

STOKES COUNTY SCHOOLS

2022 -2023

MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



**CHESTNUT
GROVE**



**PINEY
GROVE**



**SOUTHEASTERN
STOKES**

INTRODUCTION

The Stokes County School System has a comprehensive athletic program for students. The Middle Schools are members of the Foothills Athletic Conference.

The Stokes County Middle School Interscholastic Athletic Programs are governed by policies established by the Stokes County Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA).

The Stokes County Middle School Athletic Handbook contains rules, regulations, policies, forms and other information for athletic directors, coaches, the student-athletes and parents(s)/guardian(s) to run the athletic programs effectively and efficiently. A complete knowledge of these rules and regulations is vital to ensure that the interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted in accordance with existing state and local policies. Please understand this handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included and each coach has the right to make reasonable rules that are more stringent than those outlined in this document.

Participation on athletic teams is strictly on a voluntary basis. Athletics are extracurricular activities conducted after the regular school day. The student-athlete must earn the privilege of participation through dedication, desire and discipline. Because participation is voluntary, certain basic requirements are necessary in order to make the athletic program a wholesome, successful and meaningful experience.

The requirements have been kept to a minimum, but important items are listed on the following pages in order for the student-athlete to fully understand what is required before making the decision to participate. Stokes County Schools promotes attitudes and practices that keep winning in perspective. Any activities that would compromise the efforts of good sportsmanship and ethical athletic practices are unacceptable. All student-athletes will adhere to the Stokes County Schools Athletic Handbook, the Student and Parent Handbook and state and local policies and consequences for violations. Because of student-athletes high visibility and their place as leaders of the school, the athletic director/coach may also discipline student-athletes. The rules and regulations as described in this handbook will be enforced. Before a student-athlete is allowed to participate in any sport, the **Middle School Athletic Participation Requirements Form** (located in the back of handbook) stating the Athletic Handbook has been read and understood, **must be signed by the student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s).**

The goals of the athletic department are to provide opportunities for student athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline, acceptable personal and social behavior and character. The athletic program is designed to produce well-rounded citizens. The program is intended to develop leadership skills, a sense of responsibility, accountability and sportsmanlike attitudes.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide participants with the best possible administration, supervision and instruction available.
- To provide participants with quality facilities and equipment that is both safe and student friendly.
- To provide participants with safe, quality transportation to and from all competitions and activities.

ATHLETIC INFORMATION

DRESS

Student-athletes are to dress at practice and all games in an appropriate manner in accordance to the dress code as described in the Stokes County Schools Student and Parent Handbook. Coaches may stipulate game day dress code.

EXPENSES

When student-athletes or parent(s)/guardian(s) choose to make purchases related to athletic participation (e.g., camps, trips, clothing, equipment for personal use or any other purpose related to participation), the expenses will be the sole responsibility of that student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s). The Stokes County Schools System will in no way to any degree, cover or reimburse expenses at any time.

INSURANCE

By its nature, participation in interscholastic athletics includes risk of injury; therefore, participants have the responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. Student-athletes must obey all safety rules and warnings, report physical problems to their coach/coaches, follow a proper conditioning program and inspect their own equipment daily. All student-athletes must show proof of medical or accident insurance. Athletic insurance may be purchased through the school by visiting www.studentinsurance-kk.com.

OBLIGATIONS

All student-athletes are required to replace lost uniforms or intentionally damaged equipment either by payment or restitution. Student-athletes are responsible for clearing all obligations with their coach/coaches before participating or practicing with another sport (good standing). If a student-athlete fails to take care of his/her financial responsibilities to the athletic department then he/she will be ruled ineligible.

PHYSICALS

All student-athletes must have a current physical on file at school before participating in a sport, including tryouts. The physical is valid for **395 DAYS** and must be current until the end of a specific sport season. **ONLY THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION SPORT PREPARTICIPATION EXAMINATION FORM CAN BE ACCEPTED. THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED PHYSICIAN, NURSE PRACTITIONER OR PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT.**

TEAM SCHEDULES

Schedules will be available on your school's website. To receive the current schedule information go to the school's website and click on the Athletics link.

SELECTION

Students are encouraged to tryout in as many sports as he/she can. Once a student-athlete begins the in-season training period of a sport, he/she should not quit while that sport is in season. If a student-athlete quits a sport, he/she will be withheld from participation in another sport until that season is over (including playoffs).

Each coach has their own policy on how the team is selected. Coaches will explain their policy to candidates before the season/practice begins. Skill development sessions and open facilities (open to all, required for none) are allowed, but shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport, during mid-term exams, or during the last 5 (five) days of each semester. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all athletically eligible students. Insurance is required for all those involved in skill development and off season sessions, including camps.

TRANSPORTATION

The Athletic Department for the Stokes County School System will provide transportation to and from athletic contests. All student-athletes must travel with the team to athletic events held away from the home school. Student-athletes will be allowed to travel home with a parent or grandparent with prior written permission by completing the *Request and Permission for Private Transportation Form* (form is located in back of handbook).

WEATHER

The Stokes County School System guidelines do not allow practice to be held before 6:00 p.m. if the temperature is 90 degrees or higher. When schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all school activities shall be suspended unless special permission is granted by the school superintendent or designee. This rule applies to all games and practices; under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should student-athletes be penalized for failure to attend practices and games when schools are closed, even when special permission to proceed has been granted.

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (NCDPI) AND STOKES COUNTY SCHOOLS ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS

- Must be a properly enrolled student-athlete at the time of participation and must be in regular attendance at that school. ~~Enrollment must be no later than the 15th day of the present semester.~~
- Must meet the age and grade requirement established by the NCDPI. (Must be in grades six, seven and eight and cannot be 15 on or before August 31 of that school year.)
- Must pass at least one less course than the number of required core courses each semester and meet promotion standards established by the LEA.
- It is recommended student-athletes be in attendance on days of practice and competition unless excused by the principal.
- Must have been in attendance for at least 85% of the previous semester at an approved middle school. Student-athlete must not miss more than 13 (thirteen) days during a semester.
- Must live with parent(s) or legal custodian within the school administrative unit (exceptions must be approved by your principal and the Stokes County Schools System). A student-athlete is eligible if he/she has attended school within that unit the previous two semesters (if eligible in all other respects).
- Must not falsify any official eligibility information such as residency/address. Penalty for such acts will result in loss of eligibility for 365 days.

- Must have received a medical examination by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant within the previous 395 days. Student-athlete missing 5 (five) or more days of practice due to illness or injury must receive a medical release before practicing or playing. Any student-athlete with a suspected concussion is not permitted to return to participation (practice or play) until the student-athlete receives written release from a duly licensed physician.
- Must show proof of medical or accident insurance.
- Must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult.
- Must not accept prizes, merchandise, money or anything that can be exchanged for money as a result of athletic participation. A student-athlete may receive merchandise, etc., if it does not exceed \$20.00 value per season. Student-athlete may not accept items by virtue of being on a "free list" or "loan-list".
- May participate with coaching staff in skill development sessions outside of the sports season. These sessions are limited in number to one less than a team (e.g., 4 in basketball) on a daily basis and may not be held during certain prescribed "dead periods" of the year.
- Must not practice or play during instructional day unless special permission is granted by the Superintendent on inclement weather days.
- Must not play, practice or assemble as a team with a coach on Sundays.
- Must not dress for a contest or practice if not eligible to participate.
- Must not play more than three games in one sport per week (exception baseball, softball, tennis and volleyball) and no more than one contest per day (exception baseball, softball and volleyball).
- Must not practice during a teacher workday, unless it is before the workday begins or after the workday ends.

BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN ANY INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ACTIVITY (INCLUDING TRYOUTS, PRACTICES OR COMPETITIONS) THE FOLLOWING MUST BE COMPLETED:

- Meet all NCDPI and Stokes County Schools requirements.
- **Middle School Athletic Participation Requirements Form** (form located in back of handbook).
- **North Carolina High School Athletic Association Sport Preparticipation Examination Form** (form located in back of handbook)
- **The Concussion Information for Student – Athletes & Parents/Legal Custodians** (form provided by your coach)
- **Request and Permission For Private Transportation Form** – **IF APPLICABLE** - (form located in the back of handbook)

CONDUCT

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege, not a right. The Stokes County School System expects all student-athletes who represent their school through participation in extracurricular activities to be good representatives of their school community. Student-athletes should dress, act and conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on their school. Each student-athlete is expected to display good citizenship at all times. Taunting is expressly prohibited. Taunting includes actions or comments, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not deeds or words are vulgar. Any student-athlete who fails to conduct himself or herself appropriately may have the privilege of participation limited or revoked. ~~Student-athletes in (ISS) in-school suspension for more than~~

~~one period during a school day will be allowed to practice, but they will not be allowed to participate or attend their athletic event. They will be allowed to resume their activities on the day their (ISS) in-school suspension ends.~~ **Student-athletes in In-School Suspension (ISS) for more than one period during a school day will be allowed to practice but they will not be allowed to participate in their athletic event on the day in which they serve ISS.** Student-athletes suspended (OSS) out-of-school will not be allowed to practice or play.

Misconduct will not be tolerated. Misconduct includes inappropriate behavior while you are involved in any way with an athletic program, including practice, game time, travel time and out of school behavior. Insubordination, insolence or other examples of defiance toward coaches, officials, bus drivers or others in authority having responsibility for student-athletes safety are examples of misconduct.

Specific punishments cannot be listed since varying circumstances such as the severity of the infraction and the student-athletes reaction to being corrected provides too many variables. Coaches and/or the athletic director or school administration will follow board policies, the Student Parent Handbook and the Athletic Handbook to handle individual instances in a manner that seems best suited to the situation. However, student-athletes and parents should note that appropriate responses by coaches, athletic director or school administration could range anywhere from a verbal reprimand to suspension or dismissal from the team.

HAZING

Hazing, Bullying or Intimidation of a Fellow Student – It shall be a violation of Stokes County Schools Policy #4331 for any student-athlete to engage in what is known as hazing or to aid or abet any other student in hazing. For the purpose of this policy, hazing is defined as follows: “to annoy any student by playing abusive or ridiculous tricks on him/her; to frighten, scold, beat, harass him/her; or to subject him/her to personal indignity”. Furthermore, deliberate intimidation, bullying or harassment in any form is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens, or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim. The hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident if sufficiently severe. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a pattern of or a persistent engagement in name-calling and put-downs, verbal taunts, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, implied or stated threats, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, teasing, physical abuse, written or oral messages or visual images that deliberately intimidate, harass, or embarrass another individual. Such messages or images, which occur during the school day or negatively impact the school day, may include direct conversation, telephone messages, text messages, instant messages, internet postings, emails, photographic images, posters, signs and other means of disseminating hurtful, embarrassing, vicious or scurrilous remarks or content.(G.S. 14-36 and 115C-407.15).

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (NCDPI) EJECTION SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

The NCDPI policy applies to all persons involved in an athletic contest, including student-athletes, coaches, managers and game administrators. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

- **Fighting**, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
 - an altercation between 2 or more parties that includes swinging, hitting, punching and /or kicking
 - an attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hands, arms, legs, feet or equipment
 - an attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made
 - an attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate
 - leaving the bench area to participate in a fight (contact or no contact)
- **Flagrant Contact** which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:

- maliciously running over the catcher/fielder without attempt to avoid contact
- excessive contact out-of-bounds or away from playing action that is unwarranted and extreme in nature
- tackling/taking down a player dangerously in a malicious manner
- illegally hitting or cross-checking an opponent in an excessive manner with the crosse in lacrosse
- **Biting observed or determined by an official**
- **Taunting, baiting or spitting toward an opponent or official**
- **Profanity directed toward an official or opponent**
- **Obscene gestures**, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate or instigate
- **Disrespectfully address (physically contacting an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for remainder of career) an official**

PENALTY FOR AN EJECTION FOR THE ABOVE REASONS

- Football - ejection from the contest and miss the next contest at that level and contests in the interim (**miss the next two contests for fighting**).
- All other sports - ejection from that contest; miss the next two contests at that level and all contests in the interim (**miss the next four contests for fighting**).
- When an ejection occurs, a student-athlete must participate in the **Star Sportsmanship Program** before being eligible to return to competition. Student-athletes receiving two ejections for unacceptable behavior as defined above will be suspended from all sports for the remainder of that sport season. Receiving a third ejection in a school year will result in suspension from athletics for one calendar year (365 days from the date of the third ejection).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The **NCDPI and Stokes County School Systems** emphatically oppose the possession or use of alcohol and other drugs by student-athletes, coaches (including volunteer coaches) and officials. The Stokes County Schools Policy 4325 prohibits student-athletes from possessing, using, transmitting, selling or being under the influence of any of the following substances:

- Narcotic drugs
- Hallucinogenic drugs
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Marijuana or any other controlled substance
- Performance Enhancing Drugs
- Any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor
- Any chemicals, substances or products procured or used with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration or euphoria or of otherwise altering the student's mood or behavior
- Students also are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting or selling drug paraphernalia or counterfeit (fake) drugs. Students may not in any way participate in the selling or transmitting of prohibited substances, regardless of whether the sale or transmission ultimately occurs on school property.

Possession or use of prescription and over the counter drugs is not in violation of this policy if possessed and used in accordance with Stokes County Schools Policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students and the Student and Parent Handbook.

TOBACCO

The NCHSAA and the Stokes County Schools Policy 4320 prohibits a student-athlete from possessing,

displaying or using tobacco products (including cigarettes, cigars, blunts, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, and other electronic smoking devices even if they do not contain tobacco or nicotine. And also any other item containing reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products) at any time in any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Board or a school, on any school grounds and property, including athletic fields and parking lots, owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Board, or at any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus, including school trips. This prohibition applies even when a student-athlete is on school grounds as a visitor or spectator.

CONCUSSION AND HEAD INJURY

The Stokes County Schools Policy 4270 recognizes that concussions and other head injuries may be serious and potentially life threatening and those injuries may result in serious consequences later in life if managed improperly. In support of this commitment, the board directs school employees to comply with the concussion safety requirements for interscholastic athletic competition established by G.S. 115C-12(23) as amended in the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act of 2011, and to implement and follow all concussion safety requirements set forth in State Board of Education rules and policies for middle schools.

Each year, all coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders, volunteers, student-athletes and parents of student-athletes must be provided with a concussion and head injury information sheet that meets the requirements of the State Board. Before any student, school employee, volunteer or first responder will be allowed to participate in interscholastic activities (including tryouts, practices or competitions) he or she must sign the head injury information sheet and return it to the coach.

Any student-athlete who is exhibiting signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion must be removed from athletic activity immediately. Further, the student-athlete must not be allowed to return to play or practice that day or on any subsequent day until he or she has been evaluated and has received written clearance for participation that complies with the requirements of G.S. 115C-12(23) and any other applicable law or State Board Policy.

COMMUNICATION

EXPECTATION FROM THE COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations and goals the coach has for the student-athlete as well as the team/season
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, special equipment, strength and conditioning programs
5. Procedure for student-athlete injuries during participation
6. Team rules, guidelines and consequences for infractions
7. Lettering criteria
8. Team selection process

EXPECTATION FROM THE STUDENT-ATHLETE AND PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)

1. Express concerns directly to the coach
2. Provide contact numbers
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance
4. Notification of special medical conditions
5. Notification of illness or injury as soon as possible

As your child becomes involved in athletic programs at the middle school, 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 and your child wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding and resolution.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACH

1. The treatment of your child
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior
4. Concerns about your child's academic performance
5. Safety of your child

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you had hoped. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. The items listed below should be left to the discretion of the coach:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Offensive/defensive philosophies

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach, student-athlete, or coach and parent. These conferences are encouraged. It is important that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. Be willing to accept opinions and/or knowledge that you may not want to hear.

When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be used to help resolve any concerns:

- Student-Athlete-Coach — open-door policy for all coaches
- Parent-Coach — by appointment (if the coach cannot be reached, call the school athletic director to set up a meeting)
- Do not attempt to confront a coach immediately before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive resolutions.

Steps to follow if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution:

- Call and schedule an appointment with the athletic director. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.
- Call the principal to discuss the situation.
- Call the Superintendent's Office only after going through the athletic director and principal first.

SCHOOL CONTACT NUMBERS

Middle Schools

Chestnut Grove Middle School	983-2106
Piney Grove Middle School	593-4000
Southeastern Middle School	591-4371
Superintendent's Office	593-8146

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS AND SPECTATORS

Ensure that your child understands that win or lose, you love him or her.

1. Assist your child in setting realistic goals.
2. Emphasize "improved" performance, not winning.
3. Emphasize academics first, athletics second.
4. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
5. Control your emotions at games and events.
6. Be a "cheerleader" for your child and other children on the team.
7. Respect your child's coach /coaches. Communicate with them in a positive way. Encourage others to do the same.
8. Respect the officials at your child's games. Officials are human and do make mistakes.
9. Never approach an official after a game.
10. Be a positive role model for your child. Children do pay attention to your actions.

STOKES COUNTY SCHOOLS DISCIPLINE PLAN FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

- A. Student-athletes are expected to be positive role models at school and in the community. For this reason, all student-athletes are required to follow all school rules and all team rules at all times, and they should strive to be a positive influence on their peers. Parents and students should always remember that participation in extracurricular activities, such as athletics, is a privilege, not a right.
- B. The rules and regulations set forth in this Discipline Plan are in effect at all times--24 hours a day, during the academic school year. The disciplinary consequences listed in this policy are minimum consequences. Individual coaches may impose more severe consequences for violations.
- C. A student-athlete is subject to the disciplinary sanctions of this Discipline Plan and the Stokes County Schools Code of Student Conduct whether the offense occurs on or off school property; at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event; or in route to or from a school or a school-sponsored activity, function, or event.
- D. As a representative of the school and community, student-athletes are held to a higher standard. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in consequences related to athletic participation even if the student does not receive school-level disciplinary action. Appropriate consequences will be determined by the Athletic Director and School Administration. This may include suspension or removal from the team.
- E. Student-athletes may be disciplined for offensive conduct not specifically identified in this Discipline Plan.
- F. An In-Season Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) results in a minimum 1 contest suspension for football; 2 contest suspension for all other sports

The Stokes County Schools Discipline Plan for Student-Athletes becomes effective with a student's first interscholastic athletic participation and remains in effect at all times until the conclusion of their interscholastic athletic participation.

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Student Athlete: _____ Date: _____