Sullivan Middle School

STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

Conference Affiliation-WIC

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Student Athlete Handbook* exists in order that athletes and their parents may better understand their responsibilities and rights when an athlete participates in the school athletic programs. It shall be understood that the *Student Handbook* is applicable to all students, including student athletes, and shall have precedent over the *Student Athlete Handbook* should any question arise regarding interpretation of rules.

Pertinent Points:

1. The principal of the school has the authority and the responsibility to control the athletic program including staff, participants, and any other individual or organization actively engaged in activities promoting the athletic interests of the School Athletic Program.
2. The athletic director is responsible for organizing and administering the athletic program under the supervision of the principal.

School Affiliated Sports offered by seasons:

Fall- Cross Country, Volleyball, Football, Soccer, Golf, Boys' Tennis
Winter-Basketball and Wrestling
Spring-Track and Girls' Tennis

We also offer a dance team and cheer squad but they are not considered competitive sports technically. However, the participants are considered a student-athlete as far as following our policies.

Most of our teams will be divided by grades, not age. In some instances, we will have an A team and B team based on numbers and abilities.

II. PHILOSOPHY

The administration and the athletic department agree that:

a. extra-curricular activities are an important and vital part of the American educational system and have great potential to contribute to the sound growth and all-around development of the students;

b. the will to win is a natural human trait and entirely desirable, but this urge whether individual or collective, is not to be attained at the price of unfair advantage or gained through violation of established rules and principles;

c. the welfare of the students takes precedence over any other interest.

III. MISSION STATEMENT

The Athletic Department mission is to provide extra curricular opportunities for our students that promote physical, mental, emotional, and social development and growth. The Southwest School Corporation believes that extra curricular activities are an essential part of our schools whole curriculum and we are committed to creating a positive environment with our athletic programs that promote and support the entire educational process.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATION

The administration and athletic department believe that participation is essential:

A. to provide a positive image of school athletics for all Corporation students;

B. to strive always for playing excellence that will produce successful teams within the bounds of good sportsmanship and mental health of the student athlete;
C. to provide opportunities that will allow the program to serve as a laboratory where students may cope with problems and handle situations similar to those encountered under conditions prevailing in the contemporary world. The laboratory should provide adequate and natural opportunities as follows:

1. physical, mental, and emotional growth and development;
2. acquisition and development of special skills in activities of each student's choice;
3. team play with the development of such commitments as loyalty, cooperation, fair play, and other desirable social traits;
4. a focus of interests on activity programs for the student body, faculty, and community that will generate a feeling of unity;
5. achievement of goals as set by the school in general and the student as an individual;
6. provisions for worthy use of leisure time in later life either as a participant or spectator;

D. to practice self-discipline and emotional maturity in learning to make decisions under pressure;
E. to be socially competent and operate within a set of rules, thus gaining a respect for the rights of others;

V. STUDENT-ATHLETE CONDUCT

As a student-athlete, each individual becomes a personal representative of the student body, school, and community. Every student athlete's conduct is under constant scrutiny and evaluation not only during the particular athletic season, but also at all other times, including school vacation periods; therefore, a student athlete's appearance and conduct must be, at all times, beyond reproach. Participation in athletics is viewed as a privilege and not a right; a student athlete is supposed to be a good example as a student, as a citizen, and as an athlete to other students, parents, and community members. Participation on an athletic team is allowed at the discretion of the coach of that team, subject to review by the athletic director and principal, in accord with Indiana law. In addition, an athlete must meet or exceed those rules and regulations set forth by Southwest School Corporation.

Students are not only required to avoid the behaviors prohibited in the *Student Athlete Handbook* but are further required to avoid any behavior that supports or encourages the misconduct of other students. The sanction assigned would be directly related to the nature of the supporting behavior and the violation encouraged by that support.

If a student is not violating the rules, but is present, then he or she could still be implicated in the violations of others. If someone is breaking the rules, a student should walk away, report them, or take whatever steps are necessary to show that he or she is not part of the problem.

A. Athletic Handbook Rules - The rules listed in this section are adopted for Sullivan Middle School athletes with the intention of promoting citizenship and developing good behavior and positive attitudes. **Note: These rules are in effect *year-round*.**

1. Attendance and Participation - **Athletes must be in attendance for the entire school day in order to practice or participate in contests on that school day. Verified appointments with medical personnel (doctor's notes) and any school related absence that falls under the "Does not count" rule, (field trips, jurisprudence, immediate family funerals, etc.) do not affect contest and/or practice eligibility.**
2. Attitude - A student athlete shall display exemplary attitude, behavior, and citizenship at all times, not just during a particular athletic season.
3. Lost/Damaged Equipment/Uniforms - The athlete must return all equipment issued to him/her: If the equipment is lost and/or stolen, the athlete must pay the school the amount required to replace the missing item(s). The student is responsible for taking care of all uniforms/equipment supplied by the school.
4. Quitting a Team - An athlete must remain on the squad (in the sport in which he/she is participating) until the entire schedule has been completed and/or until he/she has been released by the coach. An athlete who quits the team will not receive any awards, nor be permitted to play on a different sport/team in the same season.
5. Rebellious Behavior - Insubordination, abusive or critical language, toward anyone, fighting, lack of full cooperation, lack of maximum effort, and harassment and/or intimidation (verbal, written, physical, and/or sexual) are all examples of misconduct which are strictly prohibited.
6. Profanity – A student-athlete shall not use language, which is deemed abusive, offensive, or disrespectful by school personnel. A student-athlete shall not use obscene gestures or conduct, or possess materials that are considered obscene by school personnel.
7. Responsibility - The conduct of all phases of participation in interscholastic activity, including practice sessions, trips to and from athletic contests, and residence away from home for participation in athletic contests, and participation in the contest itself, shall be according to the rules and dictates of the coach and school administration.
   a. The head coach of each sport may require that athletes practice or participate in contests on a weekend or vacation day, (never on Sunday). As is the case with each and all sports, athletes who choose to be on a team are expected to make a commitment to their sport, coach, and teammates. This means that athletes are expected to attend all practices and contests and thus meet and fulfill the same requirements as their teammates. Any penalty, which results from a violation, shall be determined by the grade-level head coach of the sport with approval from the administration.
   b. Off-season/Summer Participation Rules – No off season practices or meetings are required or mandatory.
   c. Team Travel - Athletes are required to attend and return from any contests via means of the transportation provided by the school. Exceptions may be made only if a need exists to permit the athlete to travel from the athletic event with his/her parents. The coach must be notified in advance in writing by the parent and the parent must sign out the student before leaving with a coach.
   d. <u>Removal from Team</u> - Upon occasion it may be necessary to suspend or remove an athlete from a team. In that event the coach of the sport from which the athlete is suspended or dismissed will discuss the matter with the athlete. His/her parents are to be contacted regarding the decision. Depending upon the circumstances, an administrator might be involved in this action.
   e. Definition of Summer - Summer begins with **the close of the school year,** and ends prior to the first week of IHSAA practices for fall sports.
   f. Moratorium Weeks – Coaches will follow the IHSAA moratorium calendar. Moratorium week is a week when no athletic activities, including conditioning, will be conducted. During this seven-day period, there shall be no contact between athletes and coaches.
8. Suspensions at School Info:
   a. Out-of-school - The athlete who receives an out-of-school suspension shall not practice and/or participate in athletic contests until the suspension period is complete. For an out-of-school suspension, the time period begins immediately upon being suspended by the administration. The suspension period is completed at the end (12:00 a.m.) of the last day that the suspension is in effect.
   b. In-school - The athlete who receives an in-school suspension shall practice and/or participate in athletic contests during the actual suspension time. In-school suspension begins on the day that the student first spends in the suspension room. It is completed at the close of the school day on the last day the athlete serves in suspension.
   c. After School Detentions: Athletic events or practices will not be accepted as legitimate reasons for postponing detentions. If a student is involved in any extracurricular events, then that student needs to

understand that they will miss practices or meetings due to detention if they receive a detention.

9. Practices and/or contests shall be postponed in the event of school closing or early dismissal due to inclement weather.
10. School-sponsored athletic activities are never held on a Sunday.
11. All school rules are in effect at extracurricular activities.
12. **CELL PHONES AND CAMERAS:**

Cell phones and cameras may **not** be used inside a locker room for any purpose. This means no texting, no calling,and obviously no videos or pictures. The use of cell phones/cameras is not permitted in the locker room at any time. NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE. This rule applies to all players, managers and coaches. Should an athlete receive a call or text while (s)he is in the locker room, (s)he should take the phone (still in backpack, book bag, gym bag, etc.) out to the hall or outside the building before use. CAMERAS AND PHONES MAY NOT BE IN USE OR OUT IN VIEW IN THE LOCKER ROOM FOR ANY REASON. *A violation of this rule can result in immediate penalty, which could include dismissal from the team. If a photograph or video is taken, the matter may be turned over to legal authorities for possible prosecution.

13. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

Student-athletes are responsible for information contained in written or electronic transmissions (e.g. e-mail) and any information posted on a public domain (e.g. internet, chat room, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat etc.). Inappropriate or embarrassing information or pictures should not be posted in any public domain. Student-athletes are not precluded from participation in such online social networks; however, student-athletes should be reminded that they serve as representatives of their team, the athletic program and the School Corporation Texting, tweeting and using other social networks to disparage or criticize the team, other students, opponents, coaches or other school personnel is inappropriate behavior and unbecoming of a student-athlete. Any individual identified on a social networking site which depicts illegal or inappropriate behavior, will be considered in violation and subject to athletic discipline or suspension per policy guidelines.

14. Felonies, Misdemeanors, Acts of Delinquency, and Other Acts of Behavior Which Reflect Discredit Upon the School A student may be suspended from athletics for the use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, passive resistance, or other conduct constituting an interference with the athletic program. If the student athlete is on school property, going to or from school or going to or from a school activity, on school property at any time, during and immediately before and after any school activity at any location, traveling to and from school or to and from a school activity, he/she may be suspended for urging other students to engage in the above conduct. Damage or theft involving school property, intentionally causing bodily harm to fellow students or school employees, intimidating any student, possessing weapons, violation of local, state, or federal law, or failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with the directions of coaches and/or rules of the athletic program and the school are all grounds for suspension.

A student may be suspended from athletic participation for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or the student's removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property. This includes any unlawful period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

If a student is arrested and they are not on school property, going to or from school, or going to or from a school activity; then the issue will not be dealt with by the school unless it is an interference with the educational process or to protect persons at the school. The issue is between law enforcement, the court system, and the parent or legal guardian.

VI. PRE-PARTICIPATION PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Before participation in any open-facility workout, practice or contest, an athlete must have on file in the athletic director's office an IHSAA physical form. The form must be signed by a physician and parent/guardian and dated after April 1 to be valid through the upcoming season. The signing physician must hold an unlimited license to practice medicine. We also should have all of the forms signed on Final Forms.

VII. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

A. Academic Eligibility - In order to participate in athletics a student must be in good standing with the school academically. This means to participate in extra-curricular contests a student must meet the standard of passing all of their classes at the end of each nine weeks and the semester. If a student does not meet these standards he/she will not participate in extracurricular contests during the next nine weeks grading period. Students not academically eligible **are** permitted to practice. A Student must pass 70% of classes they are enrolled in. With a six period day at SMS, you need to pass 5 classes to participate in games.

VIII. OPEN FACILITY WORKOUTS

The purpose and design of open facility workouts is to improve an athlete's out-of-season conditioning, as well as increasing strength, speed, skill and knowledge of a particular sport. These workouts are not viewed as a team practice, but an opportunity for self-improvement. The decision to hold an open facility workout is at the discretion of the head coach and must be approved by the athletic administration in advance.

All athletic teams and coaches will abide by IHSAA guidelines regarding open facility programs. **Open facility workouts are open to all middle school students within the corporation. All participants in open facility workouts must be enrolled in the Southwest School Corporation. Our athletes may not participate in open facility workouts at other schools per IHSAA policy.** The athletic department encourages attendance by athletes who are not participating members of a team that is in-season at the time of the workout, but stresses that participation is strictly voluntary. Parents are responsible for safe transportation to these workouts and are expected to pick up their children in a timely manner.

IX: Dual Sport Requirements

When competing in multiple sports during the same season, students and coaches will do the following prior to the start of the season:

a. The Student will declare a primary sport and a secondary sport

b. The Coaches will meet with the athletic director to determine a schedule of practices and develop a list of prioritized contests.

c. The athlete must practice regularly in both sports

d. The athlete will not be permitted to miss any practices or contest in ether sport without the consent of both coaches

e. Prioritized contest levels are as follows

1. Contests take precedence over practices
2. Tournaments take precedence over regular season contests
3. Conference games take precedence over non conference contests

X: *Parent/Athlete/Coach Relationships and Communications*

A. Communications parents should expect from the coach:

◊ Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all members of the squad.
◊ Locations and times of all practices, contests, and meetings.
◊ Team requirements, (fees, forms, special equipment, practice packs, off-season conditioning, etc.)
◊ Procedure, should your child be injured during participation.
◊ Any discipline measures that result in the denial of your child's continued participation.

B. Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

◊ Concerns regarding your child's mental and physical status. Ways to help your child improve in the activity. Concerns about your child's behavior.
*It is very difficult to accept when your child is not playing as much as you may hope or at the level you believe they are capable. However, the decision must be made by the coach or coaches without undue influence from the parents. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. Those decisions have a measure of subjectivity that you may not agree with, yet must accept. Please allow your child to enjoy the experience of athletic participation, without pressure or negative remarks about their performance. Comments to your child that questions the competence of the coaching staff or game officials will only harm your child's opportunity to grow and learn from this experience.

C. Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

◊ Team strategy. Play calling. Playing time (asking how the student-athlete could improve his/her skills is welcome). Other student-athletes.

D. If you have a concern to discuss with a coach:

◊ Call to set up an appointment with the coach. **Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature <u>do</u> <u>not</u> promote resolution.**

E. What a parent can do if a meeting with the coach does not resolve the concern:

◊ Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director or Principal for that sport to discuss the situation.
◊ The Administration can only discuss issues regarding your child and will not discuss or compare other student-athletes.

Participation in school athletics should be an enjoyable and learning experience for the student-athlete. The behavior and attitude of the parent(s) is critical in this process. Years from now, you will care deeply about your grown child's health, and happiness – but you will care very little about how many points they scored in a ballgame, meet or match. Please help us to teach the important lessons that come from playing school sports. These experiences can make a positive impact on their ability to handle the tremendous challenges of life.