

Football General Information 2023-2024

We would like to welcome all incoming Wildcat Families to the 2023 football season at Whitehouse Junior High School. Junior high football is an exciting experience for 7th and 8th grade student-athletes. For some, this will be their first experience with organized football. A strong work ethic, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, dependability, servitude, and integrity are just a few of the attributes we hope to instill and hone into your young student-athletes. Through competition (no matter the outcome), life lessons are experienced and are reflected upon, adding to a student's life tool box for future use. Listed below are several areas that parents may have questions or concerns about. It is our attempt to give parents as much information as possible, thus answering many common questions.

Expectations

Our expectations from the student-athlete are pretty simple. We expect each student to be respectful of others, to learn from and contribute to a **TEAM** concept, to be accountable for their actions and except consequences for those actions, to develop a strong work ethic, to learn and demonstrate dependability, to demonstrate responsibility, to exhibit sportsmanship, and to put the needs of others before their own. We feel the expectations of the parents are for us (the coaches) to demonstrate, model, and hold these young students accountable for the above mentioned attributes. Being a part of school athletics or any school related extracurricular activity is a **privilege**; therefore, our athletes are held to higher standards.

Hydration

With August temperatures in the mid-to-upper 90s, the importance of proper hydration is extremely important. Most studies suggest that an average person should drink at **least** 64 ounces of water per day. That means an athlete will require much more. Athletes will have an unlimited supply of water at all practices. Please encourage your child to drink an ample amount of water throughout the day (we encourage players to bring their own water containers to practice when possible). Gatorade or other sports drinks are recommended after practice. Please discourage the excessive consumption of soft drinks. When in doubt, go with water. Acclimatize your child to the summer heat. This acclimation to heat will allow your child to better handle the summer conditions. We will have an athletic trainer available for most practices and contests.

Practices

We expect the student-athlete to be punctual and attend all practices. Both 7th and 8th grade practices will be broken down into two segments. Segment one will occur during the athletic period. Individual position work along with 7-on-7 and inside hull will be emphasized during this period. Segment two will be from 3:15-5:30. A majority of our afternoon session will be group work (Team Offense/Team Defense/Special Teams/Tempo/Video Sessions). Days with a threat of inclement weather may alter this schedule.

We plan to keep both grades after school for the first week of school. Missed practices will require some type of makeup work and the possibility of missing game time (this will be at the coach's discretion).

After Practice Pick-Up

After practice pick-up will be located in front of the junior high or the homeside parking lot of the stadium and will be supervised by one of the coaches. We expect our student-athletes to excel in the classroom as well as on the playing field. Most of these young athletes have been at school since about 7:30 in the morning and need to get home as soon as possible for dinner and time to take care of academic studies. For this reason, we ask parents to be prompt in picking up or arranging transportation for their child. Coaches will be supervising the locker rooms after practice to speed up the transition period from the locker room to the pick-up area. Athletes need to be picked up by 5:45 P.M. Coaching supervision for pick-up will last until 5:45. After 5:45, all remaining athletes will be sent to the locker room to wait for their rides. Parents will be required to come into the school and proceed to the locker room to pick up their child. Habitual failure to have athletes picked-up on time could result in further consequences.

Equipment

Each athlete will be issued the following equipment by the school. Once issued, equipment becomes the financial responsibility of the student-athlete.

- **Helmet** – We issue helmets, but more and more parents are purchasing their child's own helmet. Issued helmets are youth certified helmets and may be used through the 8th grade season. Most of our helmets are Riddells. If players want to use their own helmet, it will need to be white with a maroon or gray facemask and pass our inspection. **Visors** are not allowed.
- **Chin Strap** – a basic chin strap (non-padded) will be provided for each helmet. If you are purchasing your own, please select white, black, or maroon. Please no neon or chrome chin straps. A lot of parents purchase padded chin straps.
- **Mouth Pieces** – a mouth piece will be placed in their locker. Please take this home to form. Directions should be on the packaging. Those concerned with protecting braces should check with local athletic stores or your orthodontist and purchase a mouth guard designed for braces. No flashy mouth guards allowed.
- **Shoulder Pads** – Each athlete will be issued shoulder pads according to their size. Shoulder pads brought from home will need to be inspected/approved by one of the coaches.

- **Practice Jersey** – Each player will receive a mesh practice jersey. 7th will be white and 8th will be maroon.
- **Game Jersey** – Closer to our first game, jerseys and numbers will be assigned by the coaching staff. Numbers may change due to moving from one team to another. Please do not request specific numbers.
- **Practice Pants** – white practice pants will be issued. These will also be used for game pants.
- **Game Pants** – both 7th and 8th grade will wear their white practice pants for game pants.
- **Practice Shorts & Shirts** – one set of a black short or gray/maroon shirt will be issued according to size. Eighth graders will wear black shorts and a maroon dri-fit shirt. Seventh graders will wear black shorts and a gray shirt.
- **Laundry Clip** - each athlete will be issued one laundry clip to use throughout the year.
- **Padded Girdle** – one 5-padded football girdle will be issued according to size. We are slowly getting away from issuing girdles (expense). ***Several players in the past have purchased their own padded girdle from one of the local athletic supply stores.*** Make sure the girdle is padded in the thigh, hip, and backside areas. Some are also equipped with a pocket for an athletic cup. Some are also adding knee pads to the girdle. If parents can purchase these it will greatly help us with equipment since our supply is limited.
- **Knee Pads** – a set of knee pads have been placed in their lockers. Sometimes the standard size runs a little large. Smaller knee pads may be purchased at local athletic stores.
- **Other Equipment** - not issued by the school. These items will need to be approved by the coaching staff before practices or games. We are fairly strict with these, and find that most of this equipment is more for individual display. Definitely does not promote a team unity look. Please consult the coaching staff before purchasing other equipment.

Game/practice cleats will not be provided by the school district. Many of the local athletic supply stores have a variety of game cleats. A simple molded or nylon cleat should be okay. We believe that a team should all look the same. With that in mind, please buy shoes that are **predominantly black with white or maroon accent colors.**

Helmet Visors will not be allowed for practices or games.

Medical Issues

We will have a Junior High Athletic Trainer on site. His/her contact number is 903-839-5590 Ext. #4783. Please contact the athletic trainer if you have any medical/injury concerns. Medication issues such as asthma and allergic reaction problems should be discussed with the athletic trainer and the coaching staff. We recommend that all injuries are checked out with the school trainer. Once examined, school athletic trainers may recommend visiting a physician.

Locker Rooms

Each student-athlete will be assigned a locker. Once issued, the student-athlete will use that locker the entire school year (no trading or changing lockers). 7th & 8th graders will be assigned to separate locker room areas. Because of the limited number of lockers, some athletes will be paired up in a single locker until an empty locker becomes available. Each locker will have a Masterlock lock (issued by the school) attached with a combination. It is the responsibility of the athlete to memorize the combination and secure (lock) his locker before, during, and after practice. We will always emphasize the locking of lockers. The first question we will ask when something is missing is: "Were your belonging inside your locker and was the locker locked?" Encourage your child to follow these guidelines.

A locker diagram will be posted in each locker room as an example of how lockers should be organized. We always encourage student-athletes to take pride in the small details. The locker room is a transition point from one activity to another, for this reason we will supervise the locker rooms and encourage the athletes to change and move to the next activity as quickly as possible. Athletic lockers are used for athletic gear. Please do not use the locker for personal item storage.

Transportation Guidelines (Football)

Team buses will be used to transfer student-athletes to-and-from athletic competitions. All players will be required to ride the team bus to the contest. Parents will have the option to drive their **own** child back from contests. Parents **will not** be allowed to transport players from other families without prior approval from the school Principal. Home contests do not require a student athlete to sign out. If parents choose to transport their child back from the game, he/she must adhere to the following requirements:

- Personally find one of the team coaches and sign the School Travel Release document. We usually have a common check out area.

- The student-athlete's game jersey must be turned in to the coach when signing out.

Personal Item Policy

All personal items brought to the school or on school related athletic events are the responsibility of the student. Student-athletes will be encouraged to secure all personal items while at school or school trips. Cell phones and other electronic devices taken on athletic events are expected to be turned off until a coach instructs the players that the phones/devices may be turned on.

Laundry

All 7th and 8th grade football players will be bringing home laundry at least two days a week for cleaning. Because of the limited access to laundry facilities at the junior high, we are asking players and parents to help keep workout gear as clean and as sterile as possible. With over two hundred eighty athletes dressing in close proximity to each other, keeping equipment clean and preventing the spread of staff is at a premium. Players must remember that this is an added responsibility, and they are responsible for the return of their equipment for the next practice. Because we do not want players to miss practice time, those that forget their equipment for the next practice will work out in their school clothes and will be subject to extra consequences for forgetting their equipment. We recommend that athletic equipment be washed at least twice a week. Some take their washable equipment home everyday for cleaning.

Food Guidelines

No food or drink will be allowed in the locker room areas or on the buses (they attract rodents and ants). For game day, parents may bring food & drink to the school for their child to eat. We ask that food & drink not be taken to the front office (this over burdens the front office staff). Generally students are given about 30 minutes to eat and dress before leaving on bus trips. We may provide meals for some of the out-of-town contests.

Game Uniform Guidelines

We emphasize a *“team first”* approach in football. We play as a team, we act as a team, we support each other as a team, and we dress as a team. We want to present ourselves as one unified team. We feel the same about game uniforms. The following guidelines will be used to address game attire:

- **Game pants** will be issued by the school. 7th and 8th graders will use their practice pants as game pants. No special markings, towels, or other attachments will be allowed. Some quarterbacks and centers will be allowed to use small towels (coaching staff will have final decision).
- **Game Jerseys** will be issued by the school. Jerseys will be worn in the proper fashion according to the coaching staff.
- **Helmets** with maroon facemasks will be issued by the school. The helmets used in practice will be the game helmets. Helmets brought from home must be inspected and approved by the coaching staff. No visors, special stickers, or stripes will be allowed on helmets. Any items worn under the helmet must be approved by the coach.
- **Game Shoes** must be predominately black. Accent colors may include maroon, white, or gray. No shoe covers will be allowed. A good pair of practice cleats can be used as game cleats. Please do not rush out and buy an expensive pair of cleats. Moderately priced shoes work just as well.
- Socks should be black, white, or maroon.
- No wristbands, sleeves, leggings/tights, long elbow strips, or other items not mentioned above will be allowed without the coaching staff's approval. Coaching staff's decision is final.