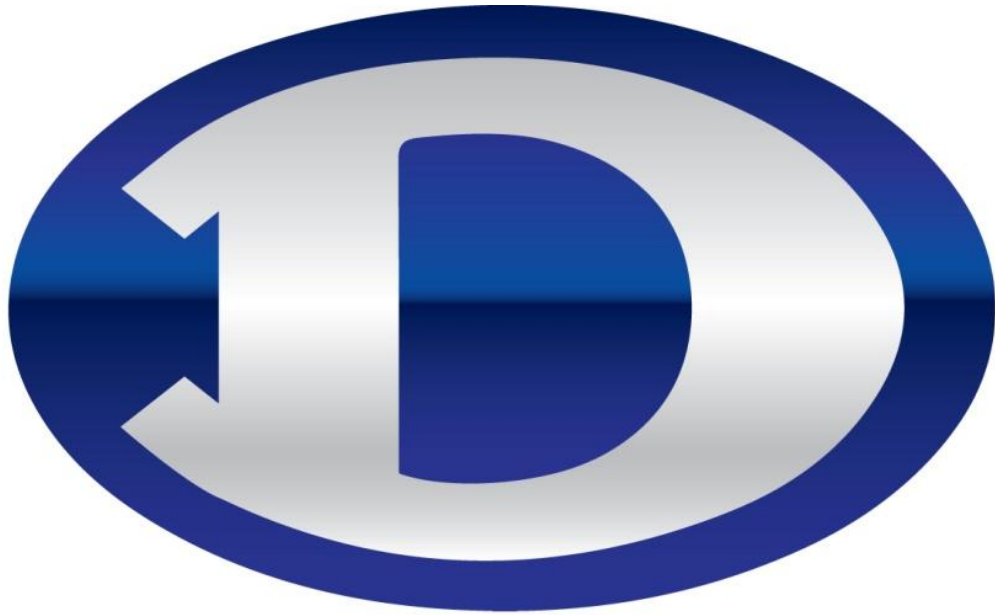


# **Decatur ISD**



## **Athletic Handbook**

## **Decatur Independent School District Athletic Handbook**

This handbook explains the athletic purpose, policies and procedures that will be followed in all sports at Decatur ISD. This handbook works in conjunction with the Decatur ISD Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. The Decatur ISD Athletic Program will operate in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the University Interscholastic League. (UIL)

Consequences outlined in the Athletic Handbook are in addition to any consequences that might be administered under DISD Board Policy or the Student Code of Conduct or Handbook. In the case of a conflict between the Athletic Handbook, Board Policy, and/or the DISD Student Code of Conduct, School Board Policy and the Code of Conduct take precedence.

### **Extracurricular Philosophy**

The Decatur Independent School District (“DISD” or “the District”) encourages student participation in extracurricular activities. DISD makes extracurricular activities available as an extension of the regular school program with this important difference: while participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student, participation in the extra-curricular program is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct. Students engaging in extracurricular activities represent not only themselves, but also other students and the District whether or not they are actively performing, competing, or participating in extracurricular activities and whether or not they are wearing uniforms or other clothing that identifies the student to the community or public in any setting as DISD students. For this reason, their behavior must be exemplary and reflect the finest attributes of the total DISD student body at all times and all places. Important goals of the extracurricular program are to give students direction in developing self-discipline, responsibility, pride, loyalty, leadership, teamwork, respect for authority, and healthy living habits.

### **Purpose of the Athletic Program**

The Decatur ISD athletic program exists to offer all athletes the opportunity to achieve their individual athletic potential and their team’s athletic potential while developing an appreciation for integrity, academics, attitude, perseverance, responsibility, hard work and the art of goal setting. It is important to view athletics as a part of the total educational program. It is here to compliment and contribute to the overall educational process. We believe the combination of sports and academics can be a tremendous experience in a young person’s life. A broad and sound sports program for all students can provide invaluable experiences for all participants. A sound, wholesome sports program will contribute to and offer involvement to all students as participants, support groups, or as spectators. It will serve the community by providing entertainment and establishing a common ground of interest, which will draw citizens together in support of the various sports and activities.

### **Athletic Eligibility**

It is the responsibility of the head coach to check athletic grades and ensure all students who participate in contests are eligible under UIL and TEA guidelines. All athletes must meet the UIL guidelines to be eligible to compete. There are standards of residence, credits towards graduation, age guidelines, and schedule requirements to be eligible for varsity competition. All athletes must meet the “no pass, no play” expectations of the UIL. Each athlete must pass all classes each six weeks to maintain academic eligibility unless specified by the UIL or TEA. A student that fails a class will be ineligible for three

weeks. At the three week grade check that athlete must be passing all classes to regain eligibility. Ineligible athletes are required to attend all practices during their period of ineligibility. Failure to do so may result in the athlete being dismissed from the Athletic Program. Any athlete who continuously fails classes may be removed from the athletic program. The athletes at Decatur ISD are students first and are expected to pass all of their classes each six weeks. Coaches will work with both teachers and athletes to accommodate the need for athletes to attend tutorial sessions as scheduled by their teachers. The athlete is solely responsible for their grades.

### **Practice and Game Attendance**

All team members are required to attend all school practices, meetings, and games. Practice times will be scheduled by the head coach of each sport. Before or after school practices are limited to eight hours per week in accordance with UIL rules. If at all possible, the head coach of a sport should be notified, in advance, when a conflict arises and an athlete must miss a practice or a game. The following types of absences will be excused if the coach is informed in advance:

1. Any school sponsored activity
2. Family emergency
3. Medical or dental appointment (must bring a note from the doctor's office)
4. Funeral

An athlete will not be punished for missing a practice with an excused absence; however, that athlete may be required to make up the conditioning to ensure that the athlete is continuing to improve their level of fitness.

Athletes who miss practices or games with unexcused absences will be required to perform extra conditioning at the head coach's discretion and such absences may result in suspension from one or more games or dismissal from the team.

### **Placement in ISS and or DAEP**

An athlete who has been assigned to In School Suspension (ISS) may not participate in athletic competitions before/during/after school until the ISS placement is completed. However, the athlete is required to attend athletic practices, either before or after the conclusion of the regular school day.

An athlete who has been assigned to Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) may not participate in any competitions or practices on the day(s) assigned to DAEP.

### **Absences due to illness or injury**

Due to the nature of athletics, injuries are very common to athletes. Any athlete who is injured is required to attend practices, if at all possible, not only to continue to learn the sport, but to receive treatment for their injury as well.

Any athlete who misses a practice or a game due to sickness is required to provide a note from a parent or a physician. If an athlete misses 3 consecutive practices due to an illness that athlete is required to provide the head coach with an excuse, from a physician, stating the nature of the illness and the period of time that the athlete will not be able to participate.

### **Practice and Game Attire**

All athletes will be issued school equipment for all practices and games. They are required to wear this equipment during the course of their season. The athlete is responsible for any equipment that is issued to them. The athlete will be required to reimburse the Decatur ISD athletic department for any equipment that is lost, stolen, or intentionally destroyed. The cost for each item will be based on the amount that will be required to replace it.

Travel attire or game attire is at the discretion of the head coach of each sport and will reflect a positive image upon the athlete, the athletic department, school district, and community

### **Personal Appearance**

All members of athletic teams are expected to maintain a manner of appearance that reflects a positive image upon Decatur ISD and the community of Decatur. All athletes will be required to follow the Decatur High School student dress code as published in the Student Handbook. No jewelry may be worn, including piercings, during practice or competition.

### **Tobacco and E-Cig Violations**

It is a violation for any Decatur ISD athlete to use or possess tobacco products or an E-Cig.

In addition to any punishment that the athlete receives from Decatur ISD he/she will receive the following punishments:

1. First offense of the school year: 5 miles of disciplinary running before the next contest.
2. Second offense of the school year: 10 miles of disciplinary running and suspension from the next contest.
3. Third offense of the school year: 15 miles of disciplinary running and suspension from the next two contests.
4. Fourth offense of the school year: Removal from the athletic program for a calendar year.

All conditioning must be completed before competing in any athletic contest. All conditioning must be done at times other than practice time.

### **Alcohol, drugs, Look-a-like Drugs, and Paraphernalia**

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, DISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than for those students who choose not to participate in these activities. Therefore, this Extracurricular Code of Conduct extends beyond the DISD Student Code of Conduct not only in types of behavior prohibited but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline.

\* This code applies at all times and to conduct on or off campus, while participating in an activity or not, during the school calendar year, and during holidays, summer break, and weekends.

\* Each organization may enforce additional consequences if addressed in their individual constitutions.

*DISD will conduct random drug testing for students who participate in extracurricular activities.*

*Prohibited conduct:*

DISD students who participate in extracurricular activities are prohibited at all times from:

- Possessing, consuming, or issued a citation for alcoholic beverages
- Possessing, consuming, or issued a citation for illegal drugs or any drug paraphernalia
- Misusing prescription drugs or non- prescription drugs or other mood-altering substances
- Commission of an unlawful act

*Violations of alcohol, drugs, look-a-like drugs, and paraphernalia:*

The first violation will result in:

- Student placed on a three-week (calendar) suspension from all activities and clubs, but must be present during regular practice time.
- Parent conference scheduled as soon as possible to review action taken and discuss referral for counseling.
- School provided or documented counseling before returning.

A second violation involving alcohol, drugs, look-a-like drugs, or paraphernalia occurring any time during a student's high school career will result in a six week (calendar) suspension from all activities and clubs, but must be present during regular practice time.

Each subsequent violation involving alcohol, drugs, look-a-like drugs, or paraphernalia occurring any time during a student's high school career will result in dismissal from all extra- curricular activities for one calendar year.

If the offense occurs over the summer break, the suspension will begin immediately upon return to athletic participation. (practices or games)

*Commissions of an Unlawful Act*

A serious, unlawful act (i.e. theft, destruction of property, etc.) could result in suspension from all extracurricular activities. Administrative discretion will be used due to the broadness of this issue.

*Establishing a Violation*

Violations of this policy may be established by:

1. Student admission
2. Admission by the parent or guardian of the student
3. Violation witnessed by DISD staff member
4. Issuance of a local agency report or citation

**Felony Offenses**

In accordance with the Texas High School Coaches Association's Code of Ethics, an athlete charged with a felony will not be allowed to participate until charges have been dropped or the issue is resolved. If an athlete is found guilty of committing a felony they will be permanently removed from the athletic program.

### **Unsportsmanlike Behavior**

There is no excuse for any athlete to exhibit unsportsmanlike behavior towards an official, opponent, or coach. Any athlete who receives a foul for unsportsmanlike behavior may be required to complete extra conditioning before the next contest. Habitual unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Any athlete that continuously exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from the athletic program permanently.

### **Racial Intolerance**

Racial intolerance towards teammates and/or opponents will not be tolerated by athletes or spectators. Any athlete who makes inappropriate comments about a teammate's or an opponent's ethnic background will be punished with extra physical conditioning. Continued racial remarks may result in dismissal from the athletic program.

### **Hazing, Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Decatur ISD Athletic Department will not tolerate any form of abuse, bullying, or harassment. Any athlete, who participates in hazing, bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct of another athlete or student, will be immediately suspended from that athletic program and turned over to the campus principal. This athlete will be subject to the punishments outlined in the Decatur ISD Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. If a crime has been committed, the necessary law enforcement agencies will be notified immediately.

Any athlete found guilty of hazing, bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct will be removed from the program. Removal may be appealed to the athletic director and reversed at his discretion.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

One of the most important ideals of athletics is respect. Decatur ISD athletes are expected to be respectful towards their teachers, coaches, administrators, auxiliary staff, teammates, opponents, and especially game officials. Any athlete that continually displays a lack of respect will be punished with extra physical conditioning or may be removed from the Athletic Program completely.

During practices and games players are expected to communicate only with coaches, other athletes, or game officials, either verbally or electronically. Athletes are expected to be paying attention to the game and any instruction from coaches. Any athlete who repeatedly ignores this rule will be disciplined and possibly removed from the contest.

### **Quitting**

Quitting: Students will have a two-week period once they have reported for each sport to decide whether to continue to participate. If the student quits during that two-week period there will be no penalty. If a student quits after the two-week period is over, the student will not be allowed to play or practice any other sport until the end of the season of the sport that he/she originally quit.

In the occasion of mutual agreement between the head coach of the first sport, the head coach of the second sport, and the athletic director, an exception to this rule may be made.

## **Off-Season Programs**

All athletes are expected to participate in off-season. Athletes who do not participate in an off-season program may incur penalties as decided by the head coach and may not be allowed to participate during the season.

## **Team Travel**

Decatur ISD will provide transportation for out of town contests. All members of teams are required to ride to and from all contests on the school provided transportation unless previous arrangements have been made with the head coach of the sport. If an athlete is going to ride home with a person other than their parent or guardian, they must provide a written note, signed by a parent or guardian, before leaving Decatur ISD to travel to the game.

Head coaches will clearly define expectations of behavior on road trips to out of town games or tournaments. This includes behavior on the bus, at the athletic venue, in restaurants, hotels, convenience stores, etc. Acceptable behavior on a road trip is up to the discretion of the head coach.

## **Social Media Guidelines**

Due to the accessibility and use of social media in today's society, the Decatur ISD Athletic Department is implementing guidelines to assist our athletes in developing the skills needed to make positive decisions while using social media outlets. It is important for our athletes to understand how social media can affect their opportunities in future endeavors. Many employers and colleges now use potential candidate's social media activities as a reference to that candidate's character, life choices, and habits.

1. Social Media use should not violate the DISD Code of Conduct for students.
2. Posts should not contain language or remarks that may harm teammates or coaches, other students or representatives of other schools, including comments that may be disrespectful to opposing teams.
3. Posts should not contain profane, vulgar, obscene, racial/ethnic, or offensive language.
4. Photos should not contain nudity, be vulgar, obscene or offensive in nature.
5. Photos or written post should not contain or reference illegal acts such as: violence, sexual harassment, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances, stalking, underage drinking, or any other inappropriate behavior.
6. Posts should not cast a negative image or negative perception of the athlete, team, or school.

**Consequences:** Ultimately, the consequences for Social Media violations will be determined by the coaches, athletic director and school officials on a case-by-case basis. Potential consequences may include; 1) conference between the athlete, head coach, athletic director and parent, 2) Extra physical conditioning, 3) game suspension, 4) expulsion from the team.

## **Insurance**

Decatur ISD is not responsible for injuries of its athletes who are participating in sports. A supplemental accident and health insurance policy is available through the school district, and parents are encouraged to purchase this or other insurance. More detailed information can be obtained by contacting the Decatur ISD Athletic Department at (940) 393-7290.

**Athletic Training and Injuries**

Students are expected to inform the head coach or athletic trainer of injuries received during athletic participation. Students should make such notification before seeking treatment except in the case of an emergency health crisis.

**Parent/Coach Relationships**

Parent meetings will be held in each sport and the expectations for parents will be outlined at that time.



## Acknowledgement

A condition for participating in the Decatur ISD Athletic Program is to sign an acknowledgement that the student-athlete has read and understands the Decatur ISD Athletic Handbook. The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must also sign the acknowledgement. The acknowledgement states that the signing party understands the consequences for engaging in prohibited conduct.

### PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

.....*Please detach on this line*.....

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read the Decatur ISD Athletic Handbook and agree to these rules as a condition for my voluntary participation in Decatur ISD Athletics. I understand that failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures related to my athletic participation.**

Student's Name (Printed)

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Student's Signature

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**I have read the Decatur ISD Athletic Handbook and understand the requirements for my child's voluntary participation in Decatur ISD Athletics. I understand the consequences that my child will face if he or she fails to adhere to these rules and agree to such terms. I am aware of the sections dealing with Parent/Coach Relationships and Behavior Expectations of Spectators. I agree to abide by the conditions stated therein.**

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Name (Printed)

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Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Signature

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