

Columbus High School Athletic Handbook

Columbus High School is committed to providing not only a competitive sports program to its students, families, and fans, but also one that fosters character, responsibility, integrity, and maturity among our student-athletes in addition to their athletic abilities.

The same standards we require in our academic AP curriculum are the same standards that we strive to achieve on the field of play. We are creating a culture of excellence in our daily lives from the time we wake-up until we close our eyes at night. We are always chasing brilliance with our attention to detail in every aspect of our daily routines. We are striving to make the best of our time, giving effort and energy in everything we do, holding others accountable, being coachable by others, and choosing a leadership path that others respect and want to be a part of.

All policies and procedures that are defined by the Athletic Department are done so with the intent of teaching and instilling respectful qualities in the student-athletes for them to put into use in their daily lives. Our athletic handbook also provides a way to maintain consistency throughout our athletic program and to set forth the standards by which we expect our athletes to adhere to and create a culture of excellence. We require that parents, as well as student-athletes, take time to read this handbook, so each member can properly support Columbus High School and its Athletic Department.

Athletic Goals and Expectations

There are five basic goals that Columbus High strives to instill into each of its student-athletes. They are:

- Develop a disposition in each student-athlete that is respected and honored by their teammates.
- Teach intensity, responsibility, dependability, maturity, and self-control in our daily actions.
- Teach submission to authority on and off the field of play or court.
- Develop leaders that can be examples for the entire student body to respect and follow during their tenure.
- Teach doing the little things the right way, taking care of the details, and making these habits a lifestyle.

Athletes' Code of Conduct

Every athlete is expected to maintain a positive and healthy lifestyle. Student-athletes are expected to be examples of good conduct to other students in the school by their daily actions, studying habits, interactions with other adults and classmates, and their exercising and eating habits. In that regard, each CHS student-athlete will be held to the following code of conduct:

1. After an athlete receives an In-School suspension (ISS) during school, the student will be suspended from his/her team (practices and games) for the number of days he or she is in ISS. Further action will be at the discretion of the Coach and/or athletic director.
2. An Out-of-School suspended athlete (OSS) may not actively participate in practices or games until he has served a probationary period after he/she returns to school.

3. The use of profanity, alcohol, vaping, and illicit drugs will not be tolerated. The use of profanity on or off the field may result in additional conditioning, a loss in playing time, or another form of punishment as agreed upon by the coach and athletic director. The use of alcohol, vaping, and illicit drugs will result in termination from the team.
4. Fighting during athletic events will result in punishment. This punishment will be determined by the coach and athletic director. A student athlete should never leave the bench area during a fight.
5. Athletes are to be good representatives of their community on all road trips. The same rules apply for overnight trips. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
6. CHS does not condone and will not tolerate "hazing" or "initiations" of athletes by other athletes. Any such actions will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the athletic team.
7. Any student-athlete who is ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game and will follow all GHSA procedures concerning ejections outlined in 2.72 of the Constitution and By-Laws. If the student-athlete receives a second ejection, he/she will be suspended for two games. A third ejection will result in dismissal from the team and forfeiture of athletic privileges for the remainder of the academic school year along with any disciplinary actions given from Administration.

Athletic Association

Our High school student-athletes compete in the Georgia High School Association, also known as the GHSA. GHSA is a statewide program that is governed by the member schools that form the policies and procedures of the association. The GHSA is a voluntary organization composed of over 450 public and private high schools. It strives to promote good sportsmanship and a cooperative spirit among its member schools. It endeavors to maintain high standards so that each pupil competing in each school is able to play his or her sport fairly and equitably. In the field of athletics, GHSA's interest is the safety of the participants; it is on this principle that its athletic rules are based. You may visit the website at www.ghsa.net to see region alignments, school directories, Constitution and By-Laws, rules clinic dates, playoff brackets, etc.

Team Selection

It is our desire for each of our students at CHS to have the opportunity to play the sport(s) of their choice. The tryout process (when necessary) will be used to maintain a manageable number of players for our limited coaching staff and facilities to accommodate.

However, we are a very competitive sports program; it may become necessary in the future that all team rosters be compiled through the tryout process. Student-athletes that represent our school will possess the ability, character, attitude, passion for the game, commitment, time availability, energy, and academic standing to compete at this highest level. Many factors go into the selection of making a team. Each CHS varsity coaching staff is allowed to set the number of teams and the size of their team roster(s). Most of our programs offer Junior Varsity teams and/or freshman teams. It is the coach's decision as to which players make the varsity team and which will play on the junior varsity team. The only rule regarding who plays on each team is that a senior cannot play on a junior varsity team.

Players may play on both teams if it is necessary to do so in order to form the junior varsity team or freshman team.

Quitting a Team

We believe that character is never formed by quitting. Responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and honoring commitments are all attributes we wish to instill in our student athletes. We also believe that students and parents need to realize that participating on an athletic team requires effort and sacrifice of time and resources. When a student decides he or she wants to play on a team and begin a season, he or is making a commitment to that team.

If after the season begins the athlete decides to quit the team, he or she should realize he or she is hurting the team by not honoring the commitment made when the season began. If you quit your team during the season, **all athletic fees or dues are non-refundable and considered a donation to the program.** However, any apparel or equipment that was ordered and paid for, shall be given to the student or reimbursed by the booster club in the form of a check.

Playing Time

Our goal is to provide a competitive athletic sports program that competes on a state level in every sport. Coaches determine playing time based upon various factors. These include a student's athletic skill, attitude, work-ethic, performance in practice, and "in-game" needs. Our goal is for all players to gain in-game experience. However, this will not be done in such a way that it adversely affects the team's ability to be in a position to win. Participating on any Columbus High team, and more specifically playing in games, should always be considered a privilege and not a right. If a parent has an issue with their student athlete's playing time, they need to make an appointment to speak with the Head Coach and the position coach at a time that is convenient for the coaching staff and student athlete during school hours. No parent meetings will occur after practices or after games unless approved by the Head Coach and Athletic Director.

Practices

Parents have permission to attend their child's practice. Parents are welcome at practice as long as they are seen and not heard. Our coaches are here to do a specific job, and we feel it is best accomplished when there is no confusion at practices as to who is giving our student-athletes instruction. Practice times for our teams will also vary. We must also understand that our buildings/complexes are multi-use facilities, and there will be times when gym availability (or a coach's schedule) could warrant practices before school, later in the evening, or on Saturdays. These are possibilities that should be considered by both students and their parents before committing to play for a team.

Game and Practice Attendance Requirements

Once any student-athlete has joined a team, he/she has committed attention and attendance to that team until the last game/meet is completed. Players must be at every practice or game unless excused for one of the following reasons: 1) death in the family; 2) previously scheduled commitment. Student-athletes and/or their parents are responsible for communicating **ANY ABSENCE** to their coach before

the practice or game, unless there is an unexpected emergency. Please text or call your coach if you cannot be at a practice or game. It is the student-athlete's responsibility and not the parents. Most coaches would prefer a text, phone call, or email from the student athlete and not the parent.

CHS is supportive of its student-athletes being involved in their local community service projects, church/youth groups, and other school wide extracurricular activities. We encourage our families to be actively involved; however, any student-athlete who misses a practice or game may have to make-up practice activities and face the team's policy for reduction in playing time. This is not meant as punishment for an excusable absence, but as a reward and incentive to those team members who were present on the day of your absence.

A team member who must miss a practice or game may return to their former status as soon as they have fulfilled the team's policy for absences. Each coach will announce their discipline procedure for missed practices or games. Multiple unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the team. All student-athletes must also be on time to all practices, workouts, or games. Coaches will also announce their own discipline procedures for tardiness due to tutoring or after school extra credit.

Physical Exams

Students participating in the athletic program will be required to have a current physical exam performed by a doctor **PRIOR TO THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SEASON OR ANY PRESEASON WORKOUTS/CONDITIONING**. Without a physical form on file, a student will be considered ineligible to participate in competition. Any physical performed within the past 12 months will be accepted and will be in effect for one calendar year. A copy of the Pre-participation Physical Examination form and Parent Permission form can be obtained from the athletic office or on-line at www.columbushighga.org under the "Forms" tab. Parents also need to retain a copy for their own records.

Preseason Forms for Parents and Student-Athletes

For the safety of our athletes, the following forms will be due back to the athletic office or coach before any student-athlete may compete in the first practice, workout, conditioning, or game of the season:

- 1) GHSA Physical Examination Form
- 2) MCSD Permission to Participate Form
- 3) GHSA Concussion Form
- 4) Hughston's Consent to Treat/Release Medical Form
- 5) Sudden Cardiac Arrest Form

Note: These forms are transferable from sport to sport. Only one of each form needs to be completed per child per year. These forms should never be shredded by a coach and only by an Athletic Trainer.

Eligibility

Student-athletes, parents, and coaches are encouraged to keep an eye on their students' grades so that students will be continually encouraged to make their academics a priority. Keeping current tabs on your student athletes will also help coaches plan for necessary adjustments in their program or team should students become ineligible which occurs when a student fails a class at CHS.

While CHS views athletics as an integral and necessary part of a student's overall education, we also feel strongly that it is a privilege that is earned and maintained by thorough and diligent attention to respect and responsibility in the academic areas.

In order for a student-athlete to participate on any given day in a team's practice or game, he/she must be in class for ½ of the school day. Exception: All exceptions must have prior approval from the Athletic Director and the administration.

Athletic Fees

The Athletic Fee/Dues are set by each Athletic Booster Club for that particular sport. All fees/dues are to be paid in full prior to the team's first contest or game. However, exceptions are warranted, and each booster club can work out a payment plan for families in need. However, fees/dues are non-refundable. Participating in fundraisers is a necessity with most booster clubs, and each participant will have an opportunity to fundraise to help with the fees/dues that are required and associated for his/her particular sport. Any fees, dues, or differences not collected will be given to administration for fines to be added to the student's account. Any outstanding fines will result in holds on schedules, transcripts, and/or diplomas.

Fundraising

All sports teams at Columbus High School have to be self-sufficient and raise the necessary funds associated with their particular sport for it to be successful and operate in the appropriate way. All fundraisers must be approved by the Principal by completing the Fundraiser Permission Form, and a Fundraiser Financial Statement must be submitted concluding the fundraiser. All student athletes/parents should participate in each fundraiser that is promoted by their specific team sport or booster club. Total participation by its members is needed to make sure the proposed budget is met each year. It is not fair to most families who go above and beyond, to cover the cost of other participants who choose not to fundraise or pay their fees/dues. Participants who fail to fundraise will need to write a check for the full amount of their fees/dues associated with the particular fundraiser, or their names will be submitted to administration for fines to be added to their student accounts. Any outstanding fines will result in holds on schedules, transcripts, and/or diplomas.

Concession Stand/Entrance Gate/Parent Volunteers

Every athlete's family should volunteer in the concession stand/entrance gate/or as an adult volunteer at least a minimum number of times per year for the sport (if needed). The proceeds from the entrance gate go towards the daily costs of running the CHS athletic department and paying the officials. If you are scheduled to work a particular time and are not able to fulfill your obligation, please secure a replacement immediately, and inform the Coaches/Booster officers immediately as well. Some sports

require the help of adults (not students) to carry out duties throughout a contest (Scorekeeper, Line Judges, Football Chain for JV games, etc.). Please be aware that the help of an adult may be the only option to ensure the contest can be completed. Your time and effort is very much appreciated by the program and Athletic Director.

Uniform Responsibility

All uniforms and equipment that we have are viewed as gifts, and we ask that those who are issued these items view them in the same way. Uniforms are one of our largest expenditures as an athletic department or even as a Booster Club, and so it is important that we try to maximize the life of these items. With that in mind, we ask that athletes and parents use the following guidelines when cleaning and caring for uniforms they are issued:

- 1) Wash separately
- 2) Wash in cold water
- 3) Hang up to dry – DO NOT TUMBLE DRY!!
- 4) Do not make alterations unless given permission by the Athletic Director.

Uniforms become the responsibility of the athlete as soon as they are issued until the time that they are returned. Athletic uniforms are only to be worn for games, not practices or other functions. Any damage that is done during that period, other than normal wear and tear, is the responsibility of the athlete and will be billed to them accordingly.

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the Coach/Athletic Director within one week after the last game of the season or after quitting the team. Any student-athlete who does not return uniforms and/or equipment will have his/her report card held and costs for replacement charged to his/her school account. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until all overdue uniforms, equipment, and fees have been turned in. Any lost items will be billed to the athlete at full replacement value. All uniforms are the property of the school even though fundraisers or parent donations are given toward the uniforms.

Transportation/Road Trips

It is the responsibility of the athlete and their family to arrange transportation to and from all home athletic practices and events. The school will arrange for transportation by a bus for all away games out of county. Families will be provided with a schedule at the beginning of each season. However, schedules are subject to change.

What the student-athletes are to wear on road trips or to away games is set by the coach of that sport. In any case, student-athletes need to be aware that they are representing their team, their community, and most importantly their school in the way that they act, talk, and dress. All students are expected to dress appropriately and in accordance with their coach's demands and be respectful at all times.

When transportation to away games is provided by the school, all team members, cheerleaders, and managers must travel to the game on the school bus. A student-athlete may ride home from an off-

campus game with his/her parent(s), legal guardian, or a friend's parent(s), provided the coach has been notified by written or verbal communication from the student-athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian prior to leaving the contest site. However, we encourage our student athletes to ride home on the bus with their teammates following a contest, unless other plans have been communicated with the head coach prior to the trip. On any out-of-town trips where two (2) gender teams are on the same bus, a coach/sponsor will sit in the middle to divide the genders and monitor appropriately.

Insurance Coverage

CHS requires all student-athletes to be covered under a family primary care/major medical health insurance policy. MCSD has a supplemental insurance policy that must be purchased in order for a student to participate if family primary care coverage is not available. This information can be found on the district website at: <https://muscogee.k12.ga.us/CMS/File/ac3d5b54-6b91-4e03-82f4-32dcd4c6f061>

Banquet

CHS will honor its freshman, junior varsity, and varsity student-athletes at their respective end-of-the-year banquet. All team members should make every effort to be present at that time. Only athletes who appear on a team's final roster at the end of the season will be recognized at the awards banquet.

Lettering

In order to letter for a varsity team, a student-athlete must participate in at least ½(half) of the innings or quarters of every game for his/her sport. However, every sport has different requirements. Our head coaches will make those decisions, and they will be final. Only athletes who appear on a team's final roster will be recognized at the awards banquet. Those student-athletes will receive a service bar at the annual banquet that denotes their years of service to that sport if they have lettered. Athletes who do not letter will receive a participation certificate for that sport. Varsity letterman's jackets will be available to purchase from the Neff Company if you are interested. www.neffjacketshop.com

Chain of Authority for Disputes

The Athletic Department does its best to run and organize our team and events in a manner that will allow all of those involved to receive the greatest possible enjoyment and benefit. However, we realize that just as in any other organization, there will be times that certain problems, conflicts, and concerns arise. It is for that reason we feel it is important to state up front our position on handling these situations.

If any parent, athlete, coach, teacher, or administrator has a concern over an athletic issue, they have a personal responsibility to go first to the person(s) they have the concern about or with. It is our desire that any problems can be resolved at that time. If, however, this does not resolve the issue, then and only then, should the issue be brought to the attention of another person. For the record, the level of authority or chain of command at Columbus High School is as follows:

- 1) Head Coach
- 2) Athletic Director

3) Administration/Principal

4) County Wide Athletic Director

5) Superintendent

Booster Clubs

Preseason Booster Club Requirements need to be submitted to Mrs. Tracee Patrick in the Main Office:

- Turn in a Booster Club Application Form
- Turn in a copy of the bank statement (Quarterly)
- Turn in a list of officers
- Turn in a copy of the signature card and tax ID number
- Turn in pre-approval forms for each fundraiser
- Turn in a copy of the Bylaws
- Turn in a proposed budget

Conclusion

It is my hope that this manual has addressed and answered many, if not all, of your questions about the Columbus High Athletic Department. If at any point you have additional questions, then please feel free to contact me at Mathis.Chadwick.B@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Chad Mathis

Columbus High Athletic Director