



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

1100 West Pine St.
Heber Springs AR, 72543
Middle School Phone 501-362-2488
High School Phone 501-362-3141

Mascot- Panther

Colors- Red and White

Alma Mater- On our city's western border, high against the sky. Proudly stands our alma mater as the year roll by, forward ever be our motto conquer and prevail, Hail to thee our alma mater Heber High all hail.

Philosophy



The Heber Springs Panthers Athletic Department believes athletics are an extension of the classroom. Through education-based athletics, we develop the whole student-athlete by emphasizing academics, character, accountability, teamwork, and excellence. Our goal is to prepare students for success in competition, the classroom, and life.

Mission

The mission of the Heber Springs Panthers Athletic Department is to develop the whole student-athlete through excellence in academics, athletics, and character while building competitive programs that emphasize teamwork, accountability, and toughness.

Being a Panther

Wearing the Heber Springs Panthers uniform is an honor and a privilege. With that privilege comes a higher standard of commitment, effort, accountability, and behavior. Student-athletes are expected to represent their team, school, family, and community with character, integrity, and respect while putting the team before themselves. Participation in Heber Springs Athletics is a privilege that must be earned and upheld every day.



PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

7th Grade – Learn

The 7th grade athletic program is centered on learning. Athletes will develop the fundamental skills of their sport while learning teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship in a positive environment. Our goal is to build confidence, create a love for competition, and establish habits that prepare athletes for future success.

Junior High – Develop

The Junior High athletic program focuses on developing athletes through increased skill instruction, competition, and accountability. Athletes are expected to build upon the fundamentals, embrace hard work, and understand the importance of commitment, teamwork, and competing with excellence. The goal is to prepare student-athletes for the demands of varsity athletics.

Varsity – Compete

The Varsity athletic program is built on competing at a high level while developing leaders of character. Athletes are expected to demonstrate commitment, accountability,

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toughness, and excellence in the classroom, in competition, and within the community. Our goal is to prepare student-athletes to maximize their potential while representing Heber Springs with pride, integrity, and class.

SPORTS OFFERED BY SEASON

FALL SEASON*

Girls Cross Country
Boys Cross Country
Football
Volleyball
Girls Tennis
Boys Tennis
Girls Golf
Boys Golf
Cheerleading
Dance

WINTER SEASON*

Girls Basketball
Boys Basketball
Girls Bowling
Boys Bowling
Cheerleading
Dance
Trap
Indoor Track

SPRING SEASON*

Girls Track**
Boys Track**
Baseball
Softball
Girls Soccer
Boys Soccer

**There may be some overlap due to post-season play. A student-athlete will not be able to begin participating in another season sport until the previous season sport is finished including post-season play.*



****All 7th-grade athletes will transition to track at the conclusion of the basketball season. Students wishing to return to their previous sports may do so after spring break.**

PANTHER STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

Being a Panther is a privilege. Student-athletes are expected to represent themselves, their team, their family, and Heber Springs with character, integrity, and pride. Every student-athlete is expected to meet the following standards:

Academics

- Put academics first.
- Meet all Arkansas Activities Association and school eligibility requirements.
- Attend class regularly, be on time, and give your best effort.

Commitment

- Attend practices, meetings, workouts, and contests unless excused by a coach.
- Be on time, prepared, and ready to compete.
- Give maximum effort and maintain a positive attitude every day.

Character

- Treat teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, teachers, and classmates with respect.



- Demonstrate honesty, accountability, and self-discipline.
- Display good sportsmanship in victory and defeat.
- Understand that your actions reflect on your team and Heber Springs Athletics.

Team First

- Put the team before yourself.
- Support and encourage your teammates.
- Be coachable and committed to continuous improvement.
- Do your job and contribute to a positive team culture.

Health and Wellness

- Take care of your physical and mental well-being.
- Communicate injuries, illnesses, or concerns with your coach.
- Commit to strength and conditioning as part of your athletic development.

Communication

- Student-athletes are expected to communicate directly with their coaches regarding questions, concerns, conflicts, or absences. Learning to communicate respectfully and responsibly is an important part of becoming a leader.

Social Media

- Represent Heber Springs Athletics with class on social media.



- Do not post content that is inappropriate, disrespectful, or harmful to yourself, your teammates, your coaches, your school, or others.

Accountability

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes are expected to uphold the standards of the Heber Springs Athletic Department at all times. Failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from a team.

BULLYING, HAZING, AND HARASSMENT

The Heber Springs Athletic Department is committed to providing a safe, positive, and respectful environment for every student-athlete. Bullying, hazing, harassment, or intimidation of any kind will not be tolerated.

These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse or forced physical activity.
- Verbal abuse, threats, humiliation, or intimidation.
- Harassment in person, online, or through social media.

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- Requiring athletes to perform embarrassing, degrading, or inappropriate acts.
- Social exclusion, coercion, or peer pressure.
- Destruction or theft of personal property.
- Any behavior that creates an unsafe, hostile, or disrespectful environment.

Student-athletes who experience, witness, or become aware of bullying, hazing, or harassment are expected to report it immediately to a coach, the Athletic Director, principal, or another school administrator. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

Any student-athlete who engages in bullying, hazing, or harassment is subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from a team, school disciplinary consequences, and any additional action permitted under district policy and state law.

At Heber Springs, we are a family. We build each other up, support one another, and treat every member of our athletic program with dignity, respect, and compassion. Bullying, hazing, and harassment have no place in Panther Athletics.

Approved to play. Athletes must have the following documents on file and updated yearly. Documents should be uploaded to Dragonfly Max. The first two forms are a requirement by the Heber Springs School District. The last four forms are required by the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA).

- [Student-Athlete Emergency Contact Form.](#)



- [Drug Testing Form](#)
- [Participant Agreement/Consent Form](#)
- [Sports Medicine Fact Sheet](#)
- [History Form](#)
- [Physical Exam Form](#)

MULTI-SPORT PHILOSOPHY

The Heber Springs Athletic Department strongly encourages student-athletes to participate in multiple sports. We believe multi-sport participation develops better athletes, reduces burnout, builds stronger relationships, and provides experiences that help students grow both on and off the field. Our goal is to create an environment where student-athletes can compete in as many sports as they choose.

The Heber Springs Athletic Department is united in its support of multi-sport athletes. Our coaches communicate, collaborate, and work together to make decisions that are in the best interest of the student-athlete while supporting the success of the entire athletic program.

Whenever possible, decisions regarding multi-sport athletes will be made based on what is in the best interest of the student-athlete, not a single sport.

When conflicts arise:

- In-season sports take priority over out-of-season activities.



- Coaches will communicate and work together to find solutions that are in the best interest of the student-athlete.
- The Athletic Director will make the final decision when necessary.

COMMITMENT

Participation in athletics is a commitment to your teammates, coaches, and the program. Once a student-athlete commits to a team and the season begins, they are expected to remain with that team through the conclusion of the season.

Student-athletes facing personal, academic, medical, or family concerns should communicate with their coach as soon as possible so solutions can be explored.

A student-athlete who voluntarily quits a sport after the season has begun, without approval from the coach and Athletic Director, will not be permitted to participate in another sport until the original sport's season has officially ended.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is an important part of being a successful teammate.

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Attend all practices, workouts, meetings, and contests unless excused by their coach.



- Arrive on time and prepared to participate.
- Communicate with their coach in advance whenever an absence or tardy is unavoidable.
- Understand that repeated unexcused absences or tardiness may result in disciplinary action, including reduced playing time or dismissal from the team.

Consistent attendance demonstrates commitment, accountability, and respect for teammates and coaches.

TEAM TRAVEL

Traveling together is an important part of being a team. Student-athletes are expected to travel to and from all athletic contests using school-provided transportation.

Travel to Contests

All student-athletes will travel to athletic contests with the team unless prior approval has been granted by a school administrator. Requests for alternate transportation to a contest should be submitted in advance and approved before the team departs.

Travel Home from Contests



At the conclusion of a contest, coaches may allow a student-athlete to leave with their parent or legal guardian.

If a parent wishes for their child to ride home with another adult, prior approval from a school administrator is required before the contest.

The Heber Springs Athletic Department believes team travel promotes accountability, unity, and the overall team experience. Student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner while traveling and are subject to all school rules and athletic department expectations during team travel. Team travel is considered an extension of the school day and the athletic program; therefore, all school and athletic department expectations remain in effect from departure until students return to campus.

PARENT / STUDENT-ATHLETE / COACH COMMUNICATION

Positive communication is essential to building successful athletic programs and creating the best possible experience for our student-athletes. The Heber Springs Athletic Department is committed to respectful, professional, and solution-focused communication between student-athletes, parents, and coaches.

Parents are expected to model the same respect, sportsmanship, and professionalism that we expect from our student-athletes. Working together with trust and open communication creates the best experience for every Panther athlete.



Whenever appropriate, communication should begin with the student-athlete. Learning to communicate respectfully and advocate for oneself is an important part of the educational experience.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

If a concern arises regarding an athletic program, the following chain of command should be followed:

1. Student-Athlete → Coach
2. Parent → Coach
3. Parent → Athletic Director
4. Parent → Superintendent

If a parent or student-athlete bypasses the chain of command, they may be directed back to the appropriate level before additional meetings are scheduled.

APPROPRIATE TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH

- Ways to help improve the student-athlete.
- Concerns regarding behavior, academics, or team expectations.
- Questions about team policies or communication.
- Injury concerns or the well-being of the student-athlete.

TOPICS NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH



- Playing time.
- Team strategy.
- Play calling.
- Other student-athletes.

RESOLVING CONCERNS

Parents and student-athletes are encouraged to communicate directly with the coach to seek clarification and resolution. Meetings should be scheduled in advance through email or phone communication.

Please do not approach coaches immediately before, during, or after practices or contests. These are not appropriate times for productive conversations. Parents should contact the coach to schedule a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

If a meeting with the coach does not resolve the concern, parents may contact the Athletic Director to schedule a meeting. Additional steps may then follow according to the established chain of command.

At Heber Springs, we believe coaches, parents, and school personnel all play an important role in the development of our student-athletes. By working together with mutual respect, trust, and open communication, we can provide the best possible experience for every Panther athlete.



A coach may temporarily suspend a student-athlete from team activities for failure to meet team or athletic department standards. However, only the Principal and Athletic Director have the authority to permanently dismiss a student-athlete from a team.

A student-athlete who is dismissed from a team may not participate in any off-season, pre-season, practice, workout, competition, or other team activity until approved by the Athletic Director.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The health and well-being of our student-athletes is a priority. Coaches will work together to help athletes transition safely from one sport season to the next while considering each athlete's individual workload, physical condition, and overall well-being.

Athletes transitioning directly from one in-season sport to another will be monitored by the coaching staff and progressed appropriately to reduce the risk of overtraining and injury.

Athletes transitioning into the off-season will be provided an appropriate recovery period before returning to full participation in off-season strength and conditioning programs.



Strength and Conditioning

“Building Stronger Athletes. Developing Better Leaders.”

The Panther Performance Program is designed to develop faster, stronger, healthier, and more resilient student-athletes. Through year-round training, we focus on improving athletic performance, reducing the risk of injury, and developing the discipline, confidence, and work ethic necessary for success in athletics and in life.

Our Panther Performance Program follows a progressive model that matches each athlete's stage of development.

7th Grade – Learn

Athletes learn proper movement patterns, lifting technique, body control, and the fundamentals of athletic performance in a safe, structured, and positive environment.

Junior High – Develop

Athletes build strength, speed, coordination, and confidence while continuing to develop sound movement patterns and training habits.



Varsity – Perform

Athletes participate in advanced training designed to maximize strength, power, speed, agility, mobility, and overall athletic performance while reducing the risk of injury.

The Panther Performance Program is a year-round commitment. During the season, training focuses on maintaining strength, promoting recovery, and keeping athletes healthy. During the off-season, the emphasis shifts to developing strength, speed, power, conditioning, and overall athleticism.

Every student-athlete is expected to fully participate in the Panther Performance Program unless restricted by a physician or approved by the Athletic Director. Consistent effort and commitment to the program are essential to reaching one's full athletic potential and contributing to the success of the team.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Heber Springs Athletic Department believes athletics are an opportunity to teach character, integrity, respect, accountability, and self-discipline. Winning is important, but how we compete is equally important. We expect our athletes, coaches, parents, and



spectators to **be the best part of the game** by representing Heber Springs with pride, class, and good sportsmanship at all times.

STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

Student-athletes are expected to:

- Represent Heber Springs with pride, character, and integrity.
- Respect teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Accept the decisions of officials with respect.
- Display humility in victory and grace in defeat.
- Exercise self-control and compete with class.
- Put the team before themselves.
- Respect school property, facilities, and equipment.
- Represent Heber Springs positively in person, online, and on social media.

Student-athletes who receive an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (technical foul, yellow card, red card, or other conduct-related penalty) may be required to meet with their coach and/or the Athletic Director. Additional consequences may be assigned based on the severity of the incident.

Any student-athlete ejected from a contest must meet with the Athletic Director and coach before returning to competition.

PARENT AND SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS



Parents and spectators are expected to:

- Encourage all student-athletes in a positive manner.
- Respect opponents, officials, coaches, and other spectators.
- Refrain from profanity, taunting, personal attacks, or unsportsmanlike behavior.
- Avoid coaching athletes from the stands.
- Respect school property, facilities, and event personnel.
- Follow all event rules and remain in designated spectator areas.
- Model the behavior we expect from our student-athletes.

SPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

Examples of positive sportsmanship include:

- Applauding effort and outstanding performances by both teams.
- Showing respect for opponents, coaches, and officials.
- Supporting teammates and encouraging others to display good sportsmanship.
- Showing concern for injured athletes regardless of school affiliation.
- Conducting yourself in a manner that brings pride to Heber Springs Athletics.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

Examples include:

- Booming, taunting, or heckling opponents, officials, coaches, or spectators.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or inappropriate gestures.

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- Negative chants or personal attacks directed toward individuals or groups.
- Throwing objects or damaging property.
- Entering the playing surface without authorization.
- Any behavior that detracts from the educational purpose of interscholastic athletics.

Spectators who engage in unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from the event without refund and may be prohibited from attending future athletic events. The Heber Springs Athletic Department reserves the right to take appropriate action to maintain a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all participants.

Sportsmanship is not just expected—it is the standard.