



VALOR ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2025-26

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PREFACE

The athletics handbook provides parents and student athletes with important expectations, guidelines, and policies for Valor sports. We ask our parents to review the entire Handbook with their student athletes. Parents or student athletes with questions about handbook content should contact the Network Athletic Director, John Kersting, jkersting@valoreducation.org.

VISION

Athletic programs are an integral part of Valor's vision for educating the whole person, and we are committed to providing students with a range of competitive athletic opportunities. We believe that healthy athletic competition can ennoble the human spirit and help students develop virtues such as courage, sportsmanship, and perseverance. Through participation in athletics, Valor will encourage students to grow in friendship and to commit themselves to the common good of the team. In addition, we will seek to cultivate a healthy spiritedness motivated by a love of sport and a desire to pursue excellence. Above all else, Valor's coaches and student athletes will pursue the following four ends of sports:

- Physical Excellence
- Character Development
- Spiritedness
- True Leisure

2025-26 SPORTS OFFERINGS

Fall:

- Cross Country – Boys & Girls
- Football
 - High School Tackle Football (Six Man- currently VSA and VNA only)
 - High School Flag Football (VK, VL, VSN)
 - 7th-8th Grade Tackle Football (VSA)*
 - Middle School Flag Football- Boys
- Volleyball - Girls

Winter:

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball

Spring:

- Baseball
- Soccer
 - Girls Soccer
 - Boys Soccer
- Softball
- Track and Field

Offerings are open to students 6th grade and up, with the exceptions:

- Cross country and track are open to students 5th grade and up.
- MS tackle football, where offered, is open to 7th and 8th grade.

REGISTRATION 2025-26

REGISTRATION WEBSITE: FAMILYID (ARBITER SPORTS)

This is the online registration portal for all athletic programs. Sign up at <https://account.familyid.com/signup>, create a profile, and add your Valor campus (example, Valor San Antonio) as your home team. From there, you are ready to add student athletes to your account and register for specific sports.

PHYSICALS

Physical evaluations must be passed every year to ensure that no new conditions have arisen that make it unsafe for the student athlete to participate in sports. Physicals are good for 12 months and must be less than a year old by the end of the season. Physicals must be completed, submitted on the registration site, and approved by athletics administration prior to the first practice. The official UIL Pre-Participation physical forms must be used. See link to physical forms below: https://www.uilTEXAS.org/files/athletics/forms/PrePhysFormRvsd1_10_20.pdf

Upload the completed physical form to your online registration on FamilyID; do not hand in a paper copy. Coaches will not accept physical forms at practice.

ATHLETICS FEES

There is a participation fee per student athlete per sport. The fee varies by sport: see your school's registration site for exact fees. Those who have applied and qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch also qualify for a reduced athletics fee: free lunch fee= 50% of the regular fee, reduced lunch fee= 67% of the regular fee. There is a cap of \$1,600 in athletics fees (aka Family Cap) per family per school year. (Club, summer programming, and camp fees do not contribute to family cap.) If you have reached the family cap, reach out to your campus Athletic Director for assistance.

The fee for any sport must be paid prior to the first official practice day. Registration fees are non-refundable once practices have begun, regardless of player eligibility or withdrawal. Valor does not want to exclude any student from participation due to financial hardship. Please contact your campus Athletic Director for further information.

	REDUCED LUNCH	FREE LUNCH
REDUCED ATHLETICS FEES (PERCENT OF REGULAR FEE):	67%	50%

ELIGIBILITY

Inter-school athletics at Valor are offered to students in 6th grade and up (5th grade and up for cross country and track). Grade-level sport availability generally depends on a minimum number of committed student athletes prior to the season. Athletic participation should be viewed as a privilege. When the rules or expectations of the program are not followed, Valor coaching staff and school administrators have the authority to suspend or revoke this privilege. Please see eligibility requirements below.

- Completed Registration, including athletics fee and executed up-to-date sports physical on appropriate form (UIL physical form).
- Attendance Requirement: A student must be present for more than half of the school day to participate in a contest that day.
- A student may not participate in contests while serving a suspension. A student is suspended until successfully reinstated. Furthermore, a student who serves multiple suspensions or who is suspended for multiple detentions may have the privilege of participating in athletics revoked at the discretion of the administration.
- Academic Eligibility: Students must maintain passing grades in all classes (70% or higher).
 - Students who are failing one or more classes at the end of quarter grade report, ineligible for athletic contests. Students who are deemed academically ineligible will have an opportunity to regain eligibility if passing all classes at a subsequent grade report (i.e. progress reports and quarter grade reports). While students who are academically ineligible based on a quarter grade report card cannot participate in contests until regaining eligibility, they are encouraged to continue participating in practices with their team. student athletes who discontinue practice while ineligible may be subject to a probation period of practice attendance before they can resume participating in contests. Ineligible student athletes will not be granted excused absences for athletics early releases.
- Valor will follow any other eligibility requirements required by our affiliate leagues.
- Tryouts: All eligibility requirements must be met to participate in tryouts, practices, or games. If there are more tryout participants than team spots available, cuts should be expected. Tryout participants who do not make a team will receive a full refund of the athletics fee.

EXPECTATIONS

BEHAVIOR

Valor student athletes will be expected to abide by all school policies as outlined in the Family Handbook.

Respect:

student athletes are called to exhibit a high level of respect in all interactions with teammates, coaches, referees, and opposing players. Profanity, crude speech, and unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind are clearly against this spirit of respect. Additionally, we hold our parents to a similarly high standard and expect them to uphold these same virtues at practices and games. Parents should remain respectful to officials, coaches, student athletes, and other parents at all times. Coaches are challenged to set the example of affirming speech and respect towards all parties while motivating student athletes to push through discomfort. student athletes are expected to be leaders in modeling respectful address, which is a special focus at all Valor schools starting in the 25-26 school year. Respectful address includes:

The Two Aspects of Respectful Address

Respectful response: When addressed by a teacher, students respond with the three parts of a respectful response:

- A clear yes/no
- Sir/ma'am
- Eye contact

Student-initiated address:

Students make eye contact and initiate address when encountering an adult on campus: e.g., good morning, sir/ma'am.

Respectful address is an outward sign of an inward reality of respect for others, in particular adults and those in authority and a way of relating well to adults as persons. Habits of respectful address are also incredibly impressive and characteristic of flourishing adults.

Competitive Spirit – Mutual Pursuit of Excellence:

Student athletes are expected to give their best in difficult circumstances, even when winning or losing by a significant margin. Giving one's best is a key controllable that constitutes a gift of self to one's team, the opponent, and the spectators. Competing with honor is, paradoxically, one important way in which student athletes show respect for the competition, even though it means trying to beat the opponent. In particular, we will focus on building specific sportsmanship traditions such as respecting our opponents by acknowledging when an opponent makes a good play. (We call this tradition 'Tip your hat'). And we will avoid behaviors that may be common but do not show goodwill or understanding of the fundamentally collaborative nature of athletic competition, such as trying to distract an opponent who is focusing on making a play or cheering a mistake made by an opponent

Stewardship:

Proper stewardship of facilities, uniforms and equipment flows from a recognition that all that we have is a gift. This healthy spirit of gratitude should exhibit itself in acts of good stewardship such as using equipment as intended, helping coaches collect equipment at the end of practices, cleaning up trash and leaving facilities better than we found them, and taking care of the uniform provided for the season.

Commitment:

When a student joins a school team, the expectation is for that team to be that student's primary extracurricular commitment for the duration of the season. The baseline of "100% commitment" includes being on time and staying for the duration of all official team activities as designated by the coach.

ABSENCES

Student athletes are expected to attend every scheduled practice during the season. It is expected that during the school sports season, the school sport will take precedence for the student athlete over other extracurricular activities. Student athletes are expected to attend all classes after a road contest. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Absence from school day due to illness
- Scheduled doctors' visit
- Significant family events (weddings, funerals, etc.)

All absences must be arranged between the student athlete and coach. The correct procedure is for the student athlete to notify the coach directly as soon as the conflict becomes apparent. Unexcused absences will be dealt with according to rules established by each head coach. Student athletes should expect unexcused absences to affect playing time. Student athletes with multiple unexcused absences may be removed from the team at the discretion of the coaching staff and school leadership.

MULTI-SPORT STUDENT ATHLETE CONFLICTS

In the case of an overlap between seasons, student athletes should complete the full season and any postseason contests for the earlier season before participating in the next season.

DRESS CODE

PRACTICE

All shirts worn for athletic practices should be modest, loose-fitting, in good repair (e.g. no holes, torn sleeves, etc), and should be worn either tucked in or well over the waist of the pants/shorts. No midriffs may be shown. T-shirts are preferred. No camisoles or sports bras or leggings may be worn as outer garments. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if modest. Clothing should be free of images and messages other than sports branding. Coaches may have more specific guidance for their team regarding practice attire (such as wearing the team shirt as the practice shirt or school-distributed practice jerseys for Varsity teams).

AWARDS CEREMONIES

For all end-of-season award ceremonies, the dress code will be formal. Male student athletes should wear button-down shirts- ties and jackets are encouraged. Female student athletes should wear modest dresses or dressy separates.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms will be distributed to student athletes at the beginning of each season and are to be returned at the end of each season. Uniforms are only to be worn for contests and on designated spirit days. The school will do its best to provide uniforms that fit each student athlete well to facilitate the student athlete's pride in representing the school community. However, exact sizes cannot be guaranteed, nor should student athletes expect to choose their own uniform number. A replacement fee should be expected for a lost or irreparably damaged uniform.

COMMUNICATION

Open and clear communication is a prerequisite for a successful athletic season. Head coaches are expected to communicate on a weekly basis with families to alert them of scheduling items, announcements, and highlights.

Parents are encouraged to be proactive in communicating with coaches in the event of logistical concerns. Here are some of the best communication practices for student athletes' parents.

- Establish and maintain open lines of communication. Tell your children what you expect (maximum effort, listening to their coach, personal satisfaction, etc.).
- Get to know the coaches so you can be assured of your child under their leadership.
- Familiarize yourself with the procedures for each sport.
- The athletics leadership and coaches are available for support. Contact your child's head coach first before taking issues to the athletic director.

PHONES

Valor has an intentional approach to student phone use. In addition to being phone-free during the school day, we are also committed to having phone-free school sports events, whether they are on or off campus, before or after the school day. Students should have phones off and away between the school day and start of practice or games or between practice and the end of morning practices. Students should also keep phones away when in the stands so they can enjoy the game in the community. We want to focus on being present and engaged- time between the end of the school day and practice is great for having good conversations, completing homework, or doing individual skill work. Students may, of course, use phones for necessary communication with parents such as calling to get a ride home, and should simply alert the teacher or coach before such use and stay in proximity to a supervising adult when making a call or texting.

COACH-PARENT COMMUNICATION APP

There is a communication app channel set up for each school team through BAND or SportsYou. This communication channel is meant to facilitate coach communication to parents and also allows for certain communication from parents to the coach, such as requesting clarification on a game time or location. It is imperative that parents follow the etiquette outlined by athletics leadership to keep this communication app effective. Also, we are clarifying that this app is not meant for player communication with coaches. We are trying to help children get away from screens as much as possible.

COMMUNICATION STEPS WHEN DIFFERENCES

At times, concerns or conflicts arise between students, coaches, and parents. We believe in working through concerns with open, honest, and respectful communication. Before initiating conversations, allow a 24-hour cool-off period when possible. Conversations immediately before or after a contest should be avoided. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach, so a minimum of 24 hours is required to have passed after a contest before a parent can speak with a coach. The following process should be used as a guideline when seeking resolution:

1. The student athlete communicates with the coach to discuss the perceived problem.
2. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached with the player-initiated conversation, parents and/or student athlete meet with the coach.
3. Parents and/or student athlete meet with the athletic director.

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

PARENTS

The parental role in a successful program is perhaps the most overlooked and underestimated influence on individual and team success. Following these guidelines, parents will empower their student athletes to focus on the difficult tasks of self-mastery and performing to potential.

1. Transport your player and arrive early to practices and games.
2. Support the coaches early and often.
 - a. Come alongside the coach and help push your student athlete to do good but difficult things.
 - b. Encourage your student athlete to communicate directly with coaches and avoid complaining.
3. Unified voice
 - a. Align the coaching you give your student athlete with the coaches' instructions.
4. Enjoy being a fan.
 - a. Be selective and positive with any communication from the stands.
 - b. Model sportsmanship, especially toward the officials and opposing fans.
5. Volunteer when you can.
 - a. Help is often needed with positions such as scoreboard, scorebook, line judges (for volleyball), concessions, and admissions. Contests can't happen without committed parent volunteers in these roles.

PLAYERS

1. Help your parents get you to practice and games early.
 - a. Take ownership of logistics. Know where you need to be and when; be ready to go.
 - b. Communicate with your parents. Show that it is important to you that you are punctual.
2. Be physically and mentally ready for practices.
 - a. Practice good hydration, nutrition, and sleep habits.
 - b. Have all of your equipment.
 - c. Take care of your school work.
3. Have a positive attitude.
 - a. Support your teammates: affirm good plays. Avoid ever complaining about a teammate, especially when that teammate is not present; identify teammates' strengths instead.
4. Work smart and hard.
 - a. Listen carefully to coaching: use the gift of your intellect.
 - b. Do not stop when you meet initial failure.
5. Practice effectively.
 - a. Ask the coach for ways to improve and practice on your own between team practices.
 - b. Practice intentionally: have a plan that fits your role and your goals, and follow through.

6. Practice Gratitude and Self-Giving.
 - a. Ask not what your team can do for you... Find the things you can do for your team.
 - b. Always give your best for yourself and as an act of justice to others.
 - c. Be comfortable being uncomfortable.
 - d. Star in the role the coach has articulated for you.
7. Communicate effectively.
 - a. Initiate direct communication with your coaches.
 - b. Find the best times: usually after practice, sometimes before practice if you arrive early.
8. Pursue moral, academic, and athletic excellence. These work hand in hand; avoid pursuing one at the cost of the others.

VARSITY LETTER JACKETS

EARNING A JACKET

To earn a Varsity letter, high school student athletes must complete a Varsity season in good standing with the team. For cross-country, track and other meet-based sports, high school student athletes must qualify and compete in Varsity division of State meet to earn a Varsity letter.

WHAT MUST AND WHAT CAN GO ON JACKET

Letterjackets need to include the following patches:

1. 'Valor' on back
2. Mascot on left sleeve

OPTIONS AND REQUIRED FORMATTING

1. Student athlete name is optional. Name on front of jacket will consist of first initial and last name. No first names or nicknames on the front of the jacket. Names are not allowed on the back of the jacket.
2. Year patch is optional. Year patch to be in 2-digit format on the right sleeve.

WHERE TO WEAR

Letter jackets are not part of the school uniform. They may be worn to school and outside on campus, but should not be worn inside the school building during the school day. When wearing off-campus, remember you represent the school!