

Forward

The Russellville Cyclones Athletic Handbook is presented to you because you have indicated a desire to participate in the athletic program of the Russellville School District. It serves as an information guide for all concerned parents who have expressed a willingness to permit their child to participate. Participation in interscholastic sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences that assist students in personal growth and maturation.

As educators, coaches, and administrators, our goal is to organize and administer a broad-based athletic program that will allow students with athletic interest an opportunity for safe participation in the sports of their choice. Our programs will provide experiences that enhance each student's growth and maturity academically, socially, and physically. The Russellville athletic program will also serve as a source of pride for participants, our school district, and our community.

Our staff is committed to providing;

1. An opportunity to earn a roster position through a tryout process.
2. Adequate equipment and facilities.
3. Well trained coaches.
4. Equalized competition.
5. An atmosphere of fairness and sportsmanship through competition.

Likewise, as a student-athlete, you must commit to a standard of conduct and effort that exemplifies the fulfillment of certain responsibilities and expectations of the proud tradition of the Russellville Cyclones Athletic Program. While this handbook merely serves as an overview and does not attempt to cover every situation that could arise, it is our hope that through this information guide our students and parents will have a better understanding of these responsibilities.

UNDERSTANDING OF RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THIS HANDBOOK

We hope that the parents and athletes understand the rules and regulations covered in this handbook. If a rule or regulation is broken and dismissal from a team is necessary, then the parent will be notified why the dismissal took place. It should be understood that the coach has the final say and is the final authority regarding dismissal from a team.

Any athlete or family members of an athlete that are removed from an athletic event by an official, police or administrator is subject to suspension from all athletic events for the remainder of that season or that year.

Any fan that disrupts an athletic event is subject to suspension from all athletic events for the remainder of that season or that year.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE RUSSELLVILLE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

The philosophy of the Russellville Athletic Department is to maintain a broad-based program that will afford all students with athletic interest an opportunity for safe participation in the sports of their choice. The coaches shall deal with the athletes with firmness and fairness in order to establish the leadership they respect and admire.

GOAL OF THE RUSSELLVILLE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

The student athlete will develop the skills necessary to become independent problem solving adults and become a positive influence in society, not just a good athlete.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Remember that as an athlete you are not eligible to participate in any sport until the following items have been completed.

1. **Physical examination** completed and on file in athletic office.
2. Completed **Emergency Consent Authorization** Form.
3. Completed **Consent for Drug Testing** Form.
4. Signed **confirmation and consent forms** from Athletic Handbook.
5. All **eligibility requirements** have been satisfied as established by the Arkansas Activities Association.

ATHLETES RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **In the classroom:** In the academic area, the athlete is expected to become a good student. A good student does not mean all “A’s”. A good student means doing the best in academics.
2. **Practice & Games:** The athlete is expected to attend regardless of holidays, job commitment, social activities or week-ends.
3. **Absences:** An athlete should consult his/her coach before missing practice. Missing practice or an event without good reason will be dealt with severely. An athlete missing for any reason is expected to make up the practice session. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the coach.
4. **School Attendance:** Students who miss school or check out on the day of an athletic event will not be allowed to participate unless they missed for an emergency or the building principal excused their absence.
5. **Out of School and In School Suspension:** If an athlete is suspended from school or is assigned to In School Suspension, they may not attend, play, or practice in any school extra-curricular activity and no coach or school personnel will be allowed to work them out until they have completed their suspension.
6. **Eligibility Guidelines and SIP School:** The athletic department encourages the academic excellence of all athletes. The eligibility requirements are those set forth by the Arkansas Activities Association and the State Department of Education. Students that are not eligible can practice with the team as long as they have permission from the head coach. The student can practice, but they are not permitted to play in a game or travel with the team.

Rules are as follows: All first semester 7th and 8th grade students have no requirements to be eligible. Second semester 8th and first semester 9th must pass (4) courses, three must be of the core. If you are in 10th, 11th or 12th grade you must pass (4) courses and have a 2.0 GPA. If a student passes (4) courses but doesn’t have a 2.0 GPA, he/she can attend SIP classes. **If a student misses a class they automatically become in-eligible.**
7. **Care and Responsibility for Equipment:** Equipment should be turned in within one week following the end of the season. An athlete is financially responsible for all equipment checked out to him/her. The cost of destroyed/lost equipment will be replacement costs. An athlete must treat school equipment as though it were his/her personal property. It should never be

abused. If an athlete is involved in the theft of school equipment, he/she could be dismissed from the team.

8. **Student Athletes and Social Networking**: As a student-athlete, one is a representative of the school and community and always in the public eye. The Athletic Department advises student-athletes to exercise extreme caution in their use of social networking (i.e.; Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, etc.). Student-athletes should not post inappropriate information or pictures on social networking websites that damage or embarrass individuals, teams, the Athletic Department or the school.

Student-athletes should keep the following information in mind before participating in social networking:

- Always represent oneself and one's school respectfully.
- Once any text, photo, tweets, or video is placed online, it is completely out of your control, regardless of whether you limit access to your page. Assume that everything posted is permanent.
- Do not post information, photos, tweets or other items online that could embarrass you, your family, your team, the athletic department or school. This includes information, photos, tweets and items that may be posted by others on their page or on your webpage.
- Do not post disrespectful comments or engage in inappropriate behavior such as the following:
 - Derogatory or defamatory language;
 - Derogatory or defamatory comments about teammates, coaches, officials, opponents, athletics or the school.

Student –athletes could face disciplinary action and even dismissal for violation of school, team, athletic department or Arkansas Activities Association policy or rules.

9. **Bullying and Hazing**: Bullying and hazing of any kind will not be tolerated. (Refer to the Russellville School District Handbook.)

10. **Proper Conduct and Sportsmanship**: Proper conduct and good sportsmanship are expected at all times. Athletes should be good role models both in and out of the classroom.

As ambassadors of Russellville Public Schools, student-athletes and coaches should strive to represent the very best spirit and tradition of athletics. Remember that athletes not only

represent oneself, but one's teammates, coaches, the entire athletic department, the school and community. Student-athletes shall exemplify good sportsmanship on and off the field of play, during pre- and post-game comments to the media, and when traveling and participating at other institutions. Profanity, derogatory comments or other intimidating actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated.

11. Any athlete charged with a felony will automatically be suspended from that sport and will not be allowed to try out or practice with another sport until they have been cleared of all charges.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

- Common goals and group loyalties.
- Subordination of self-interest to team values.
- Self-discipline and personal sacrifice for team goals.

The coach and athletic director are primarily responsible for implementing these goals and standards. No student is obligated to take part in athletics. Athletics is a privilege, not a right. Since it is a privilege, the coach should have authority to revoke the privilege, when rules are broken. Each athlete will realize that the school wishes the athlete to reach his/her very best achievement level, both in life and in interscholastic athletics.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES

1. Athletic Participation

- Students will be encouraged by the coaching staff to participate in any sport they desire.
- The head coach in each sport has complete discretion as to who plays, how long they play, and under what circumstances they play or do not play.
- Try-outs: Sports that are limited in number of participants will conduct try-outs based on ability, potential and grade level. Selection of the team will be at the discretion of the coach.

2. Dropping And Transferring Sports

- Student who drops a sport may not rejoin the team until the next tryout period. (Exceptions will be granted for reasons deemed worthy of appeal by the Athletic Director)

- An athlete who quits a sport is not allowed to participate in another sport without the consent of both coaches involved or until the season of the sport he/she quit has ended. (Exceptions will be granted for reasons deemed worthy of appeal by the Athletic Director)

3. Travel

- All athletes must travel to and from athletic contests in transportation provided by the athletic department or must have prior approval by their coach and signed parental consent on approved form.
- Athletes will remain with their squad and under the supervision of their coach when attending away games or events.
- All regular school bus rules will be followed, including those pertaining to food, noise, remaining in seats, and care and respect for equipment.

4. College Recruitment Policy

- The Russellville Athletic Department and our coaches will work with college coaches to provide them with the information and material needed for a complete evaluation. Our staff does not make decisions regarding who gets recruited or offered scholarships. We have multiple college coaches that evaluate Russellville athletes in all sports every year. Ultimately, it is their decision as to who they recruit.

5. Injuries/Illness Notification

- In effort to provide safe participation in all athletic activities, it is of the utmost importance that our coaches and training staff be informed of all injuries or illnesses no matter how minor. Please provide timely notice of any doctor's orders or recommendations pertaining to participation.

6. Conflicts in Extra-Curricular Activities

- An individual student who attempts to participate in too many extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict of obligations.
- Coaches recognize that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extra-curricular activities; and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner so as to minimize conflicts.

- Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This would include being cautious about participating in too many activities.
- When conflicts do arise, coaches will do their best to work out a solution. If it becomes obvious that a student cannot fulfill the obligation of a school activity, the student should withdraw from that activity.

7. Eligibility Highlights

- A student's eligibility for interscholastic athletics shall be in the public school district of the parents' domicile.
- A student may meet the domicile requirement at another AAA member school after attending said member school for one calendar year.
- A student can also meet the domicile requirement if the student receives a legal transfer that takes place prior to July 1 before a student enters grades 7-10.
- A student transferring or attempting to transfer from one school to another due to recruitment or inducement may be ineligible for interscholastic competition for a period of up to one full year from the date of transfer or attempted transfer.
- A student is limited to eight consecutive semesters of opportunity for eligibility beginning with the student's first enrollment in the ninth grade.
- A junior high student is not eligible for junior high competition if the student's 16th birthday is on or before September 1.
- A senior high student is not eligible for interscholastic participation if the student's 19th birthday is on or before September 1.
- A student who is a member of a school's athletic team and who has engaged in interscholastic competition may not try out for, practice with, or otherwise participate with, or be a member of a non-school athletic team in the same sport, in season, without losing eligibility for up to a full year (365 days) from the date of such participation with the non-school team.
- This limitation shall apply to the team sports of football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, and soccer. However, a member of an interscholastic baseball, softball or soccer team may try out for or practice with a non-school team on days when the school team does not practice or play.
- Players from school teams may play in out-of-season leagues or games outside the season, but may not be school sponsored in anyway. These non-school teams may not use school equipment or uniforms.

- A student who is a member of a school's athletic program as a participant in a sport and who has engaged in interscholastic competition in that sport may enter non-school competition as an individual during or outside of the school season for that sport. These individual sports include: cross country, track, gymnastics, tennis, golf, swimming, wrestling, and bowling.
- In any year that a student engages in interscholastic competition, the student shall be required to present to the coach verification of a physical examination prior to beginning practice which shall be valid for one calendar year.
- Complete eligibility rules can be accessed online at www.ahsaa.org.
- The Head Coach of each sport will be held responsible for the eligibility of all of the athletes participating in their sport which includes students that may be enrolled in the SIP Program.

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING ATHLETICS

MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS: The Russellville School District fields two teams for the middle school, RMS Red and RMS Black. The teams will be divided equally according to the talent level of the students participating. Coaches from the high school staff and junior high staff will help the middle school coaches evaluate the talent to equally divide the teams. RMS will field two teams in football, volleyball, boys basketball, and girls basketball.

SUMMER WORKOUTS: All athletes are expected to maintain their physical conditioning throughout the summer. Coaches should inform athletes of any special workout programs to be followed. Weight rooms and gyms will be open as scheduled through the summer.

TEAM CAMPS: Coaches may enroll their teams in organized team camps during the summer. Athletes are encouraged to attend if possible. Spirit team members will be required to attend camp.

FALL SPORTS PRE-SEASON: Fall sports (Football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Golf, Tennis, and Spirit groups) begin their pre-season workouts during the month of August as per Arkansas Activities Association guidelines. Athletes should keep an eye on the media as to the starting dates of practice or get in contact with their coach. If conflicts arise, athletes should contact their coach to resolve these conflicts.

OFF SEASON: The purpose of an off-season is to prepare a student physically and mentally for participation in athletics; therefore, it is in the student's best interest to have completed a conditioning program before participation in a sport. Required participation is left up the discretion of the coach.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: If school is cancelled due to inclement weather, practices will also be cancelled. Playing of games will be decided by administration of Russellville School District.

DRUG TESTING: Any athlete who participates in extra-curricular activities will be subject to a random drug test. Names of the athletes are selected by an outside agency. Any athlete who tests positive to a drug test will be disciplined according to the Russellville School District Drug Testing Policy. (See Drug Testing Policy.)

TEAM TRIPS: All students must travel to events in transportation provided by Russellville School District. Special arrangements can be made for travel if approved by the building administrator. Sign-out sheets will be provided by the coach, sponsor or teacher for students to go with their parents after the event. **Parents can sign out only their child with the Coach.**

SPIRIT GROUPS: This entire Athletic Handbook pertains to all members of any spirit groups.

- A. AACCA Safety guidelines will be followed.
- B. The primary goal is to promote school spirit in the school and at athletic events.
- C. All Try-outs will be held in the spring.
- D. Competition is at the discretion of the Coach.

PARTICIPATION OF ATHLETES IN DIFFERENT SPORTS:

1. The athletic department's philosophy is that each sport complements the other, both physically and competitively.
2. Students will be encouraged by the coaching staff to participate in all sports.
3. Try-outs: Sports that are limited to a number of participants will conduct try-outs based on ability and grade level. Selection of the team will be at the discretion of the coach.
4. An athlete must complete his/her season in the sport they are involved in before they can try-out for another sport. They will be allowed to try-out for any team after their season even if the selected team has already had try-outs.

UNDERCLASSMEN PLAYING ON VARSITY TEAMS: Only special circumstances would allow a student to participate in a sport higher than their grade level unless they are in the 9th grade and they are trying out for a sport not offered at the Junior High level. Circumstances would be evaluated by the coaching staff and athletic director.

ONLY ATHLETES THAT ARE ELIGIBLE TO PLAY IN VARSITY EVENTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO DRESS OUT FOR THE VARSITY EVENTS. THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO DRESS OUT FOR JUNIOR VARSITY EVENTS.

HOW TO REPORT A COMPLAINT

When reporting a complaint, the procedures are as follows:

1. Contact the coach who had direct supervision of the athlete at the time. If satisfactory resolution of the complaint is not made, then;
2. Contact the Head Coach of the sport in which the athlete was participating. If satisfactory resolution of the complaint is not made, then;
3. Contact the Athletic Director of the Russellville School District. If satisfactory resolution of the complaint is not made, then;
4. Contact the building principal of the school. If satisfactory resolution of the complaint is not made, then;
5. Contact the Superintendent of the Russellville School District

RUSSELLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT ATHLETIC CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my consent for _____ to compete in interscholastic sports; participate in related practice sessions and to travel with the team/coach for such functions. I acknowledge that even with proper instruction and supervision, proper use of equipment and strict observance of the rules, injuries and accidents are still a possibility. I understand that the Russellville School District or its employees will not be liable if an injury or accident occurs. I give my consent for treatment at the best medical facility available in case of injury, accident or illness. I understand that I am required to have Primary Insurance Coverage. Russellville Schools has purchased Blanket Interscholastic Insurance Coverage for all participants. This policy provides secondary or supplemental coverage to students actively engaged in the play or practice of activities sponsored by the Arkansas Activities Association. Claims must be made within 30 days of the accident. I understand that the Russellville School District will not be responsible for payment of any medical bill that the family's personal policy or the district's athletic insurance does not pay. I also agree to be responsible for the return of any athletic equipment issued to the above named student in quality condition.

I have read the Russellville Athletic Handbook and do hereby agree to comply and follow the guidelines set forth in order to participate in Russellville School Athletics.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE STATEMENTS.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Athlete

NOTE: This form must be signed and returned to the Coach before an athlete may participate in any athletic activity. Please sign, detach and return to your Coach.