

Sweetwater I.S.D. Athletic Handbook

*ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT
POLICIES AND GUIDELINES*

OBJECTIVES OF ATHLETICS

1. The primary objective of our program is to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability in all of our athletes. It is our desire that through competitive athletics our students realize that they can determine the course of their own lives. We believe that through our program we can help our students grow into mature, responsible citizens that contribute to our society.
2. We want to ensure that each one of our athletes has an opportunity to be successful. Not every young athlete will have the same level of talent, but every athlete can give their best attitude and effort. Every athlete can feel good about themselves and their role on the team.
3. Sweetwater ISD coaches will work to ensure that our athletes enjoy participating. When it's time to work, we will work and work very hard, but we also are going to find time for our athletes to have fun.

SWEETWATER ISD ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

ACADEMICS

All athletes are students first and athletes second. **Your primary purpose for being in school is to get an education.** We believe that it takes a special person to be a student and an athlete. You will have to work harder, stay up later, and get up earlier because much of your study time will be taken up by athletics. We know that this is not easy, but we hold this expectation to ensure your academic success.

Be organized, complete assignments in a timely manner. If you are having trouble in class, schedule a time for tutorials with your teacher. Every coach is also a teacher and understands the importance of success in the classroom. Coaches will check grades periodically, but the primary responsibility falls on the athlete to get help if you are having trouble. Discipline yourself to do your work so others won't have to!

ATHLETIC CLASS PERIODS

The purpose of the athletic program is to make you a better athlete all around, it is not designed for any single sport. Emphasis will be placed on strength, agility, and conditioning. All athletes participating in the following sports **MUST** be enrolled in an Athletic Period beginning in the Fall Semester: football, volleyball, basketball, golf, tennis, baseball, and softball. Cross Country practices will take place outside of the normal school day so any athlete only participating in cross country will not need to be in an athletic class period. Any athletes who participate solely in track are required to be in an athletic period beginning in the spring.

The athletic periods will run according to schedule each day. U.I.L guidelines will be followed. We expect our athletes to work year-round to become their very best.

Sports that are in season will go through strength and conditioning (SAC) a minimal of 2 times a week. Head Coaches in season will work with the Strength Coordinator to design appropriate workouts. This will remain consistent throughout the year and is expected for all sports. We believe in developing athleticism is as important as developing skill.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES – No absence will be excused. Absences because of illness, a school function, a death in the family, will be considered legitimate absence and the athlete will only be required to make up the work that was missed. However, with the exception of illness, athletes must communicate with their coach **before** any such absence occurs. In case of illness, it is the athlete's responsibility to notify a coach that they will miss practice.

Any such absence that has not been communicated to the coach will be considered a deliberate miss and that athlete will be subject to disciplinary action in addition to making up the work missed. If excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) occur during a single season, it will be up to the head coach and athletic director's discretion on means of make-up accountability or suspension of games.

If you do not come to school, call 325-235-7874 so that your absence can be communicated with your Coach.

PROMPTNESS – **Always be on time!** The athlete must be responsible for their own time. During the athletic period, athletes will have a designated amount of time after the bell to be dressed and ready to go. Tardiness will result in disciplinary measures according to the sport. On trips, the bus waits for

no one. **Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated.** If you must miss or if you are late to an athletic period/practice, be sure that it has been communicated to your coach. If you fail to do so, you are subject to disciplinary action.

ATTITUDE – WORK HABITS

Your attitude will determine your success. Athletes that are coachable, hard-working, attend practice and study the sport will have greater success. Negative attitudes and complaining benefit no one. Positive attitudes help us all. Learn to take both praise and criticism from your coach, they are only trying to make you better. **There is no substitute for hard work and a good attitude.**

The harder you work, the better you get. Do not allow yourself to be mentally or physically lazy.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

If a player or parent has a problem or conflict with a coach, there is a proper chain of command to follow. **First, schedule a meeting with the coach with whom you have the conflict or problem. Second, schedule a meeting with the head coach of that sport.** If you are not satisfied or the problem is not resolved, then go to step three. **Schedule a meeting with the girl's coordinator or the athletic director.** If you still feel that the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction **then you should schedule a meeting with the Superintendent.** By following the proper channels most further conflicts and problems can be avoided. Please do not address coaches after games or practices, the best time to address issues is in a scheduled meeting.

COACHES/TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS

Each coach, teacher, and administrator at Sweetwater ISD is a professional. Coaches should receive “yes ma’am/yes sir,” “no ma’am/no sir” responses from players when being spoken to. Whenever a Coach is speaking to you, either individually or as a group, you will give them your undivided attention and look them in the eye. If a player is disrespectful to a coach, teacher, or administrator, or in violation of athletic policies, they will be disciplined at the discretion of the Coach. If the behavior persists on the part of the student-athlete, they may be removed from the program.

CONDUCT

The athletes who have preceded you have helped us build a well-respected program. We want to be known as a class act. Do not do anything that would detract from this. Our athletic teams are noted for clean, tough, competitive play. We **do not** “shoot off our mouths” on or off the field. Praise your opponents and play to your ability. We expect you to conduct yourselves as ladies and gentlemen at all times. Despite athletic ability, but we expect each of you to perform to the best of your ability at all times. Misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary actions according to the sport.

The use of profanity is not acceptable, reoccurrence could result in further disciplinary action.

PROGRAM DISCIPLINE

Our goal is for all athletes to positively represent our programs. We want to reinforce positive behavior and address negative behavior. When negative behavior occurs, it will be evaluated on a case by case basis, not all offenses have been listed here. Each offense will be deemed as a level 1, level 2, or level 3.

Conduct detrimental to the program

Quitting
Stealing
Fighting
Gang Activity
Disrespectful to school personnel

Level 1 Offense

A level 1 offense will result in immediate removal from the program. The athlete is out of athletics and will have to go through the readmission procedure before the next season starts. In some instances, the athlete may be removed from athletics entirely for the remainder of the school year or for the remainder of their time at Sweetwater.

Level 2 Offense

A level 2 offense is a poor choice with major implications that must be addressed. The consequence for most level 2 offenses will be conditioning. If the offense was severe the consequence may be suspension from games missed. A second level 2 offense can result in the same disciplinary procedures as a level 1—depending on the offense.

Level 3 Offense

A level 3 offense is a minor behavioral problem. OCS time is a level 3 offense. Each day that an athlete is assigned OCS will result in 50 burpees that must be done within one week after the OCS assignment has ended. Most level 3 offenses will be addressed in athletics with conditioning. If we continue to have the same problems we will treat them as a level 2 offense.

ELIGIBILITY

An athlete must maintain an average of 70 in all classes to be eligible for extra-curricular activities. In addition, the athlete must have the correct number of credits at the beginning of the school year.

Freshmen	Must be promoted to 9th grade
Sophomore	Must have 5 credits
Junior	Must have 10 credits
Senior	Must have 15 credits

Athletes wishing to attend Division I or II universities on an athletic scholarship must meet all requirements of the NCAA. If an athlete fails two consecutive grading periods, they will be put on an academic probationary contract.

ELIGIBILITY-ACADEMIC

In the case of an athlete becoming academically ineligible, UIL policy will be followed. Athletes that are academically ineligible are still expected to attend practice and be a part of the team since eligibility may be regained after the three week grading period or the end of the six weeks. Practice times will be scheduled as to not affect tutorial times.

EQUIPMENT and UNIFORMS

Sweetwater ISD will issue the proper equipment for each sport. **The athlete will be held responsible for their own equipment and will pay for equipment lost or stolen.** Any athlete caught in the equipment room or borrowing another's equipment will be subject to disciplinary action. **Any athlete who is caught stealing will be automatically placed under a level 2 offense and disciplined accordingly.**

An athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until all of their equipment previous sport has been turned in. An athlete that does not take care of their equipment will be disciplined according to the sport. Athlete attire dress should reflect pride and class; both in uniform and out. We will furnish your uniform and each coach will set equipment and uniform guidelines. Take care of your equipment.

All athlete must be dressed in school-issued attire during practice times.

FORMS

All incoming 7th, 9th, and 11th grade athletes and any athlete who has never had a physical are required to have a physical examination before participating in any athletic contest. All physicals will be kept on file. An athlete who moves into the district should have a copy of his or her physical examination or make arrangements to get it.

The following forms must be completed and on file before participating in athletic contests:

- Medical Examination Form
- Medical History Form
- Acknowledgment of Rules Form
- Permit for Participation Form
- UIL Steroid Agreement Form
- Handbook Acknowledgement Form

GROOMING

Students athletes at Sweetwater ISD will reflect a positive public image in their appearance. Your appearance should, at all times, reflect class and pride in yourself and in our athletic program and must fall within school dress code guidelines. Hairstyles and clothing should not be disruptive. Hair for young men will be short and neatly groomed. Women should wear a hairstyle that will keep hair out of their eyes. **Men will not be allowed to wear earrings or any other form of body piercing on campus or at any function where they represent Sweetwater High School. Tattoos will be covered.** Athletes at Sweetwater ISD will also not be allowed to wear bandannas or other headgear not appropriate to their sport.

ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOOTBALL/VOLLEYBALL (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

Any athlete that will participate in high school football or volleyball must go through the SAC program in the previous spring semester. This time of year is considered football and volleyball offseason and will be used to prepare for the upcoming season. If a student not in athletics the prior year wants to participate, they will be allowed to do so at the beginning of 2-a-days for football or volleyball.

LETTERING

The first time a student letters on a varsity team they will be eligible to receive a letter jacket. Letter jackets are ordered twice a year. All additional patches or decorations for the jacket will be the responsibility of the individual student.

To letter, an athlete must meet three requirements.

- compete in a specified number of interscholastic contests at the varsity level
- be recommended for lettering by the Athletic Director or by the coach
- complete the season in good standing as a team member

Letter requirements for each sport are as follows:

Football – To letter in varsity football, the athlete must be on the varsity team for at least half the season.

Basketball & Volleyball – To letter in varsity basketball or volleyball, an athlete must be on the varsity $\frac{1}{2}$ the team season for at least

Powerlifting – To letter in powerlifting, an athlete must qualify for the regional powerlifting

Track – To letter in track, an athlete must represent the school in at least one-half of the regular varsity meets and score a minimum of 10 points or point at the district track meet.

Golf – To letter in golf, a student must compete in two regular-season tournaments and the district tournament as a member of the varsity team.

Tennis – To earn a letter in tennis, a student must compete in at least one-half of the regular season tournaments and the district tournament as a member on the varsity team and win at least one set.

Cross Country -- Athlete must be a top 15 finisher in the district or be a regional qualifier.

Baseball & Softball – To letter in varsity baseball or softball, an athlete must compete in a minimum of ten games at the varsity level. If no Junior Varsity team is fielded due to lack of numbers, athletes must compete in a minimum of 30 innings to letter.

All final decisions concerning athletic letters will fall under the discretion of the coach of the sport and the athletic director.

INJURY OR ILLNESS

If you become injured while participating in athletics, it is your responsibility to report it to your head coach and the athletic trainer. You will be treated at the discretion of the athletic trainer if further treatment is needed you will be referred to a physician.

If your illness or injury prevents you from participating in the workout, **you are still expected to attend practice.**

If your illness requires a visit to a physician, a note from the physician must be presented to your Coach. **We will follow the doctor's orders exactly; you will not be allowed to return to practice until the doctor releases you.** All correspondence with physicians will be kept on file.

If you have any injury that needs rehab you will stay in the program and receive treatment and perform your rehab exercises. If you have a prolonged medical condition that prohibits you from participating and it is something that cannot be rehabbed or treated then you will have your schedule changed and be removed from the athletic period.

LOCKER ROOM

The locker room should be kept neat and clean. Although locker rooms are maintained by janitorial staff, it is not their responsibility to clean up after athletes. Athletes are responsible for keeping their locker and the area around the locker clean.

Each locker room will have guidelines posted for teams to abide by. Each team member is expected to adhere to these guidelines. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures according to the sport.

QUITTING POLICY

Athletes have 3 weeks in a sport to determine if they will continue through the rest of the season. Athletes that quit a sport after the three trial period, they must complete two bowls per day for 5 consecutive days then will be suspended for 1 week of gameplay in a new sport. Conditioning must be completed under a coach's supervision outside of school or practice times.

Athletes that desire to be readmitted into athletics will have to complete two bowls for 5 consecutive and be suspended for one week of gameplay.

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS

A district contest will always take precedence over a non-district contest or field trip. Using this rule, all participants will be given an opportunity to compete in the major contests or events of any extracurricular activity. The Athletic Department will do everything possible to avoid conflicts of this type.

An athlete participating in multiple sports that do not begin at the same time will not be allowed to participate in the competitions of the latter sport until the season of the previous sport is complete.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE to include alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drugs

An Extracurricular Drug Testing Policy is in place. You may refer to it on the SISD Web site or the SHS Code of Conduct Handbook.

Students who represent Sweetwater ISD by their participation in any University Interscholastic League activity are expected to exemplify the highest standards of conduct and safe, healthy behavior. Use of alcohol, tobacco, and /or drugs **will not be tolerated**. Specifically, students are expected not to sell, deliver, possess, give, use individually or be present at a social gathering where alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are made available to minors. (Use or possession of other forms of drugs or controlled substances may be dealt with differently according to the law.) An athlete agrees to abide by this Substance Abuse Policy and consequences for their entire tenure at Sweetwater High School.

This is not based on a year-to-year format and is not contingent on school being in session. To ensure consistency among different groups, the following uniform penalties for failure to adhere to these guidelines will be implemented:

Consequences for High School

1st Strike

8 Bowls, 8,000 yards bear crawls, 500-word essay over alcoholism or drug abuse, team and parent apology, 1-hour counseling with Head Coach or Athletic Director
–Must be completed before competition play–

2nd Strike

Mandatory 2 games, 2 scrimmages or 1 tournament suspension. 12 Bowls, 15,000-yard bear crawls, 1,000-word essay on leadership, 5 hours of community service
–Must be completed before competition play–

3rd Strike

6-week suspension, 15 Bowls, 20,000 yards bear crawls, 10 hours of community service, possibility of 2 Alcohol Anonymous meeting / DSM Grant Program.

–Must be completed before competition play–

4th Strike

Meeting with parents, athlete, athletic director, superintendent, Sweetwater ISD School Board about steps needing to help our athlete with recovery and/or removal from athletic programs.

Consequences for Jr. High

1st Strike

15-mile run, 500-word essay over alcoholism/drug abuse, team and parent apology. 1-hour counseling with Jr. High Coordinator or Head Coach.

–Must be completed before competition play–

2nd Strike

Mandatory 2 games, 2 scrimmages or 1 tournament suspension. 30-mile run, 1,000-word essay on leadership, 5 hours of community service.

–Must be completed before competition play–

3rd Strike

Meeting with parents, athlete, athletic director, superintendent, Sweetwater ISD School Board about steps needing to help the athlete with recovery and/or possible removal from the athletic program.

–Must be completed before competition play–

*All punishment will be under coaches supervision and mandatory daily practice through each level of offense.

*If Strike 1 offense occurs and the athlete goes one full year without another occurrence with alcohol or drug abuse he/she will repeat Strike 1. If Strike 2 is reached in the same year then the following levels will be carried out for the rest of the athlete's career at Sweetwater High School.

*Strikes in middle school do not carry over to the high school.

*Unfinished consequences must be completed before eligibility is gained in high school.

*Strike will be carried out only if the athletic director is informed by the athlete, athlete's parents, Sweetwater ISD administration or local authorities.

One Bowl consists of a trip around the top of the bowl – running 3 full sets of steps on each side. Two trips across the floor of the bowl will be made using the ramp at the south end to go down and the stairs at the north end to go back up. As athletes cross the bowl floor they will pause at each yard line marker to do an up/down. (11 total for each pass)

TRAVEL

All team members are expected to travel to and from the competition in school provided vehicles. Extenuating circumstances that necessitate an exception to this rule must be presented to the coach of the team **by the parents or legal guardian** of the student involved. In addition to a written note,

athletes must be signed out at the end of the event and will only be allowed to leave with their parents or legal guardian.