



ATHLETICS

SPORTS MEDIA PROCEDURES & EXPECTATIONS

To ensure the safety of our student-athletes and coaches as well as ensuring legitimate media members and outlets are identified and granted appropriate media access, the Hernando County School District (HCSD) has a sports media vetting and credentialing process. To be admitted to athletic events, practices and/or competitions free of charge and granted media access, approval by HCSD is required prior to the visit, said approval is subject to the following HCSD Athletics Protocols for Media Credentials:

- Credentialing requests must be made at least 10 school/business days prior to the requested visit date.
- Same Day and/or Walk-up requests will not be considered.
- The HCSD Athletics Credential Request Form must be submitted online, approval granted and badge issued prior to visiting a campus or facility to cover a practice, competition or event.
 - Must meet eligible media criteria (see below)
 - Credential applications must be submitted by each member of an outlets media team that plans on attending.
 - Once the online form is completed, each media member requesting credentials will be run through our Safe Visitor Solutions platform at no cost.
 - Each media member will also be required to submit a high-resolution photo, similar to that of a passport photo, to be placed on their HCSD Athletics media credential badge if approved.
 - This entire process is at no cost to the media members.

Eligibility Requirements to Media Credentials:

- **Credentials may be issued to working members of the media representing recognized outlets in the business of news and/or sports gathering as their primary source of revenue for the purpose of informing the general public or school-specific audiences.** This includes a daily or weekly publication, cable system, radio station or network, television station or television network, or reputable online entity providing coverage.
- Reporters, photographers, and couriers from national publications, online entities, broadcast networks, and wire services that consistently cover youth sports.
- The designated representative or crew of a television, cable system, radio network, or a radio station that originates a daily “sports talk” program.
- Credentials will not be issued to spouses, guests or children of media members.
- Individuals or a crew gathering content on behalf of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA)
- Full-time reporters representing international agencies that regularly cover the sport.
- Athlete profile promoters or video/photography professionals working for recruiting purposes are not considered media providing coverage of an event to inform the general or school-specific audiences. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Membership in a journalism or broadcasting association and/or FHSAA media credentials does not automatically qualify an individual for credentials.
- Media credentials are only valid for one school year and will expire every June 30th, therefore media credentials must be renewed each school year.

Upon Arrival to a School Site:

- If asked to pay for parking by staff/volunteers, please identify yourself as media and show them your media credential pass. You will not have to pay for parking.
- Each campus, facility and event are unique but more often than not there will not be designated media parking spot(s).
- At the gate or entrance to a facility, media members will be asked to display their media credential pass and may be asked to display government issues ID at school sites.
- If you arrive during the school day, you must check in at the front office.
- Equipment bag(s) may be subject to a search for security purposes.
- Media representatives are expected to dress in appropriate professional attire, preferably wearing clothing or a hat clearly identifying your media outlet.

Expectations For Working Media at HCSD Athletic Events:

- Entering the locker room area under any circumstances will not be tolerated and are grounds for not being credentialed for future events.
- Entering the team bench area without prior permission, will not be tolerated and are grounds for not being credentialed for future events.
- Not bringing guests who are not credentialed media to the event with the expectation that they will receive free admission and/or privileges offered to the media.
- Not blocking view of the fans.
- Refraining from cheering for specific a player, coach or team while attending an event in an official media capacity.
- Being respectful and professional to those around you including but not limited to student-athletes, coaches, officials, fans, support staff, administrators and fellow media members. This includes not distracting the stakeholders listed above as well.
- Being mindful of the workspaces, including taking care of food and beverage containers and nor taking up too much space.
- **Per FHSAA Media Policies, the host school principal, contest manager, and/or the officials assigned to work the event will have the authority to require the repositioning of photographers if they believe their placement or use of equipment may threaten the safety of the participants or interfere with the conduct of the competition.**

Sport Specific Guidelines:

Ultimately, access to the “sidelines” is left to the discretion of the host school administration or contest manager, who should guard against the overcrowding of the sideline areas which may threaten the safety of the media personnel, the participants, and the contest officials.

- **CROSS COUNTRY:** Photographers may not be in the way of timing equipment, officials, coaches, or student-athletes.
- **BASEBALL:** Photographers are not allowed on the field of play and must be outside the fence and field of play. Some facilities may have a safe, designated and marked spot for media members inside the fence. Use of this is at the discretion of the administrator and coach.
- **BASKETBALL:** Photographers are not allowed on the court (including the painted baseline area and behind the basket/lane) and cannot shoot in front of or behind team benches and the scorer’s table. Photographers should not affect the view of fans.
- **FOOTBALL:** Photographers are not permitted on the sidelines between the 25-yard lines and must remain outside the restraining hashed lines surrounding the field.
- **GOLF:** Photographers are not allowed in any areas in which they are in the line of play or could interfere with officials, coaches, or student-athletes.
- **SOCCER:** Photographers are permitted on the sideline but should avoid blocking spectators’ sightlines. Photographers should also avoid the endline areas.
- **SOFTBALL:** Photographers are not allowed on the field of play and must be outside the fence and field of play. Some facilities may have a safe, designated and marked spot for media members inside the fence. Use of this is at the discretion of the administrator and coach.

- SWIMMING: Photographers are allowed on the pool deck but may not be in the way of the timing equipment, officials, coaches, or student-athletes. No photography is allowed behind the starting blocks.
- TENNIS: Photographers must be outside of the fence and may not be in the way of coaches. Photographers should not obstruct the view of fans.
- TRACK: Photographers are not allowed in any areas in which they would interfere with the running of an event and must be out of the way of timing equipment, officials, coaches, and student-athletes.
- VOLLEYBALL: Photographers are not allowed on the court (including the painted baseline area) and are not allowed to shoot in front of or behind team benches or the scorer's table. Photographers should not affect the view of fans.
- WEIGHTLIFTING: Photographers are not allowed on the mat/platform and are not allowed to be in the way of officials, coaches, or student-athletes. Photographers should not affect the view of fans.
- WRESTLING: Photographers are not allowed on the mat and are not allowed to be in the way of officials, coaches, or student-athletes. Photographer access/positioning may vary from tournament to tournament and facility to facility, ultimately access is left to the discretion of the host school administration, contest manager and/or official, who should guard against the overcrowding of the mat area which may threaten the safety of the media personnel, the participants, and the contest officials. Photographers should not affect the view of fans.

Specific to Still and Video Photographers:

- Photographers are not allowed in the line of play and may not be in the way of officials, coaches, or student-athletes.
- The use of flash photography is not allowed.
- Drones are not allowed anywhere on HCSD property.

NOTE: Violation of HCSD Protocols for Media Credentials may result in removal from the school site at the discretion of school administration and/or game manager.

NOTE: There is to be no rebroadcasting in its entirety of any HCSD athletic event or contest without expressed consent from the respective school's athletic director and/or administration.

Thank you for taking time to familiarize yourself with these protocols and for your work informing the public about the student-athletes, coaches, teams and schools who make up the Hernando County School District.