CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS

DR. MELODY CHALMERS-MCCLAIN, ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT
OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
CHAD BARBOUR, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

2026-2027

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

SCAN ME

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MISSION



The athletic program is an integral part of the total school experience for both boys and girls. It offers a variety of sports and activities to all students who have potential skill and the desire to participate. The policies, procedures, and regulations in the handbook are following school board policies and administrative procedures. They are designed to provide successful experiences for students and the efficient operation of the athletic program. Cumberland County Athletes must act with pride and dignity at all times.

The purpose of this handbook is to establish regulations and procedures to deal with violations that occur on or off school ground throughout the entire calendar year. The handbook is designed to encourage athletes to make choices that ensure their health and safety, and provide appropriate consequences for students who violate the rules. The student athlete is accountable and responsible for all policies contained within this handbook and for any additional ones that your respectives coaches might add.

Cumberland County Schools believes that good sportsmanship is an integral component of interscholastic competition. In order for good sportsmanship to prevail, coaches, student-athletes, and fans must display respect, fairness, civility, encourage fans to enthusiastically support their team, recognise outstanding performance of opponents, and always exhibit good sportsmanship in their words and actions. Love the game enough to know and follow the rules. Wishing all of you the best as you pursue your athletic dreams and goals.

Chad Barbour
Director of Student Activities
Cumberland County Schools



SPORTS OFFERED

The following list provides prospective student-athletes with a list of sports offered during each season. Students who are interested in participating in high school athletics should contact the coach of each sport and/or the athletic director in each school for specific tryout and preseason workout dates. The North Carolina State Board of Education establishes the rules and regulations that govern all middle school athletics. For further information, contact your school's athletic director.

FALL

Football
Pep Squad - co ed
Soccer - Boys
Track & Field - Girls
Volleyball - Girls

WINTER

Basketball - Boys
Basketball - Girls
Pep Squad - co ed
Wrestling

SPRING

Baseball - Boys
Soccer - Girls
Softball - Girls
Track & Field - Boys)

Eligibility Rules

A student who wishes to participate in middle school athletics in Cumberland County must meet all eligibility requirements before tryouts/ practice as listed below:

- **Only students in grades sixth, seven & eighth may participate in middle school athletics. Sixth graders may not participate in football.**
- **Sixth Graders will be automatically eligible in the fall based on promotion from 5th grade. In the spring, they must meet all eligibility requirements.**
- **Must be a properly enrolled student at the time you participate and must be in regular attendance at that school.**
- **Must have been in attendance for at least 85% (13 days) of the previous semester at an approved school. (CCS Board Policy)**
- **Must not have exceeded six consecutive semesters beginning with the students' entry into sixth grade.**
- **Must not have graduated from middle school.**
- **Must be less than 15 years of age on or before August 31 of the current school year.**
- **Must live with your parents or legal custodian within the school administrative unit (exceptions must be approved by your principal and the Local Board of Education).**
- **Must not falsify any official eligibility information such as residency/address. If residence changes during the school year you must notify the school immediately of this change or risk loss of eligibility for 365 days.**
- **Must have passed a minimum academic load during the previous semester, and meet local promotion standards.**
- **Must have a 70 average for the previous semester and in addition may not fail more than one core course (CCS Board Policy)**
- **Voluntary transfer students cannot participate in sports for 365 days from the first approved date of the first year of eligibility. (This includes Pep Squad)**
- **A student upon first entering grade six is academically eligible for competition on middle school teams for the fall semester.**

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Eligibility Rules Continued

- Must have a current medical examination by a duly licensed Physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant; physical must carry student-athlete completely through the sport season in which the student-athlete is participating; & if you miss five or more days of practice due to illness or injury, you must receive a Medical-Release before practicing or playing.
- Must have a current concussion form on file in the athletic office. (Concussion forms are good for the current school year)
- On the day of an athletic contest students must be in attendance 51% of the school day to participate. (CCS Board Policy)
- Must complete all athletic paperwork, found on the approved on-line platform (Final Forms) prior to participation; in any capacity, with an athletic team.
- Must not accept prizes, merchandise, money or anything that can be exchanged for money as result of athletic participation.
- May not receive team instructions from your school's coaching staff during the school day or outside your sport's season
- May not play, practice or assemble as a team with your coach on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and teacher workdays.
- May not dress for a contest or practice if you are not eligible to participate.
- Must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult while in middle school.
- For additional eligibility information, please contact your Athletic Director or refer to the State Board of Education Athletic Manual.
  When there is not a CCS specific rule, we follow NCHSAA and NCDPI rules.

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Team Selection & Administrative Rules

- Teams will be determined by tryouts open to all eligible students.
- The decision on the selection of team members by the coach is final.
- Coaches reserve the right to close tryouts and/or practices to parents and the general public.
- Student Athletes must ride the team activity bus to and from all contests unless excused in writing by a school administrator only.
- A student-athlete that quits a sport may not join another team during the same season.
- A student-athlete must try out for a sport during the initial tryout period unless the student-athlete has a medical issue or student transfers into the school out of the tryout period.

Hardships

- For all questions about hardships that relate to eligibility, please contact the Student Activities Office.

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Requirements for Participation

Remember that as an athlete you are not eligible to participate in or try-out for any sport until the following items have been completed:

1. **(1) Physical examination downloaded and concussion forms completed on the provided Parent Online Pre-Participation Athletic Registration (Final Forms).**
2. **(2) Proof of all eligibility requirements relative to residence, age, attendance and academics.**

Recruiting/Undue Influence

- **A student shall not be subjected to undue influence by an individual or group of individuals to induce or cause him/her to transfer from one school to another for athletic purposes.**
- **For the purpose of this rule, "undue influence" consists of actions taken for the purpose and intent of soliciting or encouraging the enrollment of a student-athlete in a school, including but not limited to the following:**

1. **Initiating or arranging communication or contact of any sort (letter, email, phone, social media, etc.) with a prospective student-athlete or member of his/her family.**
2. **Visiting or entertaining a prospective student-athlete or family member.**
3. **To use non-school athletic teams (AAU, Travel, Club, Arena etc.) as a vehicle to solicit or encourage a prospective student-athlete or a family member to enroll the student-athlete at a different school**
4. **Providing any assistance or encouragement to the student-athlete and/or family member to visit a different school for the purposes of potential enrollment.**

- **The above applies to any individual who coaches at a member school ~ Head or Assistant, paid or non-paid, faculty or non-faculty, parent volunteer, etc., as well as any other person formally or informally associated with a school's athletic program.**

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Requirements for Participation continued

Photographic/Videotaping Permission

Cumberland County Schools Uses Photographs, Slides, Videos, Or Illustrations Of Students For Many Purposes Such Photographs, Videos, Or Other Illustrating Material Which May Be Used In Newsletters Or Publications Produced By The School System, In Slide Presentations And/Or Videos About The Schools, By The News Media In School-Related News Coverage, In Video Productions Aired On Television Produced By The School System Or In Other Similar Forms Of Communication. Parents and legal guardians have the option of granting permission for their child's picture to be used in this manner. See the Cumberland County High Schools Student-Athlete Eligibility and Permission Form for details.

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Athletic Code of Conduct

Participation in any athletic activity is an important part of the educational experience in the Cumberland County Schools. A primary goal of such activities is to teach students character and self-discipline skills that will enable them to develop to their highest potential. As role models for their peers and younger students, students who participate in athletic activities ("participating students") are held accountable for their actions at a higher standard than other students. Because of the public nature of the athletic programs sponsored by the Cumberland County Schools, participating students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect the high standards and ideals of their school and community. The participating student athlete becomes subject to this Code of Conduct upon the student's signature and date on his/her Cumberland County Middle Schools Student Athlete Eligibility and Permission Form and continues until graduation from high school.

Participating student athletes are subject to this code at all times during the calendar year, including summer months, whether on or off campus. For summer month violations, any discipline or punishment imposed would go into effect at the next scheduled athletic activity by the student athlete. This Code of Conduct is, in addition to, any specific team/activity rules or regulations established by the individual programs.

Drugs and Alcohol

The possession, use, distribution and/or sale of illegal or counterfeit drugs/alcohol, including possession of paraphernalia for ingestion of such substances by participating students is not acceptable and prohibited. If school officials receive credible evidence, such as a police report or criminal charges related to a drug or alcohol offense, or have a reasonable suspicion that a violation under this section has occurred, the school officials will investigate. If after investigation of the charges, school officials determine that the participating student committed the violation, he/she shall be subject to disciplinary action. Every effort will be made by the school and individual activity programs to make participating students aware of the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. Students and/or parents of students suspended under this section will receive information regarding counseling.

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Athletic Code of Conduct (Continued)

Any participating student found in violation of this offense at any time while on any school premises, including activity buses, other school-approved transportation or off campus, will be suspended from athletic participation until further review by the school athletic director, principal and director of Student Activities.

Tobacco Use
(Principal's Decision is Final)
Participating students found to have used tobacco while subject to this Code will be suspended from participation as outlined:

First Offense:
The student athlete will be suspended for a minimum of 10% of the next consecutive athletic contests, not including scrimmages. The suspension may require being served over two seasons if the incident occurs near the end of the first season. At the discretion of the head coach, the student athlete may practice with the team during this suspended time frame and be allowed to travel with the team. Also, at the head coach's discretion, the student athlete may be on the sideline or bench with the team in appropriate attire.

Second Offense:
The student athlete will be suspended for a minimum of 20% of the next consecutive sports season games/contests, not including scrimmages. The suspension may require being served over two seasons if the incident occurs near the end of the first season. At the discretion of the head coach, the student athlete may practice with the team during the suspended time frame and be allowed to travel with the team. Also, at the head coach's discretion, the student athlete may be on the sideline or bench with the team in appropriate attire.

Third Offense:
The principal will suspend the student athlete from all interscholastic activities for 45 days or the remainder of the season whichever comes first.

Note: The rules are means as minimum consequences. The principal, athletic director or coach has the discretion to increase the consequences as he/she feels is most beneficial to his/her athletic program or team.

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Athletic Code of Conduct (Continued)

Criminal Charges

A participating student athlete charged with a criminal offense, misdemeanor or felony will be suspended from athletic participation until further review by the principal and director of student activities. A student convicted of a felony offense will be immediately suspended from all athletic participation according to the State Board of Education Policy. The participating student athlete must inform his or her coach or appropriate staff of any criminal charges against them as soon as practicable, but no later than the student's next participation in any athletic event, to include practices, rehearsals, etc.

- **Diversion Program**
  - **Students charged with a criminal offense and referred to the Diversion Program & do not successfully complete the program shall be suspended in accordance with the Athletic Code of Conduct.**

Review Procedure

1. **A participating student may request a review of the disciplinary action involving items 1, 2, & 3 by providing written notice to the Superintendent or his designee within two (2) school days of the date of the Principal's notification to the student and/or parent. The notice shall state the reason for the review.**
2. **The Superintendent, or his designee, will review the record of the disciplinary action and issue a decision within five (5) school days of receipt of the request for review. The Superintendent or his designee will inform the student and parent of the decision of whether to uphold, modify, or overturn the disciplinary action. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.**
3. **Any disciplinary action, including suspension from participation, will remain in effect during the review process.**
4. **Failure by the participating student to adhere to appeal content requirements and timelines set forth will result in immediate dismissal of the appeal.**

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Athletic Code of Conduct (Continued)

School Suspensions

- **In-School (full day or days) or (out of school) short-term (10 days or less) – ineligible to participate in any athletic activity on the day(s) the student is serving suspension to include practice.**
- **Out of School Long-Term (11 days or greater) – ineligible to participate in any athletic activity for the remainder of semester or suspension period (whichever is greater).**
- **Disciplinary assignment to alternative school or character academy – ineligible to participate in any athletic activity for the remainder of the semester or completion of assignment (whichever is greater).**

Inappropriate Behavior

A participating student athlete who engages in any conduct or behavior, which is inconsistent with the student's position as a role model or representative of the Cumberland County Schools, is subject to disciplinary action, including suspension as determined by the Principal. Coaches or school officials may also establish additional training regulations and rules of conduct. Inappropriate social media behavior falls within this category.

Appeals

The decision of the school principal is final for School Suspensions and Inappropriate Behavior as it relates to athletic participation.

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Athletic Code of Conduct (Continued)

Sportsmanship

As students and spectators, you represent your school and have an obligation to encourage the practice of good sportsmanship. Remember that the primary purpose of Middle School Athletics is to promote physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of contest. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat. Students ejected must serve their suspension in their very next contest even if it extends into the next academic year.

Sportsmanship / Ejection Policy

Any athlete who is ejected from any athletic contest due to poor sportsmanship shall be penalized as follows:

1. First offense the athlete shall be suspended for the next game (baseball, basketball, softball & wrestling — 2 games).
2. Second offense the athlete shall be placed on probation and suspended for the remainder of that season.
3. Third offense the athlete is suspended for one calendar year.
4. Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season.

Any parent(s) or spectator removed from the site of a contest due to poor sportsmanship or disruptive behavior can:

- **Receive a letter of warning & must take and complete the Positive Sports Parenting course on the National Federation of High Schools website. (nfhslearn.com) The certificate received from the Positive Sports Parenting course should be submitted prior to returning to an athletic event to the Athletic Director of the school.**
- **Not be allowed to attend any additional school contests.**
- **Be banned from attending any Cumberland County Schools Athletic Events.**

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CCS Middle Schools Athletic Divisions

CCS Middle Schools Athletic Divisions		
Division I	Division II	Division III
Gray's Creek John Griffin Mac Williams Max Abbott Pine Forest	Anne Chesnutt Douglas Byrd Nick Jeralds South View Westover	Albritton Hope Mills Lewis Chapel New Century Int. Spring Lake

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Middle School Athletic Director Information

Albritton - Phone - 907-0201-	**AD Kelly Melvin**
Anne Chesnutt - 867-9147-	**AD Whitney Iglesia**
Douglas Byrd - 483-3101 -	**AD Stephen Hall**
Gray's Creek - 483-4124 -	**AD Catina Johnson**
Hope Mills - 425-5106 -	**AD Kenneth Elliott**
John Griffin - 424-7678 -	**AD Bobby Dorman**
Lewis Chapel - 864-1407 -	**AD Kimberly Derrickson**
Max Abbott - 323-2201 -	**AD TBD**
Mac Williams - 483-8222 -	**AD TBD**
New Century International - 487-2001 -	**AD Latasha Hicks**
Nick Jeralds - 822-2570 -	**AD Stephanie Kelly**
Pine Forest - 488-2711 -	**AD Dr. Shameka Joyner**
Spring Lake - 497-1175	**AD TBD**
South View - 424-3131 -	**AD David Simmons**
Westover - 864-0813 -	**AD Michael Randall**

Concussion Information for Coaches / School Nurses/ Volunteers

What is a concussion? A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not result in loss of consciousness. It can occur from a fall, a blow to the head, or a blow to the body that causes the head and the brain to move quickly back and forth.

How do I recognize a concussion? There are many signs and symptoms a person may experience following concussion that can affect their thinking, emotions or mood, physical abilities, or sleep.

Thinking / Remembering	Physical	Emotional/Mood	Sleep
• Difficulty thinking clearly • Feeling slowed down • Difficulty remembering new information	• Headache • Fuzzy or blurry vision • Nausea/ vomiting • Dizziness • Balance problems • Sensitivity to noise or light	• Irritability • Sadness • More emotional than normal • Feeling nervous or anxious • Crying more	• Sleeping more than usual • Sleeping less than usual • Trouble falling asleep

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Concussion Information for Coaches / School Nurses/ Volunteers

Table from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/

What should I do if I think a student-athlete has sustained a concussion? If you suspect a student-athlete is experiencing any of the signs and symptoms listed above, you immediately remove them from participation, let their parents know, and/or refer them to the appropriate medical personnel.

What are the warning signs that a more significant head injury may have occurred? If they have a headache that gets worse over time, experience loss of coordination or abnormal body movements, have repeated nausea, vomiting, slurred speech, or you witness what you believe to be a severe head impact, you should refer them to appropriate medical personnel immediately.

What are some of the long-term or cumulative issues that may result from a concussion? Individuals may have trouble in some of their classes at school or even with activities at home. Down the road, especially if their injury is not managed properly, or if they return to play too early, they may experience issues such as being depressed, not feeling well, or have trouble remembering things for a long time. Once an individual has a concussion, they are also more likely to sustain another concussion.

How do I know when it's ok for a student-athlete to return to participation after a suspected concussion? Any student-athlete experiencing signs and symptoms consistent with a concussion should be immediately removed from play or practice and referred to appropriate medical personnel. They should not be returned to play or practice on the same day. To return to play or practice, they will need written clearance from a medical professional trained in concussion management.

No athlete should be returned to play or practice while experiencing any concussion-related signs or symptoms following rest or activity.

This information is provided to you by the UNC Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related TBI Research Center, North Carolina Medical Society, North Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association, Brain Injury Association of North Carolina, North Carolina Neuropsychological Society, and North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

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