

STONE COUNTY SCHOOLS



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK for STUDENT ATHLETES

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Stone High School
Stone Middle School

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The mission of the Stone School District is to ignite within every student a passion for learning, to inspire the pursuit of excellence, and to instill the desire to lead a productive, purposeful life.

ATHLETIC STATEMENT

The Athletic Handbook is designed to inform student athletes and their parents of the rules, regulations and information that have helped to develop the rich tradition of competition in Stone School District athletics. 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 athletic department and other specific coaches' rules for their sport.

Each student athlete represents his/her school and student body. It is the student athlete's duty to conduct himself/herself in a manner becoming the student athlete, his/her family, Stone County Schools and the community.

While an attempt has been made to answer as many questions as possible and provide information on all aspects of athletic participation, it is possible that you may have some questions that are not answered here. If so, please contact the principal and/or athletic director.

The athletic department will enforce all rules and regulations as described in this Athletic Handbook and other rules adopted by the individual coach. **Parents and athletes are asked to sign an acknowledgement document located at the end of this handbook.** The athlete is subject to disciplinary measures should he/she violate the rules and regulation set forth in this Athletic Handbook, or any other rules and regulations adopted by the individual coach.

DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

The goal of the athletic department is to provide the best opportunities for student athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline and character. In addition to developing skill in a sport, its purpose is to provide each participant with experiences that will be positive and memorable, and that will help develop the capacity for commitment to a cause, acceptance of responsibility, and loyalty toward any chosen endeavor.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Stone County Board of Education to offer the opportunity to students to participate in appropriate programs, services, and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. It is also the policy of this board not to discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, age, or disability in accordance with federal and state laws. This policy shall apply to recruitment, employment, transfers, compensation and other terms and conditions of employment.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The following policy statement from the National Federation of State High School Associations expresses the concept of sportsmanship as follows:

“The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, awareness is expected of the impact of an individual's influence on others. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.” One of the main goals of the athletic program is to teach the concept of sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship requires that everyone be treated with respect. This includes members of the opposing team, officials, coaches and spectators. Good sportsmanship includes showing courtesy and kindness toward your opponent as well as fellow team members. The contest is judged by the effort of the participants and not by putting down your opponent. Winning is exciting, but winning at any cost is not the goal. All MHSAA sanctioned events are a reflection of our community and school. The conduct of the team is extended to parents and fans before, during, and after athletic events.

MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

TO REPRESENT YOUR SCHOOL IN ATHLETIC EVENTS

You must be a bona fide student, having enrolled no later than the 15th day of any semester of participation, carry five major subjects and deport yourself satisfactory.

1. You must attend the school in the district of which your parents are bona fide residents.
2. You must not have reached 19 years of age prior to August 1 of the current school year.
3. You must have a certified birth certificate (issued by the State Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state where you were born and bearing its official seal and birth/recording number) on file in your athletic director's office and official eligibility list (a Form 1 with required information about you included) submitted to the state office 15 days before the first contest.
4. You must not have participated in interschool contests for more than four consecutive years after the date of entering into the ninth grade regardless of when you began to participate.
5. You must have received an adequate physical examination for the current school year and have a Physician's Certificate on file in the athletic director's office prior to participating in interscholastic athletics.
6. You (high school and middle school students) must meet Academic Eligibility Rules as defined by the MHSAA (page 6 and 7 of this handbook).
7. You may be eligible in your home school at the beginning of each new school year as far as any transfer of schools is concerned. Your home school is the one that serves the area where your parent/guardian resides. Eligibility may be established in any school by attending that school for a period of one school year from the date of original entry. If you attend school outside of your "home school" district, you must attend that school for one full calendar year in order to establish eligibility in that school. Always check your eligibility status before changing schools.
8. If your parents make a bona fide move from one school zone to another, you may transfer your eligibility to the new school. You become eligible after a special eligibility sheet is signed by the principal of the school from which you are transferring is submitted by your school to the MHSAA office.
9. You may not participate on a non-school team (game or practice), or in an outside sport activity in your sport(s) during your school season. (As determined by the MHSAA calendar.)
10. You must be an amateur athlete.
11. You must not have participated in any non-sanctioned all-star game.

You may not dress in uniform for an athletic contest or sit on the bench in game uniform or be on the field or court as a player if you are not eligible to participate in the game or event.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

All students, including student athletes, managers, or support group members must meet the residency requirements of the Stone County School District Board of Education as well as the Mississippi High School Activities Association. A pupil must attend school in the district of which his parents are bona fide residents. A parent can have no more than the bona fide residence at any given time. A bona fide residence is one where the family actually lives. This means the specific dwelling in which the family cooks, eats, and sleeps on a regular basis and claims as its sole or primary place of residence. This rule does not prevent a parent from commuting to work and it does not prevent a father from traveling out of state where his work requires him to do so, provided he returns to the home periodically and considers the home as his legal, permanent residence. The family mail must also be received where the family lives.

BEFORE THE FIRST PRACTICE

The following things are required by the student athlete before the first practice with any team:

1. Meet academic eligibility requirements.
2. Take and pass physical examination.
3. Obtain parental signature on physical exam emergency information form.
4. Parent and athlete sign "Acknowledgement of Athletic Handbook Document".
5. Signed parent information and consent form.

STONE SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Students must display qualities of good citizenship if they wish to participate in extra-curricular activities. Failure to be a good citizen at all times may result in probation and/or suspension from all extra-curricular activities. Any pupil who is under temporary suspension, or whose character or conduct is such as to reflect discredit upon the school, is not eligible. A student's attendance, attitude and classroom effort must be acceptable to the school in which the student is enrolled.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY RULE (MHSAA)

SENIOR HIGH (9TH-12TH GRADERS)

The Children First Act of 2009 was passed by the Mississippi Legislature and approved by the Governor.

This law dictates the academic eligibility of athletes.

- The MHSAA eligibility rules require each student participating in MHSAA sanctioned competitions to make "satisfactory progress toward graduation." Each school district determines the requirements for "satisfactory progress toward graduation" through its graduation requirements. Each school district must interpret this according to its requirements. In situations which require "judgment," schools are directed to "interpret the rules for the benefit of the students."
- Additionally, according to Mississippi law, a student must maintain a grade point average of at least a 2.0 or C average. This will be measured at the conclusion of the first semester using the semester averages of all the courses the student is taking. Students who do not have a 2.0 or C average for the first semester will be ineligible for the second semester.
- At the end of the school year, each student's grade point average for the year will be assessed. This assessment will reflect the average for the entire year using the final grades for each course. If the student does not have a grade point average of at least a 2.0 or C average, he/she will be ineligible for the fall semester.
- Students may attend summer school, extended school year, take correspondence classes, participate in credit recovery programs and taking advantage of other related options to establish a 2.0 or a C average to regain eligibility. Students must complete these programs prior to the first day of the next year or the next semester. Athletes who participate in sports that cross the semester line (i.e. Soccer, Basketball) will maintain their 2.0 (75 numerical) GPA at the end of the 1st semester of the current school year in order to continue playing through the season.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Must have a 65 average or above in every academic class the previous semester in order to be eligible to try out for any sport.

The State Department of Education increased Carnegie units from 20 to 24 units in 2008/2009.

Stone High School currently requires 29 units for graduation.

Special Education students will be automatically eligible if they are making satisfactory progress according to the committees reviewing their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

ATTENDANCE ELIGIBILITY

Daily attendance at school and practice is expected. In order for an athlete to be eligible to participate in any after-school activities, he/she must be present a majority of his/her classes on the day of the activity.

Check in cut off time for high school is no later than the end of 1st period. For middle school the cut off time for check in is no later than 9:15 a.m. If he/she is not in school from that time until the end of the school day, then he/she is not to participate or be involved in any activity. Practices are considered an activity. Any exceptions (Doctors Appointment/Funeral) must have the approval of the athletic director/principal. An athlete must be in school on a regular basis in order to be eligible to participate in athletics. An athlete who has excessive tardies to school and/or classes will be subject to restriction from athletic participation.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Non-Drug Test Violations:

Rule 1:

Student athletes shall not possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol and/or other drugs, such as marijuana, controlled drug substances (hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, or any other narcotic or controlled drug), or possess, use or transmit paraphernalia for use of such substances. (Use of an authorized drug as prescribed by a registered physician will not constitute a violation.)

CONSEQUENCES

Any student at Stone High School or Stone Middle School found to be in possession or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs on the school campus or any other school sponsored activity (on campus or off campus) will be disciplined according to the school's disciplinary policy.

Rule 2:

Any student found to be in possession or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs off campus at a non-school sponsored event will be subject to no less than one week suspension from games in the sport in which he/she is a participant.

If it is serious enough the athlete may be placed on probation or suspended. An athlete who continues such behavior will be suspended from athletic participation. Student athletes are expected to leave situations immediately where drugs and/or alcohol are being used. Failure to do so implies guilt and violators will be dealt with accordingly.

Rule 3:

Any student arrested for a felony will be subject to immediate suspension from all extra-curricular participation until the student is cleared of the felony charge. If the student is cleared of the felony, or if the felony charges are dropped, the student will be reinstated in all extra-curricular activities in which he/she is involved. If the felony arrest is upheld by courts, the student will be removed from all extra-curricular activities for a minimum of one calendar year.

Rule 4:

Hazing and bullying is strictly forbidden. Any student found guilty of hazing or bullying another teammate will be subject to dismissal from team.

Rule 5:

Specific team rules may be set forth by the coach of each sport. These rules and the penalties for breaking them will be given to student athletes by the coach at the first parent/athlete meeting of that sport. **Exception: positive drug test.**

These rules under this section are enforced twelve (12) months of the year, grades seven through twelve (7-12).

CONDUCT NOTES

Consequences for off campus violations of the Code of Conduct will not be based on hearsay or rumor. When there is reasonable suspicion (a belief or opinion based on the facts or circumstances), or when there is an admission of guilt by the athlete to a violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct, the Athletic Handbook rules will be enforced. Penalties for violations take effect immediately upon determination of any violation and will include games in succession: i.e., season schedule, tournaments, and state series, in order of competition.

If violation of the Code of Conduct occurs in the last one-third (1/3) of the sport season, the student athlete will not be considered in good standing and therefore will forfeit all letters and awards for that sport season.

If a violation of the Code of Conduct occurs in the last part of a sport and violator cannot fulfill the terms of his/her consequences in that sport, the suspension does carry-over until the suspension is fulfilled. This includes his/her next sport or the same sport next year; i.e., if the suspension is for two football games with only one remaining; the student athlete must also miss the first basketball game or baseball game until the suspension has been paid.

If a typically one-sport student athlete elects to participate in a new sport in order to serve a suspension, he/she will be required to complete that season in good standing. When serving an out-of-school suspension, the student athlete will be ineligible to participate during the suspension period. If school rules are broken, the student athlete will be subject to the normal punishment for such misbehavior as listed in the Student Handbook as well as subject to penalties under the Athletic Handbook. In no case will athletic rules circumvent school rules.

AWARDS

An athletic award is a symbol of athletic accomplishment, good sportsmanship and observance of athletic policies. Student athletes, including cheerleaders, managers, and trainers are eligible to earn awards. No student athlete may receive an award in a sport for which he/she is academically ineligible at the completion of the season, or if under suspension for athletic violation. Candidates must complete the season's play; however, this requirement may be waived in cases of physical injury. No awards will be issued to an athlete until all equipment for his/her sport is turned in to the coach.

INFORMATION FOR ATHLETES

ACCIDENT/INJURIES

All accidents or injuries, at home or away, are to be reported to the trainer and/or coach immediately.

ATHLETIC SEASONS (2016-2017)

Refer to MHSAA activity calendar

CHANGING A SPORT/QUITTING A TEAM

If a student athlete is cut from a team he/she may join another team sport or program in that sport season. A student athlete cannot quit one sport to join another sport until that sport season is concluded; i.e., one cannot quit football to go out for basketball until football season is completed. However, athletes will be allowed to transfer from one sport to another during a given season upon mutual agreement of both coaches.

CONFLICT BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

Students are sometimes involved in concurrent activities, and there may be conflicts in schedules. Communication between coaches and sponsors of conflicting activities is vital.

DOCTOR VISITS

Medical expenses are the responsibility of the athlete/family. Written verification from the doctor is required when a physician removes an athlete from practice or games. Written verification from the doctor is required to return to athletic competition.

DRESS CODE

Participation in Stone athletics is a privilege, not a right. To be successful, the participant must be well disciplined and willing to put aside individualism for the benefit of the team. Conforming to a dress code is part of this process. It is very important to our team/school reputation that our student athletes dress appropriately during the school day and at all school functions.

The following rules are additional to those included in the Student Handbook:

1. All athletes must wear to practice clothing in the school colors. No cutoff or mutilated clothing.
2. Individual coaches may add additional rules related to the dress code.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment checked out by the athlete is his/her responsibility. It is to be kept clean and in good condition. Loss of issued equipment will be the athlete's/parent's financial obligation. The athlete will not be allowed to participate in other athletic programs or receive awards until this obligation is met.

NOTE: Equipment includes any issued supplies from the training room.

INSURANCE

All Stone student athletes are required to have medical insurance and must supply information verifying such before participating in practice and/or competition.

PARTICIPATING IN TWO SPORTS IN ONE SEASON

Student athletes may participate in more than one sport during one season *with the approval of both coaches*. Practice schedules will be worked out between the coaches involved. Consideration should be given to the importance of the sport (ex. Varsity verses non-varsity, playoffs verses regular season and games verses practice). If contests conflict, the student athlete will decide in which contest to compete. The student athlete must realize that extra time for practice is necessary to compete in two sports in one season. The student athlete must meet the requirements of both sports. If the requirements of one or both sports are not met, the student athlete may be cut from the sport(s).

TEAM TRYOUT POLICIES

Each coach of varsity sports has his/her own policy on how he/she will choose his/her team. Coaches will explain their team selection policy at the first meeting. Arrangements for tryouts must be made for athletes involved in overlapping sport seasons. It is the responsibility of the student athlete to contact the coach and discuss possible conflicts well in advance of tryouts. A student athlete may be cut from a team anytime during a season for appropriate reasons.

TRAINING ROOM (HIGH SCHOOL)

The training room is available to all athletes. Athletes are offered a wide variety of services to help meet the demands of athletic competition. The following are guidelines to be followed when using the training room.

1. No student is permitted in this room without the athletic trainer or coach being with him/her.
2. Only student athletes needing treatment and/or rehabilitation of an athletic injury are allowed in this area.
3. All taping, bandaging and treatments will be done by the athletic training staff.
4. Wear appropriate clothing. We are a coed facility.
5. Take a shower after practice before receiving treatment.
6. Do not use or remove supplies without permission. No athlete may participate until all issued supplies have been returned or paid for.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to athletic events is provided by the Athletic Department when appropriate. Parents should see the coach or Athletic Department for a permission form to transport students in privately owned vehicle.

- Under no circumstances will an athlete transport other athletes.

BULLYING AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Athletes representing Stone County Schools will not spread, start, or in any way encourage rumors of slanderous nature about other students, fellow team members, teachers or administrators of the school district. This includes communication in any format: oral, written or electronic (phone, text or Internet included.)

**STONE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ATHLETIC DRUG SCREENING POLICY**

Student athletes and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be made aware of the drug testing process and the steps/consequences if and when a student athlete tests positive. Every precaution will be taken to assure and maintain accuracy and confidentiality of the test results, including the maintenance of a documented chain of specimen custody to insure the identity and integrity of the sample throughout the collection and testing process.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Athletic Drug Screening Program is to aid and assist student athletics.

It is not intended to unduly interfere with private lives or to bring hardship, but rather to protect the student athlete's well-being and that of others who are associated with athletics in the Stone County School District. Specific goals of the program are as follows:

1. To educate Stone County School District student athletes concerning the dangers and problems associated with drug use/abuse.
2. To prevent drug use/abuse by student athletes of the Stone County School District.
3. To identify any student athlete who may be using/abusing drugs to determine the identity of the drug(s).
4. To educate any student athlete who may be using/abusing drugs as to the possible effect it may have, both physically and mentally, and the possible adverse effect on the team and its members.
5. To provide reasonable safeguards so that every student athlete in the Stone County School District is physically competent to participate in interscholastic sports.
6. To remove the stigma of drug use/abuse from those student athletes who do not use/abuse drugs.

The athletic department of the Stone County School District, its coordinator and coaching staff, along with the Board of Trustees and administration, strongly believe that the use and abuse of drugs (excluding those prescribed by a physician to treat specific medical problems) can:

1. Be detrimental to the physical and mental health of its student athletes.
2. Seriously interfere with the performance of individuals as students and athletes.
3. Be extremely dangerous to student athlete teammates, particularly with regard to the participation in athletic competition or practice.
4. Create an unfair and damaging stigma for those student athletes who do not use and abuse drugs.

Because of the genuine concern for each student athlete participating in interscholastic sports in the Stone County School District and the student athlete's well-being, as well as the obligation to assure that athletic programs are operated in the best interest of all who participate, the school district, beginning with the 2000-2001 academic year, is implementing a program of drug education, testing, and counseling/rehabilitation to assist and benefit all athletes.

The ultimate goal is to involve all student athletes, grades 8-12, in the drug-screening program. Only student athletes participating in varsity sports will be tested. For the purpose of this program, student athlete refers to any student participating in the following activities:

archery, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country, football, band, golf, power-lifting, soccer, show choir, softball, tennis, track and other sports that may be added.

The athletic drug-screening program shall be implemented in accordance with the established board policy by the administration with the advice and assistance of representatives from the medical profession. The contracting biomedical laboratory shall be approved by the Board of Trustees and shall conduct drug testing according to accepted national standards and procedures. The testing shall be done only after written consent from the student athlete and the parent/legal guardian.

Provisions will be made to test any student athlete who transfers into the Stone County School District from another district, or any student athlete who was unavoidably excused from the first test.

If any student athlete and/or parent/legal guardian refuses to either sign the drug testing information release form or for the student athlete to take the test, the student athlete will immediately be suspended from participation in athletics.

Procedure for Testing:

Quality control and confidentiality is assured as follows:

1. An assistant(s) from the contacting agent, under the supervision of a school employee, shall be responsible for the collection and labeling of drug testing samples.
2. A school employee shall be present with assistant(s) when the samples are being collected.
3. The samples shall be analyzed by the contracted agency selected to perform the laboratory work for the substances specified in the Stone County School District Athletic Drug Screening Program Policy.

THE DRUG SCREENING PROGRAM (STONE HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

Student athletes will be subject to drug screening to test for the following substances, the use of which is expressly prohibited:

Amphetamines	Cocaine	Marijuana
Phencyclidine	Barbiturates	Opiates
Methadone	Propoxyphene	Benzodiazepines
Methaqualone		

Drug Screening: The drug screening shall consist of the collection of a urine sample from the student athlete by an assistant(s) from the contracting biomedical laboratory, under the supervision of the Athletic Director, coaching staff and/or other school employees. The contacting agency, approved by the Stone County School District, shall analyze each sample for the presence of drugs identified previously in this document.

The outside agency shall report all test results to the Athletic Director of the school. The Principal, along with the Athletic Director, and the head coach of the sport, will review the test results report to determine which, if any, of the test results are positive. A local physician will be consulted, if necessary, for advice and clarification of the test results. For purposes of this program, a positive result shall mean a test result, which indicates the presence of one or more of the listed drugs in the student athlete's sample. A test will not be determined positive until it is double checked and validated. The student athlete and his/her parent/legal guardian shall be notified if and when the student athlete tests positive.

Random testing will be performed throughout the academic year. Also included in the random testing will be athletes who have tested positive at an earlier date during their high school career.

EFFECTS OF POSITIVE RESULTS

A. First Positive:

If the positive result is verified and confirmed, the appropriate school official will take the following steps:

1. The athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be advised of the results.
2. The Principal and Athletic Coordinator will be advised of the results.
3. The student athlete will not be permitted to participate in practice and the student will forfeit participation in interscholastic participation for fifteen (15) school days from testing date.
4. Student athletes who test positive for drugs will forfeit certain team and individual awards as determined by the head coach.

The student athlete will be retested after the fifteen (15) day suspension period. Another positive test will result in the student athlete being suspended from participation in practice and interscholastic competition for the remainder of that sports season. If the student athlete's test is negative the student will be reinstated to participate in athletics.

B. Second Positive:

After re-instatement and later in the academic year, the student athlete will be re-tested. If a positive result is verified and confirmed, the Principal, the Athletic Director, and the student athlete's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be immediately notified. A conference will then be scheduled promptly with the student athlete, parent(s), legal guardian(s), Principal, appropriate head coach, and designated counselor present. The student athlete will immediately be suspended from participating in practice and interscholastic competition for the remainder of the season and the next sport season.

C. Third Positive:

After reinstatement and later in the academic year the student athlete will be re-tested. If a positive result is verified and confirmed, the Principal, the Athletic Director, and head coach will be notified. A letter will be mailed to parent(s) legal guardian(s) from the Principal notifying them that the student athlete has been suspended from the team immediately.

With the third positive test, the student athlete will be suspended from participating in athletics for the completion of the present semester **AND** for the following **FULL** semester as defined by the school calendar.

If the student athlete is suspended, the student athlete has the right to appeal the decision to the Stone County School Board for a final determination. The student athlete shall have the right to have council present at the student athlete's own expense, and to question witnesses.