

NORTON CITY SCHOOLS

Football Media Sideline Access Procedure

Purpose

Norton City Schools recognizes and appreciates the important role of media coverage in highlighting the accomplishments of our students, student-athletes, coaches, schools, and community. The division seeks to provide reasonable opportunities for news, photography, video, and other media coverage while maintaining a safe and appropriately supervised environment for students.

The area inside the stadium fence and along the football sideline is a **restricted-access area** because of safety, security, supervision, and game-management considerations and the close proximity of student-athletes, cheerleaders, band members, student workers, coaches, officials, and other students.

This procedure does not regulate or restrict an individual's ability to cover, photograph, record, or report on Norton City Schools athletic events from areas generally available or designated for media coverage. Rather, it establishes consistent safety and access requirements for individuals who request the additional privilege of entering the restricted football sideline area.

1. General Media Access

Representatives of media organizations and individuals engaged in news, photography, videography, or other media coverage may cover Norton City Schools home football games from areas available to spectators or other areas designated by game management for media coverage.

Individuals who do not have an approved Norton City Schools Media Sideline Credential may photograph, record, interview, and report on the event from approved locations **outside the fenced/restricted sideline area**, subject to normal safety, security, and game-management expectations.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent, discourage, or interfere with media coverage of Norton City Schools students, athletic programs, or events.

2. Restricted Sideline Access

Any media representative or other individual requesting access inside the fenced football field area or to a designated restricted sideline media area must obtain a **Norton City Schools Media Sideline Credential** before receiving access.

The credentialing requirement applies consistently to individuals requesting media-related access to the restricted area, including representatives of traditional press organizations, photographers, videographers, freelance journalists, independent media representatives, digital media representatives, and content creators.

The credential authorizes access only to designated media areas within the restricted portion of the facility and does not provide unrestricted access to students, teams, locker rooms, school facilities, or other restricted areas.

3. Application Requirements

Individuals requesting a Media Sideline Credential must:

- Complete and submit the Norton City Schools Media Sideline Access Application by the established deadline.
- Provide identification and information sufficient to verify the applicant's identity and the media-related purpose for requesting restricted-area access.
- Complete the required background-screening process established by Norton City Schools for individuals granted comparable special or restricted access in close proximity to students.
- Pay the applicable season credential fee, unless exempt as a representative of a traditional press organization as described below.
- Review and agree to all sideline safety, security, and conduct expectations.
- Receive approval from Norton City Schools before entering the restricted sideline area.

Applications will be reviewed using consistent criteria for similarly situated applicants.

Submission of an application or payment of an applicable fee **does not guarantee approval or sideline access**.

4. Background Screening

Because restricted sideline access places credential holders in areas not generally accessible to the public and in close proximity to students, individuals requesting this access must satisfactorily complete the background-screening process established by Norton City Schools for individuals receiving comparable special access to students or restricted student areas.

The screening requirement is based upon the **level and location of access being requested and not upon the applicant's media organization, viewpoint, content, or method of coverage**.

Applicants will receive information regarding the applicable screening process after submitting an application.

Information obtained through the screening process will be handled in accordance with applicable law and Norton City Schools procedures.

5. Season Credential Fee and Traditional Press Exemption

A **\$75 season credential fee** will apply to approved independent photographers, videographers, freelance media representatives, content creators, commercial or independent digital media representatives, and other non-traditional media applicants requesting restricted sideline access.

The season credential fee is intended to offset administrative and credentialing costs associated with providing and managing special access to the restricted sideline area.

Representatives of established traditional press organizations will not be charged the \$75 season credential fee. For purposes of this procedure, traditional press organizations generally include established newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and other recognized news organizations that routinely engage in news gathering and reporting for dissemination to the general public.

Applicants requesting the traditional press fee exemption may be asked to provide reasonable documentation of their affiliation with the press organization, such as an employer-issued press credential, assignment confirmation, or verification from an editor, news director, or other authorized representative of the organization.

The fee exemption applies only to the **\$75 season credential fee**. Traditional press representatives requesting restricted sideline access remain subject to the same applicable application, safety, identification, background-screening, and sideline conduct requirements as other credential holders.

No credential fee is required to report on, photograph, record, or otherwise cover a game from areas outside the restricted sideline area that are otherwise available or designated for media coverage.

6. Issuance of Credentials

Upon approval of the application, completion of applicable access requirements, and payment of any required credential fee, Norton City Schools may issue the applicant a season Media Sideline Credential.

The credential:

- Is issued only to the approved individual.
- May not be transferred, loaned, or shared.

- Must be visibly displayed whenever the individual is within the restricted sideline area.
- Authorizes access only to areas designated by Norton City Schools.
- Remains the property of Norton City Schools.

Issuance of a credential does not guarantee access to every restricted area or every event. Access may be limited when necessary because of safety, security, capacity, emergency response, field conditions, or game-management needs.

7. Sideline Safety and Conduct Expectations

Individuals granted restricted sideline access must:

- Wear and visibly display the Norton City Schools-issued media credential at all times while in the restricted area.
- Remain within designated media areas as directed by school administrators, athletic staff, or game-management personnel.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from players, coaches, officials, cheerleaders, band members, student workers, and other students.
- Keep equipment, bags, tripods, cameras, and other materials positioned so they do not create a safety hazard or interfere with participants or game operations.
- Immediately comply with reasonable safety and operational directions from administrators, athletic staff, security personnel, law enforcement, officials, or game-management personnel.
- Refrain from entering team benches, locker rooms, team meeting areas, medical/treatment areas, or other student-only areas unless specifically authorized.
- Refrain from interfering with the game, coaching, officiating, emergency response, student supervision, or other school operations.
- Conduct themselves appropriately while on school property.
- Follow all Norton City Schools guidelines and stadium safety and security rules applicable to individuals granted restricted access.

8. Student Privacy and Safety

A Media Sideline Credential provides access to a designated restricted area; it **does not provide special or unrestricted access to individual students**.

Credential holders must respect student privacy and may not use sideline access to initiate inappropriate or unauthorized contact with students.

Interviews with student-athletes or other students should occur in appropriate locations and at appropriate times consistent with school procedures and without interfering with student supervision, team activities, or game operations.

Photography or recording in locker rooms, restrooms, medical/treatment areas, or other areas where students have a reasonable expectation of privacy is prohibited unless specifically authorized and otherwise permitted by law and division procedure.

9. Approval, Denial, Suspension, and Revocation

Decisions regarding restricted sideline access will be based upon **objective safety, security, access, capacity, credentialing, and game-management considerations** and will be applied consistently to similarly situated applicants.

Norton City Schools may deny, suspend, limit, or revoke restricted sideline access for reasons including:

- Failure to complete established credentialing or screening requirements.
- Failure to pay an applicable credential fee.
- Providing materially false or incomplete information in an application.
- Failure to follow sideline safety or restricted-area requirements.
- Interference with participants, officials, school personnel, student supervision, or game operations.
- Entry into unauthorized areas.
- Transfer, sharing, or misuse of a credential.
- Conduct creating a safety or security concern.
- Space, capacity, emergency, or other legitimate operational limitations.

Violation of the established requirements may result in immediate removal from the restricted area and suspension or revocation of the credential.

Approval for one season does not guarantee approval for subsequent seasons.

10. Assumption of Risk and Liability Waiver Required

Prior to entering the restricted access area, all applicants must sign an acknowledgment assuming the risks of being near the field of play and a waiver of liability for possible personal injury and damage to equipment.

11. Game-Day Requests

Individuals seeking restricted sideline access should submit an application and complete all applicable requirements **in advance of the football season or by the deadline established by Norton City Schools.**

Individuals arriving on game day without an approved Norton City Schools Media Sideline Credential will generally not be granted access to the restricted sideline area.

A media representative who has not completed the sideline credentialing process may still cover the event from approved locations outside the restricted area, subject to the same safety and game-management requirements applicable to others using those areas.

12. Administration

The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with school administration and the athletic department, will administer the media credentialing process.

The Superintendent or designee may establish additional reasonable procedures necessary to address safety, security, capacity, emergency response, student supervision, or game operations, provided such procedures are applied consistently to similarly situated individuals.

Approved: _____

Effective Date: _____

Reviewed/Revised: _____

NORTON CITY SCHOOLS

Media Sideline Access Application

Football Season: 2026–2027

Norton City Schools welcomes media coverage of our students and athletic programs. Because the football sideline is a **restricted-access area** that places credential holders in close proximity to students, individuals requesting access inside the fenced/restricted sideline area must complete this application and receive approval prior to receiving access.

This credentialing process applies only to **restricted sideline access**. Individuals may continue to photograph, record, report on, or otherwise cover Norton City Schools football games from approved locations outside the restricted area without obtaining a Media Sideline Credential.

Season Credential Fee: \$75 for approved non-traditional media applicants. Representatives of established traditional press organizations are exempt from the season credential fee.

Completion of this application or payment of an applicable fee does not guarantee approval or sideline access.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full Legal Name: _____

Organization/Media Outlet, if applicable: _____

Position/Role: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

MEDIA INFORMATION

Please identify the category that best describes your work:

- Newspaper/Print News Organization
- Television News Organization
- Radio News Organization
- Other Established News Organization
- Independent Photographer
- Independent Videographer
- Freelance Media
- Independent/Digital Media
- Content Creator
- Commercial Photography/Videography
- Other: _____

Website, publication, social media page, portfolio, or organization information, if applicable:

Editor, News Director, Supervisor, or Organization Contact, if applicable:

Name: _____

Phone/Email: _____

PURPOSE OF RESTRICTED SIDELINE ACCESS

Please briefly describe the media-related purpose for which you are requesting access to the restricted football sideline area:

Please provide information or documentation reasonably sufficient to verify your identity and the media-related purpose for requesting restricted-area access.

SEASON CREDENTIAL FEE

A **\$75 season credential fee** applies to approved independent photographers, videographers, freelance media representatives, content creators, commercial or independent digital media representatives, and other non-traditional media applicants requesting restricted sideline access.

The fee is intended to offset administrative and credentialing costs associated with providing and managing special access to the restricted sideline area.

Representatives of established traditional press organizations are exempt from the \$75 season credential fee. Traditional press organizations generally include established newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and other recognized news organizations that routinely engage in news gathering and reporting for dissemination to the general public.

Applicants requesting the traditional press exemption may be asked to provide reasonable verification of their affiliation, such as an employer-issued press credential, assignment confirmation, or verification from an editor, news director, or other authorized representative.

Please select one:

- I am requesting the Traditional Press Organization Fee Exemption.
- I am applying as non-traditional/independent media and understand that the \$75 season credential fee will apply if my application is approved.

Traditional Press Organization, if requesting exemption:

Documentation provided for exemption, if applicable:

BACKGROUND SCREENING

Restricted sideline access places credential holders in an area not generally accessible to the public and in close proximity to student-athletes, cheerleaders, band members, student workers, and other students.

For this reason, applicants requesting restricted sideline access must satisfactorily complete the background-screening process established by Norton City Schools for individuals receiving comparable special or restricted access in close proximity to students.

The screening requirement is based upon the **level and location of access requested** and applies regardless of the applicant's media organization, viewpoint, content, or method of coverage.

- I understand that restricted sideline access requires completion of the applicable Norton City Schools background-screening process.
- I agree to provide the information and authorization necessary to complete the required screening.
- I understand that failure to satisfactorily complete the required screening will result in denial of restricted sideline access.

Applicants will receive additional instructions regarding the screening process.

SIDELINE SAFETY AND CONDUCT AGREEMENT

By signing this application, I acknowledge and agree that, if approved for restricted sideline access:

- I will visibly display my Norton City Schools Media Sideline Credential whenever I am within the restricted area.
- I will remain within designated media areas.
- I will follow reasonable safety and operational directions from school administrators, athletic staff, security personnel, law enforcement, officials, and game-management personnel.
- I will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from student-athletes, cheerleaders, band members, student workers, coaches, officials, and other participants.
- I will keep cameras, tripods, bags, and other equipment positioned so they do not create a safety hazard or interfere with participants or game operations. Drones or any other equipment that creates distractions to participants or game operations are not permitted.
- I will not enter team benches, locker rooms, team meeting areas, medical/treatment areas, or other student-only areas unless specifically authorized.
- I understand that my credential provides access to a designated restricted area and **does not provide special or unrestricted access to individual students.**
- I will respect student privacy and comply with Norton City Schools expectations regarding student interviews, photography, and recording.
- I will not photograph or record in locker rooms, restrooms, medical/treatment areas, or other areas where students have a reasonable expectation of privacy unless specifically authorized and otherwise permitted.
- I will not interfere with the game, coaching, officiating, emergency response, student supervision, or other school operations.
- I understand that my credential is issued only to me and may not be transferred, loaned, or shared.

- I understand that restricted sideline access may be limited, suspended, or revoked for failure to comply with established requirements or when necessary because of safety, security, capacity, emergency, or game-management considerations.
 - I have read and agree to comply with the **Norton City Schools Football Media Sideline Access Procedure**.
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APPLICANT CERTIFICATION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete. I understand that providing materially false or incomplete information may result in denial or revocation of restricted sideline access.

I further understand that approval of this application provides access only to designated restricted media areas and does not provide unrestricted access to students, teams, locker rooms, or other areas of the school or athletic facility.

By my signature below, I further acknowledge that my presence in the restricted access area may involve inherent and unexpected risks, including and without limitation, contact with players and football equipment. I knowingly and voluntarily assume all risks associated with being near the field of play and agree to exercise reasonable care at all times. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, I hereby release, waive, and hold harmless, Norton City Schools, Norton City School Board, its employees, agents, volunteers, and representatives, from any and all claims arising from my voluntary presence on or near the football field and sideline.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR NORTON CITY SCHOOLS USE ONLY

Application Received: _____

Identity/Media Purpose Verified:

- Yes
- No

Applicant Classification:

- Traditional Press — Fee Exempt
- Non-Traditional/Independent Media — \$75 Fee Applicable

Traditional Press Affiliation Verified, if applicable:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Background Screening Completed:

- Yes
- No

Background Screening Satisfactorily Completed:

- Yes
- No

\$75 Credential Fee:

- Received
- Fee Exempt
- Pending

Application Status:

- Approved
- Denied
- Additional Information Required

Credential Number: _____

Approved By: _____

Date: _____

Notes:
