

Oconee County Schools Athletic Handbook



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www.oconeeschools.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#).....2

[Purpose](#).....2

[Scheduling](#).....2

[Participation](#).....3

[Profile](#).....3

[High School Ticket Prices](#)4

[Athletic Behavior Code](#).....4

[Code of Ethics](#).....4

[Discipline](#).....5

[Spectators](#).....6

[Athlete/Parent/Coach Communication Process](#)7

[Parent/Coach Communication](#)7

[Attendance and Practice](#).....8

[Athletes Going From One Sport to Another](#).....8

[Awards/Lettering](#)9

[Competitive Interscholastic Activities in Grades 6-8](#).....9

[Competitive Interscholastic Activities in Grades 9-12: No Pass/No Participation](#).....10

[Equipment](#).....10

[Equity in Sports Act \(HB 1308\)](#).....11

[Insurance](#).....11

[Media](#)11

[Multiple-Sport Athletes](#)12

[Parent Meeting](#).....12

[Physical Examinations](#).....12

[School Colors](#).....13

[Supervision](#)13

[Transportation and Travel](#).....13

[Tryouts and Team Selection](#)14

[Weather Regulations](#).....15

[OCS Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment Form](#)16

[OCS Statement of Student Responsibilities for Weight Room Use](#).....17

[OCS Drug Screening Consent Form for Grades 9-12](#)18

[GHSA Student/Parent Concussion Awareness Form](#).....19

INTRODUCTION

The athletic departments are integral parts of the educational environment of the Oconee County Schools (OCS). OCS believes that athletics has a major role in the overall development of its young people. Athletic competition adds to the OCS spirit and helps all students, participants, and spectators to develop pride in their schools and community. Every student athlete, through their public participation, is an ambassador for our county.

Research indicates that a student involved in competitive interscholastic activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided in this handbook makes both your child's and your experience with the various school athletic programs less stressful and more enjoyable.

All students who participate in competitive interscholastic activities shall abide by the guidelines contained in the Oconee County Schools policies, regulations, this handbook and any other guidelines pertaining to competitive interscholastic activities, such as the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Constitution and By-Laws (www.ghsa.net).

The Athletic Departments of the Oconee County Schools provide a comprehensive program of team and individual sports opportunities including football, basketball, cross country, fast pitch softball, volleyball, swimming, diving, baseball, soccer, golf, tennis, track, cheerleading, wrestling, and gymnastics.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Oconee County Schools Athletic Handbook* is to provide coaches, student athletes, and parents/guardians with the necessary information to make the athletic experience a rewarding one for all involved. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the information provided and with the rules and regulations that govern the OCS athletic programs in this handbook and on the school system web site.

Principals and Athletic Directors should make sure that all sponsors of activities are aware of these rules.

SCHEDULING

Interscholastic activities of the school will be under the supervision and control of the principal. Scheduling of competitive interscholastic activities will be accomplished by the principal and/or a designated staff member with the consensus of the athletic director after careful consideration of the effect and impact of the activities upon the participants and the total school program. Scheduling for high school regional and state playoffs falls under the jurisdiction of the Georgia High School Association.

Teams having players in grades seven and eight must not play more than 60 percent of the number of regularly scheduled games played by the high school varsity in any given sport. (One tournament, not to exceed four games, may be played in addition to the regular season games.)

Middle school games played on nights preceding a school day may not begin prior to the end of the regular school day and must end no later than four hours after the close of the home team's school day. Only one school day per week may be used by any middle school team for interscholastic athletic games. Tournaments are excluded from this restriction.

Ninth grade or “B” teams must not play more than 70 percent of the number of regularly scheduled games played by the high school varsity in any sport. (One tournament, not to exceed four games, may be played in addition to the regular season games.)

PARTICIPATION

Students participating in athletics must have a signed statement from their parents/guardians (on file in the principal’s office) giving permission for the student to participate and relieving the schools and the Board of Education of any responsibility for injury or death which may occur as a result of such activity.

Georgia High School Association rules require that, in order to be eligible to participate and/or try out for an activity, a student must be enrolled at the school seeking eligibility or, in the case of 8th grade students, must be enrolled in a feeder school. (More information about non-feeder schools is available in the *Tryouts and Team Selection* section.) Students who are “planning” to move to Oconee County, but who are not yet enrolled in the system, are not eligible to try out for athletics, cheerleading, or any other GHSA activity until they are actually enrolled in an OCS school.

Middle school extracurricular activities are not regulated by GHSA; however, OCS will use the same enrollment eligibility guidelines utilized by GHSA for high schools.

PROFILE

Oconee County Schools offers athletic opportunities for students in grades 7 and 8 in middle school and grades 9 through 12 on varsity, junior varsity and C team levels.

OCS currently sponsors the following activities for high school for the fall, winter and spring seasons:

FALL

VARSITY

Cheerleading
Competition Cheerleading
Cross Country (B & G)
Fast Pitch Softball
Football
Volleyball (G)

JUNIOR VARSITY

Cheerleading
Cross Country (B & G)
Fast Pitch Softball
Football
Volleyball (G)

C TEAM

Football

WINTER

VARSITY

Basketball (B & G)
Cheerleading
Swimming/Diving (B & G)
Wrestling

JUNIOR VARSITY

Basketball (B & G)
Cheerleading
Swimming/Diving (B & G)
Wrestling

C TEAM

Basketball (B)

SPRING

VARSITY

Baseball
Golf (B & G)
Soccer (B & G)
Tennis (B & G)
Track (B & G)
Gymnastics

JR. VARSITY

Baseball
Golf (B & G)
Soccer (B & G)
Tennis (B & G)
Track (B & G)

C TEAM

Baseball
Soccer

8th Graders may participate on JV or C teams at NOHS and OCHS as long as the sport is not offered at MBMS or OCMS. An 8th grader may not displace a NOHS or OCHS athlete in the 9th-12th grade.

Sports offerings can only be changed (added or discontinued) by mutual agreement among the principals at the level involved and with the approval of the Superintendent.

Teams will be sponsored depending on the interest of student athletes.

HIGH SCHOOL TICKET PRICES

STUDENT HOME GAME PASS - \$60

(Valued at over \$200)

Includes all home games, excluding region and state play-offs

Playoff ticket prices are set by GHSA and will be released after the regular season.

NOTE: Ticket prices may increase without notice or differ based on the school.

ATHLETIC BEHAVIOR CODE

OCS athletic programs are open to all students. Through voluntary participation, the athlete gives time, energy, and loyalty to their chosen program. Participation in the various athletic programs is a privilege granted to the young men and women of our schools in return for compliance with the training rules, regulations, and responsibilities which are unique to an athletic program as well as the policies and regulations of the school system.

It is our desire that all individuals (athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and supervisors) involved with interscholastic athletics display behavior that reflects the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and a sense of fair play. It is important for all to recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players. Participation in athletics is a privilege which carries with it varying degrees of honor, responsibility, and sacrifice. Since competition is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate shall be expected to follow the rules established by the Oconee County Schools athletic departments and other specific coaches' rules for their particular sport. Please remember that, most of all, it is the duty of all parties concerned with middle and high school athletics to remember that each individual athletic contest is only a game and should be kept in that perspective.

CODE OF ETHICS

The athlete is expected:

- To abide by the OCS Student Code of Conduct.
- To attend school regularly and be punctual to class.
- To avoid the use of profanity, abusive language, or gestures in dealing with opponents, officials, or spectators.
- To abstain from the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco at all times.
- To accept the decisions of officials without question.

- To show consideration for the playing facilities of all schools (both home and away).
- To be a positive role model for other students and athletes in academics, language, dress, and behavior - both on and off the playing area. (Remember that an athlete assumes a leadership role and that younger students emulate your behavior.)
- To avoid displays of self-glorification.
- To accept victory with grace and defeat with dignity.

Violators of this code are subject to suspension or dismissal from the team.

DISCIPLINE

The Oconee County Schools athletic departments will not condone the violation of the OCS Student Code of Conduct, training rules, BOE policies, or the procedures outlined in the OCS Athletic Handbook. Should violations occur, the athletic staff has the authority to prescribe the appropriate consequences.

Drugs and Alcohol (controlled substances)

The Oconee County Board of Education has adopted a policy for student drug/alcohol use and the accompanying regulation outlines the offenses and their consequences. A signed consent form is a mandatory requirement for participation in any GHSA governed interscholastic activity that requires an annual physical examination for participation. This signed form authorizes the school to administer drug/alcohol testing and allows the results of the test to be released to parents/guardians, administrative officials, and the head coach of the athletic teams on which the student participates. Student athletes will be given the following options when a positive drug/alcohol test occurs or when there is proof that the student has violated the drug, alcohol, and tobacco statement in the Code of Ethics.

First Positive

If a test is returned positive, the parents/guardians and the student will be notified.

The student athlete will be suspended for 10% of the team's regular season contests beginning with the next scheduled game. (This could be a playoff game or a game in the following season; it does not include practice scrimmages.) The student athlete may remain a part of the team and will be expected to participate in team practices or conditioning sessions.

The student and parents/guardians must provide evidence of enrollment in the drug/alcohol counseling program approved by the school system (Prime for Life.) At this time, the cost of the intervention program will be the responsibility of the student and the parents/guardians. The student must agree to another drug/alcohol test (at the family's expense) within a time frame recommended by the Toxicology Lab.

Second Positive

If a student has a second positive screening, the parent/guardian and the student will be notified. The student will be suspended from the team at the time of notification. A meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians, the student, the principal and, if applicable, the head coach and athletic director to arrange the following:

- Agree to participate in a drug/alcohol treatment and counseling program for a minimum of four weeks; parents/guardians are also expected to participate in the program; the cost of the program will be the responsibility of the student and the parents/guardians.

- Sign an agreement that releases Oconee County Schools from any liability arising out of the required drug/alcohol testing and/or treatment program.
- Apply for reinstatement to the team after a minimum of four weeks if the following provisions are met: (a) provide a negative drug/alcohol screen to school administration; (b) agree to continue with drug/alcohol counseling; (c) agree to be subjected to future testing on demand at the student's expense and (d) understand that the application for reinstatement may be denied (the principal and, if applicable, the head coach and/or athletic director will decide on reinstatement.)

Third Positive

A third positive screening will result in suspension from all interscholastic athletics and/or parking privileges for one calendar year from date of result. Parents/guardians and the student will be notified immediately. Continued counseling and treatment during the year of suspension is expected with periodic testing at the family's expense. Reinstatement procedures will remain constant, meaning they will have to go through the reinstatement process outlined in the Second Positive.

Other Misconduct

The coaching staff reserves the right to administer consequences for misbehavior subversive to good order and discipline on the athletic team. Such behavior may or may not be specified in the preceding material. Offenses would have to be discovered by an administrator, coach, parent/guardian, or teacher.

Students attending the Oconee Community School (Alternative School) are **NOT** eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Only after a student returns to their home school can they be considered eligible for participation on athletic teams if all other requirements are met.

SPECTATORS

All participants and spectators at any school event are expected to behave responsibly while on any school campus. Violators are subject to eviction from the event and/or being banned from future events at OCS.

Expectations of Spectators:

- To conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.
- To show respect and positive support for officials, coaches, and players prior, during, and after the game.
- To recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team.
- To participate in cheers that support, encourage, and uplift the teams involved.
- To understand that school athletics is an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for the student athletes.
- To treat visiting teams and officials as guests, extending every courtesy.
- To understand that schools are responsible for the conduct of their respective spectators **whether home or away.**

ATHLETE/PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION PROCESS

It is our expectation that communication will be encouraged and maintained among parents, athletes, and coaches. Parents are entitled answers to legitimate questions regarding their child's performance and/or status. During the season, concerns may arise. Our philosophy at OCS is that we are student/athlete advocates. The following communication process will be followed:

- Step 1:** Player meets with the coach to discuss concerns/issues.
- Step 2:** If unresolved, player and parent meet with the coach for further discussion.
- Step 3:** If unresolved, player, parent, and the coach meet with the athletic director for further discussion.
- Step 4:** As a last resort, player, parent, coach, and the athletic director meet with the building principal.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to students. As a parent, when your child becomes involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach regarding your child's program.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all players on the squad
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline which results in the denial of your child's participation

Communication coaches expect from parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
 2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
 3. Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
- As your child becomes involved in the program, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child might desire. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other topics, such as those listed below, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Team strategy
2. Play calling
3. Playing time
4. Team position
5. Other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the appropriate procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue or concern. **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 do not promote a favorable resolution.** If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, you should follow the procedure outlined in the "Athlete/Parent/Coach Communication Process" section of this handbook.

ATTENDANCE AND PRACTICE

1. A student must be in attendance for at least a half day in order to participate in a practice or game.
2. A student that has been assigned to OSS or ISS may not participate in a practice or a game until the ISS has been satisfactorily completed. Out-of-school suspension is effective from the time the disposition is assessed until the beginning of the first day that the student is back in school. ISS begins the morning of the first day and ends at 3:30 pm on the last school day assigned provided that all work has been satisfactorily completed.
3. A student who goes on a field trip is not considered absent.
4. All individual or group practice will be conducted before the start or after the end of the academic school day exclusive of recess and lunch periods.
5. All athletes are required to attend all scheduled team practices and contests unless specifically excused for medical, religious, or other reasons deemed appropriate by the coach and/or athletic director.
6. Athletes should be prepared to practice on Saturdays and during school vacations. Outside commitments that restrict practice attendance on Saturdays and during school vacations are not acceptable. Athletes who miss practice will be subject to discipline by the coach. This does not apply to absences for religious reasons.
7. Athletes cannot miss practices or events to attend other extra-curricular activities. This is one of the sacrifices athletes must make and is essential to team building.
8. It is recommended that parents plan vacations so as not to conflict with their son's/daughter's participation on a team.

ATHLETES GOING FROM ONE SPORT TO ANOTHER

Whenever students enlist in the athletic program by joining or trying-out for a specific team, they assume a responsibility and commitment to that team and coach. Dropping out of a sport is discouraged. On occasion, however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. Dropping a sport and subsequent transferring to another sport shall be governed by the following guidelines:

1. An athlete who wishes to leave a team (and/or transfer to another) may do so provided he/she leaves while in good standing and only after discussing with the coach the reason for leaving. All issued equipment must be returned.
2. No changing of teams will be allowed after the second week of a season or after the final cut has been made on the team being dropped or the team to be joined.
3. The athlete must meet the requirements for the new sport before he/she may participate in any athletic contest.
4. An athlete who is dismissed from a squad for disciplinary reasons (i.e., violation of the code of conduct, insubordination, excessive unexcused absences, etc.) shall not be allowed to participate in another sport for the remainder for the sports season or until the period of suspension expires.
5. If you have lost equipment, you will have to pay for it **before** you start your new sport. When you are cleared from your previous sport, you can begin your new sport. **You may not begin a new sport until you are cleared from your previous sport.**
6. If you are new to a sport, you will need to turn in the physical form with all the appropriate information filled out completely before you begin practice. Then, the coach will check your eligibility. **This may mean that you do not start immediately in the new sport.**
7. It should be understood that students who are finishing one athletic season while tryouts are in progress for another season will be given special consideration and an opportunity for a delayed tryout.

AWARDS/LETTERING

Athletes must successfully complete the athletic season to be eligible for an award/letter including all post-season competition. Attendance at practices and competitions is an essential requirement. Awards/Letters are given by each coach for his/her particular sport. All guidelines for receiving an award and/or lettering are set by each coach with prior approval of the Athletic Director before the season starts. The criteria for awards/letters are made known to the student athlete and parents at the pre-season meeting.

COMPETITIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES IN GRADES 6-8

Sixth grade students in Oconee County Schools are not eligible for competitive interscholastic athletics.

Students, who have not attained ninth grade status but are participating in high school competitive interscholastic activities, shall abide by the appropriate grades 6-8 requirements. The principals of grades 6-8 shall be responsible for the compliance of this requirement.

Ineligible students are prohibited from practicing or dressing out for competitive interscholastic events.

Middle School Student Eligibility:

1. For determining student eligibility, the grading period shall be a semester. The same period shall be the minimum length of ineligibility period
2. Students participating in competitive interscholastic activities shall pass a minimum of 70% of courses carrying credit toward grade promotion in the semester immediately preceding participation. This means that the student must pass five out of six courses in a semester to be eligible.
3. An exploratory course that is comprised of several multi-week courses taken during the same period of the day within the semester shall be averaged to count as one subject for eligibility purposes.

4. If more than one exploratory course is taken during a semester (during two different periods of the day), then each course shall be individually calculated into the average to determine student eligibility.
5. Student eligibility shall be determined on the first school day of each semester.

**COMPETITIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC
ACTIVITIES IN GRADES 9-12
NO PASS / NO PARTICIPATE**

To be eligible for high school competition, students must satisfy the following requirements:

1. **Rising 9th graders** must meet Georgia High School Association eligibility status.
2. **Rising 10th graders** must accumulate 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have passed 5 units in the previous school year.
3. **Rising 11th graders** must accumulate 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have passed 12 units entering the third year of high school.
4. **Rising 12th graders** must have accumulated 2.5 units in the previous grading period and must have passed 20 units entering the fourth year of high school.

- **ONE UNIT EQUALS ONE FULL SEMESTER CLASS.**
- **A HALF UNIT EQUALS ONE NINE-WEEK CLASS.**
- **ELIGIBILITY IS ESTABLISHED AT THE END OF EACH SEMESTER.**

EQUIPMENT

It is important to emphasize to all student athletes their responsibility as team members to take good care of school equipment and report any abuses to their coach or athletic director. Replacing or repairing equipment is expensive. Athletes are expected to follow these rules regarding equipment:

1. Equipment issued by the Athletic Department is to be worn only during practice and interscholastic contests or with the permission of the coach. At no time are student athletes to wear school-issued equipment or uniforms for:
 - a. Physical education classes
 - b. Work or job
 - c. Social events
2. An athletic team member may wear his/her entire uniform, uniform top, or game jersey only under the direction of his/her coach.

3. Each athlete is solely responsible for all the equipment and uniform components signed out in his or her name. Lost, stolen or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at the athlete's expense.
4. Immediately report any loss, theft, or damaged equipment or uniform to your coach. Lost, stolen, or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at cost. Cost may include replacing a complete set when items cannot be replaced individually. The athlete is notified in writing of the amount he or she owes.
5. All uniforms and equipment must be returned in good condition on the date specified by the coach, or athletes will be charged the replacement cost. **Compensation is required regardless of whether or not the athlete still has the item! Athletes will not be permitted to practice or tryout for another sport until the school is compensated for all unreturned items.**
6. Each head coach is directly responsible for the care and control of all equipment used in his/her program.
7. Coaches should establish a system to distribute and collect athletic equipment.
8. The head coach, although he/she may delegate the issuing of equipment to assistant coaches, is ultimately responsible for the issuing of equipment to all team personnel. Each coach must have the knowledge to ensure properly fitting equipment.
9. Coaches must instruct players in the proper use, care (cleaning), and maintenance of their equipment at the time of issue.
10. Coaches must periodically inspect and review the equipment issued to the student athletes to ensure safety. Equipment may break or deteriorate and become unsafe during the year. Replace unsafe or defective equipment. Facility hazards should be reported to the Athletic Director immediately.

EQUITY IN SPORTS ACT (HB 1308)

1. The NOHS and OCHS Athletic Directors have been assigned to render decisions regarding complaints relating to sex equity issues.
2. Parents and/or students may contact the Athletic Director to complete the appropriate form for filing a complaint.
3. Once filed with the Athletic Director, a written decision will be made within 30 days.
4. A copy of the Athletic Director's decision will be provided to the complainant.
5. A complainant has the right to appeal the decision of the Athletic Director to the local board of education within 35 days of the initial decision date.
6. A complainant may appeal a decision of a local board to the state board of education.

INSURANCE

A student must have adequate health insurance in order to be allowed to participate in school athletics. Any student not covered by an insurance plan must purchase the Student Accident Insurance Plan. Forms are available at the front office of the school and/or the athletic office.

MEDIA

The head coach is solely responsible to inform the media of their schedules, scores, tournaments, special recognitions, etc. The head coach can also assign another coach and/or a parent representative to be in contact with the media after games, tournaments, etc. Varsity head coaches should make arrangements with the media in order to secure proper recognition for team and individual accomplishments.

MULTIPLE-SPORT ATHLETES

All OCS athletes, parents, and coaches should understand the importance of the multiple-sport athlete to our program. We support, encourage, and allow students to participate in one, two, or three seasons as they so choose. It should be understood that students who are finishing one athletic season while tryouts are in progress for another season will be given special consideration and an opportunity for a delayed tryout. However, it is the duty of the athletes to discuss this with their coaches well in advance. Injury, illness, and other special situations will be taken into consideration as well, but must be authorized by the varsity head coach and athletic director. At no time should a coach encourage an athlete to specialize in one or more specific programs. Coaches will support the multiple-sport concept.

PARENT MEETING

Each coach will meet with the parents of his/her team to explain details of the upcoming season and summarize what will be expected of the athletes and what to expect from the coaching staff. Coaches will also outline their philosophy, practice schedule, game schedule, tryouts, making the team, etc.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

1. All students who participate in competitive interscholastic athletics and cheerleading shall have an annual physical examination prior to participation in any tryout, practice, or conditioning, whichever comes first, or thereafter as is deemed necessary to protect the health and physical welfare of participating students.
2. The physical examination form shall indicate approval for participation and be signed by a doctor of medicine, a doctor of osteopathy, or a physician's assistant.

The physical examination form shall also include the date the exam was performed (month, date, and year), the student's name, and the physician's signature. The form **must** be on file for all athletes in the Athletic Director's office **prior** to participation. Physicals examinations will be good for twelve (12) months from the date of the exam; however, those taken after April 1 are good for the entire subsequent school year.

Certified Athletic Trainers

Oconee County Schools is fortunate to have certified athletic trainers at each high school. The primary function of the trainers is to help protect our student athletes when injuries occur and to help rehabilitate the injury once it is sustained. When injuries occur, the athletic trainer will communicate with the coach and the parent on possible treatment options. The athletic trainer is not a substitute for a medical doctor; however, the athletic trainer can rehab the injury at the school. Athletic trainers will also check on heat readings prior to practice and report their findings to the Athletic Director/Principals, who will make a final decision on practice schedules.

SCHOOL COLORS

To continue the tradition of honoring school pride, all athletic uniforms worn by our students must predominantly display the school colors. Additional colors may be incorporated as accent colors as long as they are pre-approved by the Athletic Director. **All uniforms must be approved by the Athletic Director before ordering.**

SUPERVISION

Coaches are responsible for the athletes under their supervision and should be present and in control of the activities taking place while students are under their care. The coach's responsibility starts at the time the students have been instructed to report for practice, games, or meets (home or away) and ends when the last student athlete has left. Since the coaches are required to remain until all student athletes have been picked up, transportation arrangements by parents need to be done in advance. Parents should be on time for pick up after games and practices.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

All transportation is the coach's responsibility. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure all rules and regulations of bus transportation are followed. During an "away" contest, the following procedures should be followed:

1. While visiting another school, athletes representing OCS should dress and act appropriately at all times. Athletes are expected to travel to contests in appropriate attire as dictated by the coach. Coaches inform team members of the appropriate travel attire at a pre-season meeting or on the first day of practice.
2. Athletes are strongly advised not to travel with expensive jewelry, large amounts of cash, or other valuable items. An athlete who does so is solely responsible for the safekeeping of these items. OCS or the host school may not be held responsible for damage, loss, or theft.
3. Athletes should bring just enough money to pay for meals required during the trip. Teams are not required to stop for a meal after every away contest. Coaches will consider time (and/or location) when deciding to stop for an after-game meal.
4. Transportation to all athletic contests is provided by the school via school bus or commercial coach. All athletes and support personnel must travel to and from the contest on school transportation. Athletes are not permitted to drive themselves, drive other students, or ride with other students to athletic contests. Exceptions may be granted for some circumstances and only if a written request is made to the coach by the parent/guardian before the trip. The request for exception will be judged individually and may or may not be granted.
5. Athletes are expected to be ready to board the bus at the time designated by the coach. Coaches are instructed not to wait for tardy athletes. Habitually tardy athletes may face disciplinary action by the coach.
6. Occasionally, a team travels overnight for a contest or tournament. Athletes are held to all school policies for the duration of the trip. Essentially, the athlete will be "on school grounds" for the entire trip and any violation of school policy triggers the appropriate disciplinary action by the school. If an athlete disrupts the team or is a danger to himself or others, the parent or guardian is called and the athlete is sent home.

Each varsity head coach is responsible for arranging transportation to away games for his/her particular sport. At least three weeks prior to the beginning of the season, an Athletic Field Trip Information Form must be completed and turned into the Athletic Department.

Transportation back to the school following away games must be provided by the coach. Written permission from a parent/guardian must be given to the coach in order for their child to return home by transportation other than what is provided by Oconee County Schools.

TRY OUTS AND TEAM SELECTION

Our philosophy of athletics is driven by a desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic programs at Oconee County Schools. We encourage coaches to select as many students as possible without compromising the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, athletic ability, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. However, when developing procedure in this regard, coaches will strive to maximize the opportunities for student athletes without diluting the quality of the programs. Choosing the members and captains of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coach.

Prior to trying out, the coach will provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

- a. Extent of the tryout period
- b. Criteria used to select the team
- c. Number of students to be selected
- d. Practice commitment for those who make the team
- e. Game commitments

Sports are competitive and team rosters are limited. All students who try out may not be selected for the team. In all possible situations, athletes will be told by the coach when they have been cut. If circumstances dictate, rosters of the players who made the team may be posted at a location designated by the coach. Keep in mind that making a Junior Varsity or a C team does not automatically mean that you will make a Varsity team in the future. You will have to tryout and earn a spot on a Varsity team.

There may be some overlapping of sports seasons. Students who are participating in a previous season's sport may not quit that sport to practice in another. There is no penalty or disadvantage in the second sport because of this rule.

The goals of the tryout process are as follows:

- To judge the relative ability of the athletes and determine which athletes are likely to contribute the most to the program.
- To select the athletes that will benefit the most from the experience.
- To maintain a roster size that maximizes practice and playing opportunities for participants.
- To maintain a roster size that can be properly uniformed and equipped within the constraints of the athletic department budget.
- A student's prior discipline in school may affect a student's chances of making the team. (This right is reserved by the coach.)

Non-Feeder Schools: Athens Academy, Prince Avenue, Westminster and Athens Christian schools all have grades 9-12 and, therefore, are not considered feeder schools. St. Joseph's Catholic School is a feeder school for Monsignor Donovan Catholic High School.

Middle school students participating in high school sports cannot displace high school students on a given team. In other words, if high school team membership is reduced at any time during the official GHSA season, middle school students will be “cut” first.

WEATHER REGULATIONS

Athletic trainers at both high schools take a weather reading daily during the months of August and September to monitor heat issues. Once these readings are taken, the athletic trainer sends the report to the AD/Principal, who then forwards the report to the middle school administration. Principals will make the final decisions on practice schedules for their respective schools when heat issues arise. For more information on weather regulations, please go to the system web site, www.oconeeschools.org and look under policy/regulation [IDE\(3\)-R\(4\)](#).

Oconee County Schools Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment Form

Student Athlete: _____

Sport(s): _____

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read and understand the *Oconee County Schools Athletic Handbook*. I recognize that my child must abide by all procedures therein in order to remain eligible to participate in the athletic program and understand that violating the procedures will result in the loss of that privilege. Therefore, I support and accept the policies and regulations of the school board, including those that prohibit the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, and the procedures of the *OCS Athletic Handbook* while my child is involved in any athletic activity.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

As a student participant in the OCS athletic program, I have read and understand the *Oconee County Schools Athletic Handbook*. I recognize that I must abide by all procedures therein in order to remain eligible to participate in the athletic program and understand that violating the procedures will result in the loss of that privilege. Therefore, I support and accept the policies and regulations of the school board, including those that prohibit the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, and the procedures of the *OCS Athletic Handbook* while I am involved in any athletic activity.

Signature of Student Athlete

Date

The athlete is expected to abide by the Oconee County Schools Student Code of Conduct as well as the Athletic Code of Ethics contained in this handbook.

Athlete Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____

Date: _____

***Return this form to the head coach of your sport.**

Oconee County Schools

Statement of Student Responsibilities for Weight Room Use

1. No loitering.
2. No horse playing.
3. Follow designated work-outs, rules, and schedules.
4. Only exercises from the approved list developed by the strengthening coach should be used.
5. All injuries should be reported immediately.
6. All free weight exercises should be spotted by a person or persons physically able to assist with the weight. "Do not bang weights."
7. All weight equipment should be checked by the athlete before using to make sure it is in working order and safe to use. Immediately report any equipment malfunctions to a supervisor, attendant, or instructor.
8. Clothing appropriate for weight lifting should be worn: athletic shoes, socks, properly fitted shorts, and t-shirt. Jewelry and loose fitting clothing are prohibited. Towels are essential for wiping down equipment before use.
9. The athlete should warm-up before attempting lifts with heavy weights.
10. Lifting belts should be worn for any exercise when the back is not supported.
11. All weights should be returned to the racks when they are not in use. Do not remove weights from lifting area.
12. No food or drink is allowed in the weight room.
13. Clamps (collars) must be used on all free weight equipment.
14. No unattended personal equipment (books, book bags, clothing, etc.) should be left in the weight room.
15. No student athletes will be allowed in the weight room without proper adult (school) personnel.

The use of proper weight lifting techniques is essential for student safety.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read and fully understand the student procedures for weight room use. Failure to observe these rules will result in suspension of the privilege to use the weight room. I hereby voluntarily assume and understand all risks and responsibilities associated with participation of weight room activities. I understand that the procedures are developed for my safety; however, they cannot prevent all injuries in a weight room. I understand that weight lifting is a dangerous activity and injury can occur.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENTAL CONSENT

DATE

***Return this form to the head coach of your sport or to your high school athletic trainer.**

Oconee County Schools
34 School Street · Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
Drug Screening Consent Form for Grades 9-12
For Student Participation in GHSA Interscholastic Athletics

Involvement as a participant in interscholastic athletics in the Oconee County Schools (OCS) is a privilege and will be directly influenced by my conduct as an individual. I hereby agree to accept and abide by the standards, rules, and regulations set forth by OCS and their athletic departments for the athletic activities in which I participate.

I understand that submission to random urinalysis testing for the presence of drugs is a condition of participation in GHSA sanctioned interscholastic athletics in OCS. I further understand that if I refuse to take the test as outlined in the drug testing procedures, fail to report for the test, or if I establish a violation of the drug testing policy, I will face consequences set forth by the drug testing policy.

By signing and dating this form, I consent to participate in a computerized random selection process. If selected, I will submit to urinalysis testing procedures conducted by a qualified medical testing agency on site in the Oconee County Schools.

I understand that this form will be valid during my entire tenure with OCS and, at any time I declare my intention to participate in a GHSA sanctioned sport, I will be included in the random selection process.

_____ PRINT STUDENT NAME	_____ GRADE
_____ STUDENT SIGNATURE	_____ GRADE

_____ has my permission to participate in an interscholastic sport sanctioned by the Georgia High School Association. I understand the drug testing policy and give my consent for my son/daughter to submit to random testing as outlined in the OCS drug testing policy and regulations.

_____ PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	_____ DATE
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***Return this form to the head coach of your sport or to your high school athletic trainer.**

STUDENT/PARENT CONCUSSION AWARENESS FORM

SCHOOL: _____

DANGERS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention and a state law has been passed to address this issue. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” to the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or changes in brain function (either short-term or long-term). A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

Player and parental education in this area is crucial – that is the reason for this document. Refer to it regularly. This form must be signed by a parent or guardian of each student who wishes to participate in GHSA athletics. One copy needs to be returned to the school, and one retained at home.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- Headache, dizziness, poor balance, moves clumsily, reduced energy level/tiredness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred vision, sensitivity to light and sounds
- Fogginess of memory, difficulty concentrating, slowed thought processes, confused about surroundings or game assignments
- Unexplained changes in behavior and personality
- Loss of consciousness (NOTE: This does not occur in all concussion episodes.)

BY-LAW 2.68: GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include; licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.

- a) No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.
- b) Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.
- c) It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years –beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
- d) Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.

I HAVE READ THIS FORM AND I UNDERSTAND THE FACTS PRESENTED IN IT.

SIGNED: _____

(Student)

(Parent or Guardian)

DATE: _____