, by the next school day.
 - b. The student-athlete may appeal the Athletic Director's decision by the next school day, in writing, to the Director of Instruction. The Director of Instruction will meet with the Athletic Director, coaches, and student-athlete by the next school day after receiving the appeal to discuss the incident before rendering a decision. The decision of the Director of Instruction will be submitted to the Athletic Director, coaches, and student-athlete, in writing, by the next school day.
 - c. The student-athlete may appeal the Director of Instruction's decision by the next school day, in writing, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will meet with the Director of Instruction, the Athletic Director, coaches, and student-athlete by the next school day after receiving the appeal to discuss the incident before rendering a decision. The decision of the Superintendent will be submitted to the Director of Instruction, the Athletic Director, coaches, and student athlete by the next school day.
 - d. Student-athletes who receive a twelve-month suspension may request reinstatement after six months from the date of dismissal in writing to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director and Coaches will make a decision within one week of receiving the request.

Article VI Amending the Handbook

A. Amending the Handbook

1. Any requested changes to the Athletics Handbook must be submitted, in writing, to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will submit the requested change to Coaches to be voted on. If the majority of Coaches accept the change, the requested change will then be forwarded to the Director of Instruction and Superintendent for final approval.
2. The decision on requested changes will be announced no later than two weeks after submission.

Tennessee School for the Deaf

Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

1. I will give 100% effort, 100% of the time!
2. I will adhere to the expectations outlined in the TSD Handbook.
3. I will adhere to the expectations of a TSD student-athlete outlined in the Athletics Policy.
4. I will represent TSD with respect and maturity.
5. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all practices and contests.
6. I will arrive to practice on time.
7. If I have an *Incomplete* grade, I will be suspended from all athletics activities until a grade is posted.
8. I will be responsible for informing my coach prior to an absence from practice or a meet. I may be excused for the following: illness, approved school activity, family emergency, or with coaches' approval. If I do not notify my coaches prior to practice, it will be unexcused.
9. Unexcused absences will result in suspensions. 1st – Suspension from next contest. 2nd – Suspension from remaining contests but continue as a team member. 3rd – Dismissal from the team.
10. If I am ill and excused from practice or a contest, I will stay at the Clinic, at home, or in the cottage.
11. I will participate in practice if I am in ISR that day. I will attend but not participate in a contest if I am in ISR that day.
12. If I quit a team without notifying coaches, I will not be able to play the next season sport as well as the sport I quit, the following year. If I do talk to the coaches prior to quitting, I will not be able to play the next season sport, but I may play the next season of the sport I quit provided I make the team.
13. I will be immediately dismissed from the team for the following: underage use of tobacco, use of alcohol and/or drugs, sexual misconduct, fighting, possession or use of any weapon, arrest with conviction/probation. I may request reinstatement six months after the date of dismissal.
14. I will place my electronic device (phone, mp3 player, iPad, etc.) in my bag/backpack prior to practice or home game and will only use it with coaches' approval. I may bring and use an electronic device on the bus to and from contests. I will place my electronic device in a bag to be left on the bus or with the coach during contests. The first offense (using without permission) will result in loss of use for the remainder of the season. The second offense will result in dismissal from the team.
15. If for any reason, I am placed on "eye contact" and/or 1:1 restriction, I will be immediately dismissed from the team.

16. If I am placed on 24-hour watch, I may not attend any team functions until I am released from the watch.
17. I will participate in a specific training program set up by my coaches.
18. I will take care of all my uniforms, apparel, and equipment and will pay for any lost or damaged items I am responsible for within two weeks.
19. If I fail to pay for or replace any item, I will not be able to participate in any athletic activities until payment or the coaches or Athletic Director receives replacement.
20. I will follow the TSD Athletics Social Media Policy below.
 - a. All coaches and student-athletes have the responsibility, as representatives of the Tennessee School for the Deaf, to portray the school, the team, and themselves in a positive manner at all times.
 - b. The following website is helpful for coaches, parents and student-athletes to educate themselves on the inherent risks associated with social media and internet use.
<http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/protect-kids-online>
 - c. All student-athletes' social media accounts are subject to monitoring without notice or consent if these sites are accessed on school issued devices or on personal devices using the school's internet connections at any time.
 - d. Examples of inappropriate use of social media and the internet may include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Posting material, including videos, pictures, comments, or posts that may be determined by others as profane, threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity including the Tennessee School for the Deaf, the Athletic Department, team uniforms and/or the official Viking logo. *For example: posting "star signs," gang signs, profanity, obscenities, etc.*
 - ii. Posting material, including videos, pictures, comments, or posters that may be determined by others as unsportsmanlike or demeaning to an individual or an opposing team.
 - iii. Posting confidential information such as phone numbers, email addresses, etc. of anyone other than yourself. If you do choose to post you own information, it is important to remember that others could misuse it.
 - iv. Allowing any other individual to use your identification for posting material.
 - e. Consequences for misuse of social media and the internet include the following:
 - i. First offense – Suspension from the next scheduled athletic contest
 - ii. Second offense – Dismissal from the team

I understand this policy and agree to follow it fully.

Athlete/Date: _____

Cottage Number/Day Student: _____

Coach/Date: _____