



ST. CLAIR COUNTY SCHOOLS
EVERY STUDENT PREPARED

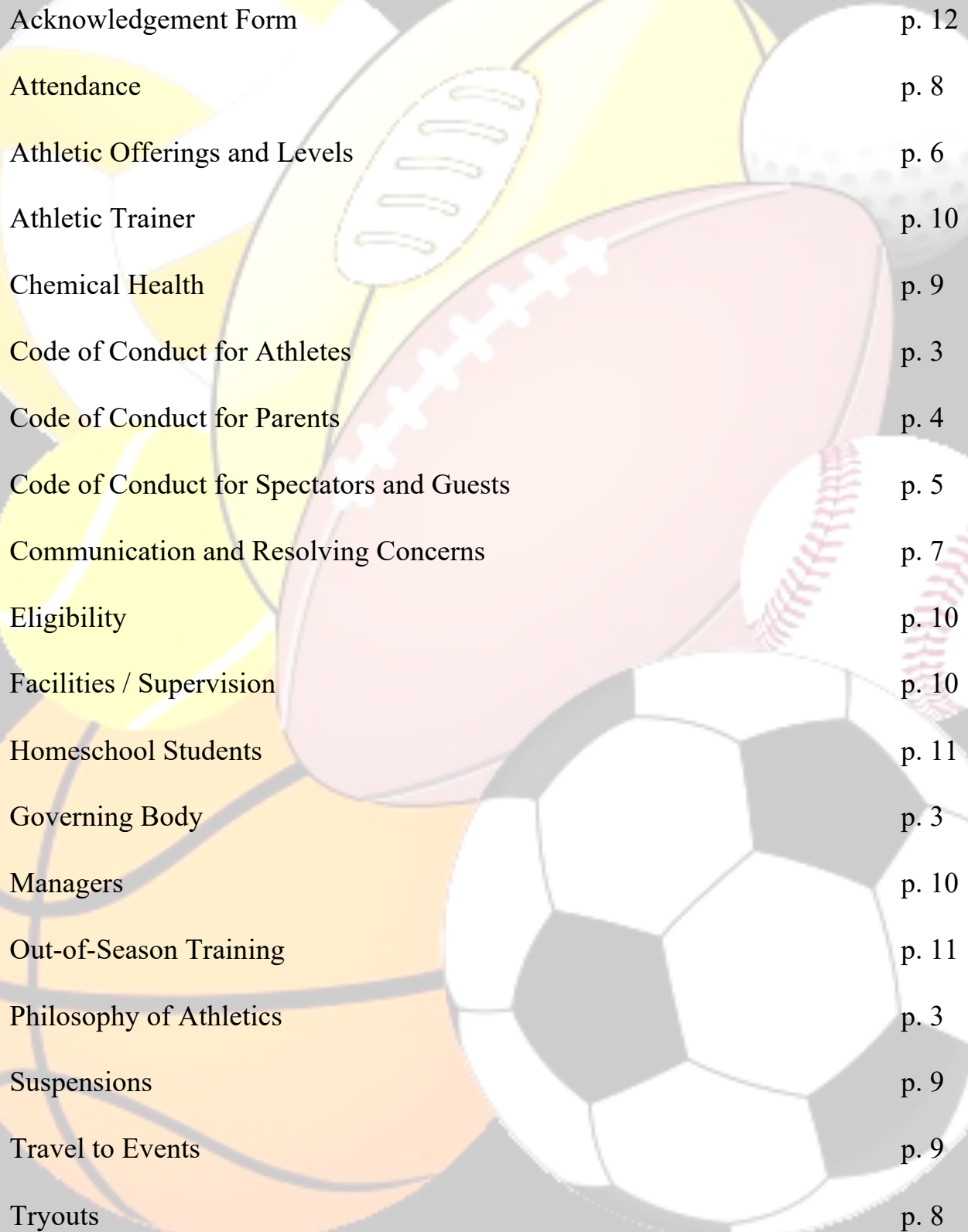
Athletics Handbook

2023-2024



Member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association

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Philosophy of Athletics

The athletic programs in the Saint Clair County School System are committed to providing a safe learning environment, where athletics are an extension of the school day. Our coaches are charged with the responsibility to teach the values of sportsmanship, confidence, and tolerance, participation within the rules, physical well-being, leadership, organization, sacrifice, self-discipline, and teamwork. Through athletic involvement, students will be respectful, accountable, and loyal citizens of the Saint Clair County community and will learn the value of a healthy lifestyle. We pride ourselves on promoting an atmosphere of competitiveness while respecting the game, its participants, and the hard-work and dedication from all people that make the event possible.

Governing Body

The High Schools and Middle Schools of the Saint Clair County School System are members in good standing of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). With this membership, the schools and all athletic programs agree to abide by all rules and regulation of the AHSAA. Information about the AHSAA and the rules our student-athletes must abide by are available at www.ahsaa.com.

Code of Conduct for Athletic Participation

The athletic standards of the Saint Clair County School System are designed to encourage responsible and safe decision-making by all students and to promote a positive learning environment within the community. The Saint Clair County School System (SCCS) maintains that the possession and/or use of illicit drugs and unlawful possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco or tobacco-like products by minors/students is wrong and can be physically and/or emotionally harmful to students. Therefore, the SCCS has strict rules against being knowingly in the unlawful presence of and/or possession, sale, transfer, or use of these substances, whether or not they are on school property or at a school function. As a participating member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA), our system is committed to meeting or exceeding their standards for code of conduct and discipline.

1. Student-athletes are subject to school rules and regulations governing student behavior as cited in the Saint Clair County Code of Conduct and in conjunction with the AHSAA policies and guidelines. All participants are reminded that they must be good citizens and be NFHS sportsmanship certified to represent their school and community in athletic activities. Violations of school rules resulting in suspension will automatically preclude student involvement in athletic activities for the length of the suspension. In addition, depending upon the severity of the violation, the student could be removed from participating in athletics for remainder of school year.

2. Student-athletes found on school premises or at a school sponsored event, including athletic games, in possession of a controlled substance may be subject to expulsion from the school in accordance with procedures established by state, federal, and local laws.
3. Students should be aware that if they are part of a group that engages in activities contrary to school rules, they may come under suspicion and be subject to investigation if that is deemed appropriate by the administration. It is wise, therefore, either to prevent the wrongdoing, or failing that, to remove oneself from the group as soon as possible without putting oneself at risk.

Sport Parent Code of Conduct

As a parent of a student-athlete:

1. I will not force my daughter/son to participate in athletics.
2. I will remember that student-athletes participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my son/daughter or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game.
5. I will teach my daughter/son to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
6. I will teach my daughter/son that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
7. I will praise my daughter/son for competing fairly and trying hard and making my child feel like a winner every time.
8. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I have for my child to win.
9. I will demand a sports environment that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
10. I will refrain from coaching my daughter/son or other players during the games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
11. I will avoid speaking negatively about the coach in front of my daughter/son. It may create an insurmountable barrier in their hopes for improvement in their sport.
12. I will not use social media to communicate derogatory comments about the school, team, coaches, or players.
13. I will pay all fees associated with the program in a timely manner, and I understand that fees are non-refundable if my child quits or is removed from the team because of disciplinary concerns.
14. I will participate in all fundraisers associated with my daughter/son's sport and the athletic booster club.

Expectations of Conduct for Spectators and Guests

The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity should permeate all interscholastic athletics in our community. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Our athletic fields should be the laboratories to produce good citizens reflecting “fair play” in every area of life. The Saint Clair County Schools reserve the right to deny entry or remove someone from a school-sponsored event if deemed in the best interest of the school system.

Expectations of Spectators, Guests, and Other Fans:

- Game attendance is a privilege.
- Respect the entire playing of the National Anthem.
- Respect decisions made by contest officials.
- Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs.
- Become aware of the purpose of the sport and rules, and keep winning in its proper place.
- Respect fans, coaches, and participants.
- Recognize outstanding performances of either side of the playing field.

Suggesting Positive Behavior Guidelines:

- Applaud during introduction of players, coaches, and officials.
- Accept all decisions by officials.
- Handshakes between participants and coaches at end of contest, regardless of outcome.
- Search out opposing participants to recognize them for outstanding performance of coaching.
- Applaud at end of contest for performances of all participants.
- Demonstrate concern for injured player, regardless of team.
- Encourage supporting people to display only sportsmanlike conduct.

Unacceptable Behavior:

- Yelling or directing negative chants or gestures toward opponent.
- Booing or heckling an official’s decision.
- Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official’s call.
- Refusing to shake hands or to give recognition for good performances.
- Blaming a loss of game on officials, coaches, or participants.
- Laughing or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- Using profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.
- “Coaching” the student-athletes during a competition from the stands.



Athletic Offerings and Levels

Fall Sports

- Cheerleading
- Cross Country
- Flag Football
- Football
- Volleyball

Winter Sports

- Basketball
- Bowling
- Cheerleading
- Indoor Track and Field
- Swimming and Diving
- Wrestling

Spring Sports

- Baseball
- eSports
- Golf
- Outdoor Track and Field
- Softball
- Tennis

Levels:

- **Varsity**
Varsity play is designed to develop high proficiency in all aspects of the sport. Winning within the context of the rules, the spirit of good sportsmanship and fair play is emphasized. The amount of game time is determined by the coach's evaluation of the athlete's attitude, attendance, work ethic, skill, and team role at practice.
- **JV / Freshman**
Sub-Varsity play is designed to develop, reinforce, and refine fundamental skills of the sport and should provide equal practice opportunities for all participants. The amount of game time is determined by the coach's evaluation of the athlete's attitude, attendance, work ethic, skill, and team role at practice. Coaches strive to teach athletes to compete within the rules of sportsmanship and fair play while developing the ambition to achieve at the next level of competition.

Communication and Resolving Concerns

Athletic involvement, while fun and rewarding, can be very time consuming and emotional. Due to the level of effort and emotion invested, conflicts between players and coaches may arise. All conflicts should be addressed professionally and as soon as possible.

To accomplish this, please follow the following guidelines:

FIRST STEP: Student-Athlete and Coach Contact

The student-athlete should meet individually with the coach to share concerns and/or discuss any issue or conflict. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to make an attempt to meet with the coach before involving others, if at all possible.

Times to be avoided when initiating contact:

- Immediately prior to and/or right after a contest
- During an active practice session
- During a time when other students are present and/or when the discussion is readily visible by others
- When it is apparent that there is not sufficient time to allow for complete discussion

SECOND STEP: Parent/Guardian and Coach Contact

If a conflict between a student-athlete and a coach remains unresolved or becomes a chronic issue, the parent/guardian and student should schedule a meeting with the coach. The student should be involved and present at this meeting.

THIRD STEP: Parent/Guardian and Athletic Director

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student-athlete and parent/guardian should inform the coach that they intend to contact the Athletic Director. A meeting with the Athletic Director should be scheduled through the Athletic Office.

FOURTH STEP: Parent/Guardian and Administration Contact

If existing concerns remain following a meeting with the Athletic Director, the student-athlete and parent/guardian should acknowledge such and initiate contact with the Athletic Administrator and/or Principal.

****Please note: If you believe that, due to the seriousness and/or nature of your concerns and or complaint, you may express your concerns directly to the SCCS Athletic Director.**

Tryouts

Representing a Saint Clair County School member through athletics is a privilege. Students are encouraged to become involved in athletics each season. Participating in tryouts (unless tryouts are not required) is necessary to be considered for an athletic team. In some programs, there is a risk of not being selected for a team. Team sizes may be limited due to the nature of the sport, the number of candidates, or to ensure player safety and practice time. The squad size will be determined by the Head Coach of the sport.

The coaching staff of each team has the sole responsibility for selecting members of the team, determining the level of play, and the amount of playing time. Prior to tryouts, all candidates will be informed as to the expectations that the coach has for them during tryouts.

Whenever possible, no cuts will be made until after two days of tryouts. Any student not selected is encouraged to explore other opportunities on teams that have not finalized their rosters.

Attendance

Daily School Attendance

To be eligible to participate in any athletic event (practice or game), the student must be present in school for at least one half of the school day. Approved field trips or school activities constitute attending school. The building principal may approve exceptions prior to the absence. The absence must be an excused absence.

Daily Team Attendance

When selected for a specific athletic team, it is expected that the student attend all practices and games pertinent to that team. Weekend practices vary by sport and should be expected. If there is a conflict, it needs to be communicated to the coach prior to the scheduled event.

Permanent Dismissal from Team

In the event that a student is permanently dismissed from being a member of a team, the coach will make every effort to contact the parent prior to the dismissal. Academically, the student will be removed from the athletic class, and be placed in an alternate class as deemed appropriate by the counselor. If a student quits a team after the competitive season begins, that student will not be eligible to participate in another sport until the previous team's competitive season is complete.

Vacations and Extended Absences

Each team member is expected to be present for all team practices and games. Due to scheduling parameters, a number of our teams will practice and/or play games during scheduled school vacations. Students, knowing that they will be absent for an extended period of time, should discuss their situation with the coach prior to trying out for the team. Coaches will discuss with the student what the penalty will be if they miss games and/or practices due to a vacation or extended absence.

Travel to Events

Travel to athletic events from the school campus will either be provided by the sport using a bus, or will be provided by the parent of the student. If a parent is driving a student to an athletic event, a "Parent/Volunteer Driving Form" must be on file prior to the event. An athlete may not drive to the event they are participating in.

School Suspensions

Suspension from school involves the denial of a student's privilege to attend school and its activities. This action is taken when it is obvious that no other action is suitable or likely to result in the correction of a student's unacceptable behavior. If the suspension carries multiple days, including weekends, the student is ineligible to participate in practices or games until he/she returns to "good disciplinary standing" with the school. If the suspension is the result of a student's behavior at school or a school sponsored activity, and the offense is severe to be referred to Alternative School, the student may be subject to restrictions for the duration of the discipline. A suspended student is not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or athletics while suspended. In addition to the suspension, the student may be removed from the team for remainder of the season. The decision will be made in coordination with the coach, the Athletic Director, and the school's Administration.

In-school suspension involves the temporarily removal of the student from his/her academic classes. Since, the ISS classroom is on-school campus and the student has not missed the academic school day, the student may be eligible to participate in practices and games at end of the school day. However, if the ISS placement covers multiple days, the student will be ineligible to participate in a game until he/she has completed the ISS placement for the disciplinary infraction. For example, if a student is assigned 2 days of ISS, they will be eligible to participate after completing the 2nd day of ISS. If assigned Monday and Tuesday, the student-athlete is eligible to participate at the end of the school day Tuesday. The student will be able to participate in practice at the discretion of the coach. Additional disciplinary actions from the coach may be taken if deemed appropriate.

If a student's conduct during a game is deemed by school and/or County Administration to be a major infraction toward the Code of Conduct and produces negative publicity on the Saint Clair County Schools, the student will be in violation of the AHSAA STAR Sportsmanship agreement. SCCS policy for such infractions may warrant suspension from competition. The student will be responsible for paying any fines to the AHSAA and completing the STAR Take 2 program. The student may be suspended from competition until the fines are paid.

Chemical Health

From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event) whichever is latest, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco or tobacco-like product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as "near beer". If in violation, the student's discipline will be 10% game suspension based on the amount of regular season games. If student is out-of-season, the suspension will be applied to the next season. The athlete may also incur disciplinary actions by the coach of the sport.

Eligibility

Academic Eligibility:

To be academically eligible for athletic participation, the AHSAA has mandated that all students in high school must pass 4 core classes (history, math, science, English) and 2 elective courses with at least a 70% average in the most recent 2 semesters.

Athletic Eligibility:

To be athletically eligible for athletic participation, the AHSAA has mandated that all students in high school must adhere to specific guidelines:

1. A student must be under the age of 19 on/after August 1st of the current school year.
2. A student is eligible only for four consecutive years upon entering 9th grade.
3. A student must be enrolled in school within the 1st 20 days of school and must reside in the school zone (unless already enrolled for 1 year prior to playing a sport)
4. A student must be STAR certified, have a current physical on file, complete the AHSAA agreement, and have current insurance.

Facilities / Supervision

The proper care of athletic facilities is the responsibility of each coach and athlete. Damage to any equipment or facility must be reported immediately to the Athletic Director. A member of the coaching staff (school board employee) must supervise all activities by athletes and no student is allowed access to any of the athletic facilities without proper supervision. Student-athletes are expected to respect all athletic facilities and school property. We expect the students to take pride in their facilities and school and aid in keeping everything in good condition. Any type of vandalism will not be tolerated. Students may not use the gym or weight room unless properly supervised by a coach. Coaches may not leave until all athletes have left the facility.

Athletic Trainer & Training Room

Most of the Saint Clair County Schools has an athletic trainer on site to evaluate and treat athletic injuries as they may occur. The athletic trainer provides medical assistance or treatment for athletic contests and practices, but is limited to being at one place at any one time. In case of injury, the athletic trainer will evaluate and recommend care of the injury to the parent/guardian. If a visit to the hospital or physician is necessary, a written medical note from the physician releasing the athlete from treatment or permitting them to return to participation is mandatory.

Managers

Students wanting to be a manager for a sport should contact the Head Coach of that particular sport. Sport managers are strictly up to the discretion of the coach and the requirements and duties are decided upon by the coach. A meeting should be scheduled with the coach, the student, and the student's parents to discuss these duties and requirements. If a student requires supervision to fulfill the duties as a manager, the parents will be responsible for providing supervision for all extra-curricular activities he/she is involved with.

Out-of-Season Involvement

Participation in out-of-season clinics, camps, leagues, or other related sports activities is strictly up to the discretion of the athlete and his/her parents/guardians. While such participation will improve one's knowledge and skill, it is the individual's decision whether they wish to become involved in such activities. Participation in such activities will have no bearing on the student athlete's participation on any Saint Clair County School System's athletic team. The Athletic Department encourages all students to take full advantage of the activities we offer and become involved in more than one sport.

It is important to understand that some out-of-season activities are not sanctioned and therefore could cause the athlete to become ineligible to participate in regular season activities. Any athlete desiring to participate in such events MUST contact the Head Coach prior to joining/registering. The Head Coach will then contact the Athletic Director to ensure the event is sanctioned.

Homeschool Students

In accordance to State Legislature and the AHSAA, homeschool students will be allowed to participate in athletics. Specific guidelines must be met in order to participate...

1. Must be enrolled in the school in which student resides by Day 3 at beginning of school year (a home visit by a member of the local school is required).
2. Must be enrolled in school prior to participating with any athletic team (enrolling DOES NOT guarantee a spot on any athletic team).
3. Must have all paperwork associated with playing athletics for SCCS and AHSAA (physical, insurance, consent, etc.).
4. Must participate in the tryout of the sport (if required) and must make the team like all other students.
5. Must take a semester exam for all Homeschool courses each semester at the school provided by the State.
6. Must take 2 elective classes through the ACCESS program (online course) provided by the school.
7. Must obtain and maintain an overall grade of 70%, pass 4 core courses, and 2 elective courses.
8. Must participate in all fundraising events associated with SCCS athletics, the Booster Club, and the sport(s) the student plays.
9. Must pay all fees associated with the sport like all other students.
10. May not receive any outside training during the school day (will immediately be ineligible).
11. May only be on a SCCS campus during the times the sport is in session
12. All AHSAA bylaws can be found at this website...
 - a. www.ahsaa.com (Click on Publications, current Handbook)



**Parent and Student Athletic Acknowledgement Form
2023-2024**

1. Student Code of Conduct

I am aware of the rules governing the code of conduct for parents, spectators, and athletes. I understand these rules and understand that failure to follow these rules may result in me not be able to attend athletic events in a capacity of spectator or as a player.

My signature below indicates that as a parent/athlete, I have reviewed and will abide by the guidelines and requests set forth in the SCCS Athletic Handbook.

Print Student's Name

Grade

Date

Student Signature

Parent Signature

2. SCCS Athletic Handbook

I am aware that a copy of the SCCS Athletic Handbook is available to me and my daughter/son via the SCCS Athletic Website: (www.sccboe.org) Click Forms.

My signature below indicates acknowledgement of my responsibility as a parent/athlete to read and be accountable for the policies addressed within the SCCS Athletic Handbook.

Student Signature

Parent Signature