

SECTION 8

Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

1. Introduction to the Pursuing Victory With Honor Program

At its best, athletic competition can hold intrinsic value for our society. It is a symbol of a great ideal: victory with honor. The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. Thus, sports are a major social force that shapes the quality and character of the American culture. In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the nation, we seek to establish a framework of principles and a common language of values that can be adopted and practiced widely. The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and the six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. (Preamble to the Arizona Sports Accord – Pursuing Victory with Honor)

Athletics is an important part of the total school program in the St. Johns County Schools and works in conjunction with the other educational experiences to provide students the environment and opportunity to develop the values of character and ethical decision-making. This opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics is an extracurricular activity and privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the sport, other students, the family, and the community, as well as the student-athlete.

The Student-Athlete Code of Conduct governs all student-athletes (including home school and virtual school students) in the District who participate in interscholastic athletics. These standards of conduct shall supplement, and not supplant or replace, the District's Student Code of Conduct or any additional or more stringent rules and standards of conduct that the Head Coach of each athletic team lawfully imposes as a condition of participation in such activity. Discipline imposed as a result of a violation of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct shall not preclude additional discipline or consequences under the Student Code of Conduct or the rules and bylaws of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA). The Pursuing Victory with Honor Program and Student-Athlete Code of Conduct hold student-athletes to a higher standard of conduct than the general student body. Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege, not a right, and that privilege is conditioned upon the student-athlete's compliance with the Student Code of Conduct, FHSAA rules and by-laws, and, in addition, the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. Student-athletes and their parents should be aware that the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct applies not only at school and school events and activities, but also off-campus and during non-school hours, including breaks and vacations.

It is the intent of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct to provide a clearly defined course for student-athletes to follow, at school and in the community. It is also the intent that a onetime infraction should result in appropriate consequences without causing lasting hardship.

2. Parent and Student Contracts

In order to participate in the interscholastic athletics, student-athletes and their parents are required to execute the Pursuing Victory with Honor Contract and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the Pursuing Victory with Honor program and the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. These contract forms for student and parents are found within this Student Code of Conduct.

3. Prohibited Conduct

Each student-athlete is expected to display good sportsmanship, win or lose. This means that student-athletes must demonstrate the "Six Pillars of Character" Counts in both school and in the community at large during the time that the student is enrolled in the District. Student-athletes are subject to disciplinary action under the District's Code of Conduct and Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, as well as FHSAA rules and by-laws. Such disciplinary action may include suspension or termination of the privilege of participating in any or all extracurricular activities. Sanctions may apply to all practices and meetings and at all times before, during and after games or school-sponsored events, as well as to bus trips to and from games or school sponsored events. Ejection from any contest or event will result in a suspension from subsequent contests under the rules and bylaws of FHSAA and the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. The following are violations of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct:

A. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

B. Disrespectful, derogatory, harassing comments and/or conduct (verbal, written, electronic), disruptive conduct, and insubordination by a student-athlete directed toward any other person or group, including but not limited to game officials, coaches, advisors, teammates, athletes or members of opposing teams or schools, fans, spectators, other students, and the general public.

C. Conduct at school, at related activities, on school transportation, or in the community which is clearly beyond the bounds of what is acceptable and tolerable. Any misconduct in the community that would constitute a Level III or Level IV offense if committed at school constitutes a violation of this standard of conduct.

D. No student-athlete shall knowingly attend any party or other social gathering where underage drinking and drug use occurs. This rule is intended to apply to gatherings that consist primarily of students and student age individuals where underage drinking is occurring, usually without the knowledge or acquiescence of the parents, and shall not apply to events such as a wedding, family reunion, or the like. **It shall not be a defense to this rule that a gathering of students at which alcohol and drugs are consumed was sanctioned by any parent, or held with parental consent. It is the attendance at such gatherings that is prohibited by this rule. Actual consumption of alcohol or use of drugs is not a prerequisite to establish a violation of this rule. Any student-athlete who is found to have voluntarily remained in the vicinity of a gathering prohibited by this section shall be guilty of a violation of this rule whether or not he or she consumes or uses any prohibited substance.** No student-athlete will be deemed to have violated this rule if he or she can show to the satisfaction of the school Principal, Athletic Director and Head Coach that, immediately upon becoming aware that underage drinking and/or drug use is present at a party or social gathering, he/she completely removed himself/herself from the place where the party or social gathering was held, including parking areas.

E. A student-athlete's use, distribution and possession of alcohol (including hosting a party where alcohol is available) drugs or controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, use of performance enhancing substances; use of tobacco products or any other misconduct that, if committed at school would violate the rules governing drug and alcohol use, as set forth in Section 4 of the Student Code of Conduct, or misuse of prescription medication, as set forth in Section 4 of the Student Code of Conduct. For purpose of this provision, the definition of "drugs" in Section 4 of the Student Code of Conduct applies.

F. Felony arrest.

4. Disciplinary Procedure

Student-athletes who are accused of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to the disciplinary procedures specified in Sections 4 and 6 of the Student Code of Conduct. In conjunction with that disciplinary process, the principal or designee shall impose such athletic sanctions as may be appropriate under the paragraph below.

Some offenses under the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct may not be subject to Student Code of Conduct discipline because the alleged offense occurred off-campus, after school hours or for some other reason. In those cases, the principal or the principal's designee shall give the student-athlete oral notice of the allegations and an opportunity to explain or defend the conduct. The principal or designee shall then determine whether the student-athlete violated the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. If a violation is found, the principal or designee shall impose such sanctions as may be appropriate under paragraph 5 below. The sanctions and the reason for the sanctions should be communicated in writing to the student-athlete's parent or guardian within twenty-four (24) hours by United States mail or hand delivery, including hand delivery in the care of the student-athlete, following the conclusion of the school-based investigation.

The school should notify the Superintendent in care of the Office of School Operations within twenty-four (24) hours of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct disciplinary action and the reasons therefor. The Superintendent's designee shall review the case for compliance with the requirements of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct.

A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action imposed under the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct to the Student-Athlete Disciplinary Review Committee, by scheduling a hearing through the Office of School Operations. However, the pendency of the appeal shall not delay the commencement of any sanctions, including suspension from athletic contests.

The rules of evidence and judicial procedure do not apply to disciplinary proceedings under the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. The decision of the Student-Athlete Disciplinary Review Committee shall be final and shall not be subject to further review.

5. Responses and Sanctions

The following are the sanctions for student-athletes who are found to have violated the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. The sanctions listed shall not be construed as a promise or guarantee of any particular form of discipline. The District retains the right to take disciplinary action under this policy that is deemed to be appropriate under the individual circumstances of each case. These penalties can be assessed in addition to those assessed under the Student Code of Conduct.

All game(s) suspensions will be served during the athlete's current-year season of participation. In the event that a sanction is assessed at the end of the current season, the sanction will be carried over into the next sport season in which the student-athlete participates. Student athletes will begin serving sanctions immediately upon imposition. In the event a student-athlete files an appeal of a disciplinary action imposed as a result of a code violation, the game(s) suspension will be immediately served upon imposition and/or during the appeals process.

A. Minor Violation - A coach shall be responsible for assessing penalties for violation of team and attendance rules. Such penalties may range from a verbal warning to expulsion from the team for repeat offenses. Coaches shall generally practice progressive discipline, depending on the facts and circumstances. A coach's decision to remove a student-athlete from a team will be approved by the

Athletic Director prior to the imposition of the penalty. The coach shall notify the parents of the imposition of any sanction including the nature of the offense and the reason(s) for the disciplinary action.

- B. Level 1 Violation** - Any student-athlete found to have engaged in prohibited conduct unless otherwise indicated at another Level. For a Level 1 violation, suspension from participation, probation and successful completion of educational component may be required.
- C. Level 2 Violation** - Any student-athlete found to have committed a second Level 1 violation while on probation or any student-athlete found to have hosted a party where alcohol is served or where drugs are present, or who participates in any bullying, harassment or hazing. For a Level 2 violation, suspension from participation, probation, and successful completion of educational component may be required. The commission of any drug or alcohol offense while serving probation for a current drug or alcohol offense will result in loss of participation for one calendar year.
- D. Level 3 Violation** - Any student-athlete found to have engaged in prohibited conduct while serving a Level 2 probation or to have committed a second Level 2 violation during his/her enrollment in the District. For a Level 3 violation, loss of participation for 1 calendar year, probation and successful completion of educational component may be required.
- E. Level 4 Violation** - Any student who is charged with or convicted of, a felony. Such a student-athlete will be suspended from participation (includes practices and meetings) until the case has been adjudicated after which a review will be conducted to determine eligibility. Level 4 also includes repeated violations while on probation. For a Level 4 violation, loss of athletic eligibility while enrolled in the District.

Drug testing may be required as part of a sanction at student or parent expense.

- **Probation** is a stipulated period of time (1 calendar year) assessed to an athlete as a consequence for violations of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. This period of time may be extended (extended probation) until the athlete has successfully fulfilled all requirements of the assessed for a violation. The **Educational Component** is a rehabilitative activity intended to reinforce the athlete's personal adherence to the policies and rules that govern the interscholastic program and is designed to educate the athlete about the violation committed and its impact on reaching personal and team goals. Following a meeting with the District Director for Athletics, this component will occur after school hours and will take place at the location of the provider in partnership with the St. Johns County School District. The Educational Component will be required for any student-athlete that is found to be in violation of the drug and alcohol policy outlined in the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. Suspensions from team participation may continue until this meeting is held.

The St. Johns County School District is committed to creating a safe, secure and enjoyable experience for all fans. We want all event attendees to enjoy the experience in a responsible fashion. Event attendees are responsible for their own behavior. Any behavior that is deemed unruly, disruptive, or illegal in nature to officials, players, school administration and/or other spectators may result in removal from the event and loss of the privilege for attending future events.

Participation Penalty

Sports	Number of Games	Level 1 Participation Penalty	Level 2 Participation Penalty
Baseball, Basketball, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball and Water Polo	25	3	5
Lacrosse, Tennis and Wrestling	18	2	4
Golf	14	1	3
Swimming and Diving, Track and Field, Weightlifting and Cross Country	13	1	3
Football	10	1	2
Cheerleading (Competitive and/or Spirit)	To be determined by the interscholastic athletic season in which Cheerleading is participating.	To be determined by the interscholastic athletic season in which Cheerleading is participating.	To be determined by the interscholastic athletic season in which Cheerleading is participating.

If an athlete misses games due to school suspension for a disciplinary infraction, the games missed shall be counted toward the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct participation sanction. Cheerleading sanctions may also result in the loss of competitive events and/or cheer competitions.