

INTRODUCTION

The Rowan-Salisbury Schools high school interscholastic athletic programs are governed by policies established by the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA).

This athletic handbook contains rules and regulations and other information necessary for athletic directors and coaches to run their programs effectively and efficiently. A complete knowledge of these rules and regulations is vital to ensure that the interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted, in accordance with existing state and local policies.

This handbook is also designed to inform the student-athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) of the rules, regulations, and policies of the athletic department. The district's coaching staff believes that success in athletics is established and maintained through adherence to the principles outlined in this handbook. It is hoped that by being aware of rules, regulations, and expectations, unfortunate situations due to lack of knowledge can be avoided. Please understand that this handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included and, of course, each coach has the right to make reasonable rules that are more stringent than those outlined in this document.

Participation on athletic teams is strictly on a voluntary basis. Athletics are extra-curricular activities conducted after the regular school day. The athlete must earn the privilege of participation through dedication, desire and discipline. Because participation is voluntary, certain basic requirements are necessary in order to make the athletic program a wholesome, successful, and meaningful experience.

The requirements have been kept to a minimum, but important items are listed on the following pages in order that the athlete may fully understand what is required before making the decision to participate. Rowan-Salisbury Schools promotes attitudes and practices that keep winning in perspective. Any activities that would compromise the efforts of good sportsmanship and ethical athletic practices are unacceptable. All students will adhere to the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Code of Conduct and the consequences for violations. Because of athletes' high visibility and their place as leaders of the school, the athletic department may also discipline athletes. The athletic department will enforce the rules and regulations as described in this handbook. Parents and athletes must sign the High School Athletic Participation Requirements Form (located in the back of handbook) stating that they have read and understand the information included in this handbook before a student is allowed to participate in any sports.

The goals of the athletic department are to provide opportunities for student athletes to excel in teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline, acceptable personal and social behavior, and character. The athletic program is designed to produce well-rounded citizens who can take their place in a community and in a democratic society. The program is intended to develop leadership skills, a sense of responsibility and accountability, and sportsmanlike attitudes of the student population.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide our participants with the best possible administration, supervision and instruction available.
- To provide our participants with quality facilities and equipment that is both safe and student friendly.
- To provide our participants with safe, quality transportation to and from all competitions and activities.

ATHLETIC INFORMATION

DRESS

Athletes are to dress in an appropriate manner whenever they represent Rowan-Salisbury Schools Schools in accordance to Rowan-Salisbury Schools School's Dress Code at practice and for all games. Coaches may stipulate game day dress code.

EXPENSES

Should student-athletes or guardian(s) choose to make purchases related to athletic participation (e.g., camps, trips, clothing, equipment for personal use or any other purpose related to participation), the expenses will be the sole responsibility of that athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). Rowan-Salisbury Schools, and/or the coaching staff will in no way to any degree, cover or reimburse expenses at any time.

INFORMED CONSENT

Before participating in athletics each year, a consent form must be signed by parent/legal guardian and on file.

INSURANCE

By its nature, participation in interscholastic athletics includes risk of injury. Although serious injuries are not common in supervised school athletic programs, it is impossible to eliminate all risk. Participants have the responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. Players must obey all safety rules and warnings, report physical problems to their coaches, follow a proper conditioning program, and inspect their own equipment daily. All players should show proof of insurance. Athletic insurance may be purchased through the school.

OBLIGATIONS

All athletes are required to replace lost uniforms or damaged equipment either by payment or restitution of the lost article. Athletes are responsible for clearing all obligations with their coaches before participating or practicing with another sport (good standing). If an athlete fails to take care of his/her financial responsibilities to the athletic department then he/she will be ruled ineligible.

PHYSICALS

All athletes must have a current physical on file at school before participating in a sport, including tryouts. The physical is valid for one calendar year and must be current until the end of a specific sport season.

TEAM SCHEDULES

Schedules will be available on your school's website and school calendar.

SELECTION

Students are encouraged to tryout in as many sports as he/she can. Once an athlete begins the in-season-training period of a sport, he/she should not quit while that sport is in season. If an athlete quits a sport, without an officials release, they will be withheld from participation in another sport until that season is over (includes playoffs). Each coach has his/her own policy on how he/she selects the team. Coaches will explain their policy to candidates before the season/practice begins. Skill development sessions and open facilities (open to all, required for none) are allowed, but shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport, during exams, or during the last 5 (five) days of each semester. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all athletically eligible students. Insurance is required for all those involved in skill development and off season sessions, including camps.

TRANSPORTATION

As per Rowan-Salisbury Schools policy, the athletic department will provide transportation to and from athletic contests. All athletes must travel with the team to athletic events held away from the home school. A transportation waiver must be signed and approved by the head coach if a parent/legal guardian wants to transport an athlete home from an away game. (Form is located in back of handbook.) Athletes will be allowed to travel home with a parent/legal guardian with prior written permission.

WEATHER

Rowan-Salisbury Schools School System guidelines do not allow outdoor practices/contests to be held before 6:00 pm if the temperature is forecast to reach 90 degrees or higher. When schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all school activities shall be suspended. This rule applies to all games, practices, rehearsals, etc. Any practices and games that are to be held when schools are closed will require the permission of the superintendent or his designee. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should students be penalized for failure to attend practices and games when schools are closed, even when special permission to proceed has been granted.

HIGH SCHOOL NCHSAA AND ROWAN-SALISBURY SCHOOLS ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS

- Must have been in attendance for at least 91% of the previous semester at an approved school. Student must not miss more than 8 (eight) days during a semester. Written appeals must be in line with the RSSS Code of Conduct.
- Must not practice or attend any meeting of the team or group on the day the student is absent from school.
- Must not have exceeded eight consecutive semesters of attendance or have participated more than four seasons in any sport since first entering grade 9.
- Must not have graduated from high school
- Must be less than 19 years of age on or before August 31 of the current school year.
- Must live with your parents or legal custodian within the school administrative unit (exceptions must be approved by your principal and the NCHSAA). A student is eligible if he has attended school within that unit the previous two semesters (if eligible in all other respects).
- Must not falsify any official eligibility information such as residency/address. Penalty for such acts will result in loss of eligibility for 365 days.
- Must have passed a minimum academic load during the previous semester, and meet local promotion standards. Students in a "block schedule" must pass three of four courses per semester and meet local promotion standards; students in the "traditional schedule" must pass at least five courses and meet local promotion standards.
- Must have received a medical examination by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant within the previous 365 days; and if you miss five or more days of practice due to illness or injury, you must receive a medical release before practicing or playing. **Any student-athlete** with a suspected concussion is not permitted to return to participation-practice or play- until the student-athlete receives written release from a duly licensed physician.
- Must not have been convicted of a felony or offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult.
- May only accept prizes, merchandise, money or anything that can be exchanged for money as a result of athletic participation in accordance with NCHSAA rules and regulations.
- Must not have signed a professional contract, have played on a junior college team or be regularly enrolled in college.
- Must not participate in unsanctioned all-star or bowl games.
- May participate with coaching staff in skill development sessions outside of the sport's season. These sessions are limited in number to one less than a team (E.G., 4 in Basketball) on a daily basis, and may not be held during certain prescribed "dead periods" of the year.
- Must not practice or play during instructional day unless Superintendent gives permission due to

inclement weather.

- Must not play, practice or assemble as a team with your coach on Sundays.
- Must not dress for a contest or practice if you are not eligible to participate.
- Must not play more than three games in one sport per week (exception baseball, softball, wrestling and volleyball) and no more than one contest per day (exception baseball, softball and volleyball).
- Must not practice during a teacher workday, unless it is before the workday begins or after the workday ends.

Before practicing with any team, the following must be complete:

- Meet all NCHSSA requirements
- Complete a High School Athletic Participation Requirements Form
- Complete the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Schools Sports Participation Physical Form

STUDENT TRANSFER

The Rowan-Salisbury School System (RSSS) Board of Education shall assign students to schools based on their domicile. It is the intent of the Board of Education that a student attends the school that serves his/her domicile. Exceptions to this will be made in limited circumstances within the criteria set forth in Board Policy 8-30 Student Transfers.

Please note that although a student may have multiple residences, they may only have one domicile. The parent/legal custodian's domicile is used to establish the school assignment. It is expected that the child reside with the parent/legal custodian.

ATHLETIC WAIT PERIOD

The Board does not permit transfers between schools for reasons of athletic participation. In accordance with North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) rules, students who are granted a voluntary transfer away from their base or assigned school to another RSSS school shall not participate in athletic activities that come under the jurisdiction of the NCHSAA and the State Board of Education for 365 days from the first approved transfer date.

Upon approval of any 7th grade, 8th grade, or high school transfer, there will be a one-year (365 days) athletic wait period before athletic eligibility or cheerleading eligibility can be established. This provision means that a transfer student may have a one-year (365 days) athletic wait period while in middle school and again in high school. This wait period would also include all students transferring from outside the RSSS district. This wait time will begin on the date of registration at the school requested (registration begins the day a student is entered into the student registration database). If a high school student is legally enrolled in RSSS and registered and in attendance on the first day of classes at the school of transfer, he/she will be eligible for athletics the week of August 1st of the next school year. Students of full-time employees receiving benefits of the RSSS are exempt from the athletic wait period for a first middle or first high school transfer. Students of full-time employees receiving benefits will be subject to a 365 day athletic wait period if a second transfer request is granted within the same grade span (middle or high school) then this waiting period does not apply to students whose change in school is due to bona fide change in residence as defined by the NCHSAA; for a senior who receives a Board approve transfer to complete the final year of high school in the high school that he/she attended during the junior year; ninth grade students who receive a transfer in order to participate in a Board approve academy; or students attending a Choice School while residing in the choice zone area for that school.

Students who attend a RSSS middle or high school under a transfer will be subject to a 365-day athletic wait period if they return to the "home school" within a grade span (middle or high school). Home school is defined, as the school a student should attend at the time the transfer is terminated. This provision also shall apply to students who return to their home school after attending a Choice School. Students subject to the 365-day athletic wait period pursuant to this policy due to a change in school within the district may apply to the Superintendent or designee for a waiver of the athletic waiting period and the Superintendent or designee may grant such waiver according to the following guidelines:

- Parents must submit a written waiver request form that is available at Long Street Administrative Office, Ellis Street Administrative Office or RSSS website. Parents should submit a copy of the transfer approval letter and any other supporting documentation.

- The waiver may be granted if the information provided by the parents reliably demonstrates that the transfer was not requested entirely or partially for reasons of athletic participation.

- The decision will be forwarded to the parent or guardian in writing. The student shall be ineligible to participate in the athletic program pending approval of the appeal. If a transfer student participates in a contest prior to the approval of an appeal, the student will be immediately dropped from the team. Eligibility will be restored after approval of an appeal and after suspension from the number of contests equals the number of contests the student participated in while ineligible. If the student is an underclassman, the suspension may carry over into the next sport in which the student participates in that year.

- The Superintendent may revoke a decision to permit a student to participate in athletics if at any time it is determined that the student has transferred for athletic purposes.

The Superintendent's decision regarding an athletic eligibility waiver shall be final, except where the parent/guardian demonstrates a right to appeal to the Board of Education under N.C.G.S. 115C-45(c). Staff members (including full-time, part-time, non-faculty coaches or volunteers) who exercise influence (direct or indirect) upon prospective athletes in an attempt to influence the athlete's school assignment or violate any portion of this section, will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including the termination of employment. Additionally, if a student, parent, or legal guardian is party to violation of any part of this section, the student's right to participate in interscholastic athletics will be denied.

CONDUCT

Participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is a privilege, not a right. The Rowan-Salisbury Schools Board of Education expects all students who represent their school through participation in extracurricular activities to be good representatives of their school community. Students should dress, act and conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on their school. Each student is expected to display good citizenship at all times. Taunting is expressly prohibited. Taunting includes actions or comments, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Any student who fails to conduct himself or herself appropriately may have the privilege of participation limited or revoked. **Students that are in in-school suspension (ISS) for an entire day will not be allowed to practice or participate in games. Students that have been suspended out-of-school (OSS) will not be allowed to practice or play.**

Misconduct will not be tolerated. Misconduct includes inappropriate behavior while you are involved in any way with an athletic department program, including practice, game time, travel time and out of school behavior. Insubordination, insolence, or other examples of defiance toward coaches, officials, bus drivers or others in authority or who have responsibility for your safety are examples of misconduct.

Specific punishments cannot be listed since varying circumstances such as the severity of the infraction and the athlete's reaction to being corrected provides too many variables. Coaches and/or the Athletic Director or School Administration will follow the student handbook and will handle individual instances in a manner that seems best suited to the situation. However, athletes and parents should note that appropriate responses by coaches, athletic director or school administration could range anywhere from a verbal reprimand to suspension or dismissal from team.

HAZING

Hazing, Bullying or Intimidation of a Fellow Student – It shall be a violation of board policy for any student to engage in what is known as hazing or to aid or abet any other student in hazing. For the purpose of this policy, hazing is defined as follows: “to annoy any student by playing abusive or ridiculous tricks on him/her; to frighten, scold, beat, harass him/her; or to subject him/her to personal indignity.” Furthermore, deliberate intimidation, bullying or harassment in any form is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, physical abuse, written or oral messages or visual images that deliberately intimidate, harass, or embarrass another

individual. Such messages or images may include direct conversation, telephone messages, text messages, instant messages, internet postings, e-mails, photographic images, posters, signs, and other means of disseminating hurtful, embarrassing, vicious, or scurrilous remarks or content. (G.S. 14-36 and 115C-391). Refer to the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Student and Parent Handbook for consequences regarding hazing, bullying and/or intimidation.

NCHSAA EJECTION POLICY

The policy applies to all persons involved in an athletic contest, including student-athletes, coaches, managers and game administrators. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

1. Fighting, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
 - An attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hands, arms, legs or feet
 - An attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made
 - An attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate
 - Leaving the bench area to participate in a fight (contact or no contact)
2. Biting observed by an official
3. Taunting, baiting or spitting toward an opponent
4. Profanity directed toward an official or opponent
5. Obscene gestures, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate
6. Disrespectfully addressing an official or physically contacting an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for remainder of career

Penalty for an ejection for the above reasons:

- Football - ejection from the contest and miss the next contest at that level and contests in the interim (EXCEPTION: fighting equals 2 missed contests)
- All other sports - ejection from that contest; miss the next two contests at that level and all contests in the interim (EXCEPTION: fighting equals 4 missed contests)

When an ejection occurs, an athlete must participate in the **NFHSlern.com Sportsmanship Course** before they will be allowed to return. Athletes receiving two ejections for unacceptable behavior as defined above will be suspended from all sports for the remainder of the season. Receiving a third ejection in a school year will result in suspension from athletics for one calendar year (365 days from the date of the third ejection).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The **NCHSAA and Rowan-Salisbury Schools Schools** emphatically oppose the possession or use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by student-athletes. The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, performance enhancing substances, and illegal drugs is prohibited. Medical research clearly substantiates the fact that the uses of these or any mood modifying substances produce harmful effects.

An Athlete shall not at any time, during school or out of school, and regardless of quantity:

1. Have in possession, use or consume a beverage containing alcohol, performance enhancing drugs or illegal drugs
2. Use or consume, have in possession, buy, sell, or give away any other controlled substance or drug paraphernalia.

It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a controlled substance specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor. Rowan-Salisbury Schools Code of Conduct rules are followed for prescribed medications.

The student who wishes to experiment with such substances should remove himself from the team before

he/she jeopardizes team performance, team reputation, team success, and physical harm to himself/herself or teammates.

VIOLATIONS

The Student Code of Conduct guidelines will be followed and individual school team rules will apply.

TOBACCO

Possession of or use of tobacco products, lighters, matches, pipes, or any other related items are against the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Code of Conduct. Athletes are prohibited from the use and/or possession of tobacco products and shall not possess, smoke, dip, chew or otherwise use any tobacco products at any time while on school premises, off school property at any school-sponsored activity or event. Rowan-Salisbury Schools Code of Conduct consequences will be followed for all athletes breaking this rule.

PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

Parenting and coaching are both extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater benefit to children. As parents, when your child is involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on him/her. This begins with clear communications from the coach of the sport

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations and goals the coach has for your child as well as for the team/season
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, special equipment, strength and conditioning programs
5. Procedure if your child is injured during participation
6. Team rules, guidelines and consequences for infractions
7. Lettering criteria
8. Team selection process

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM ATHLETES & PARENTS

1. Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach
2. Parent's contact number, both home and emergency
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance
4. Notification of special medical conditions
5. Notification of illness or injury as soon as possible

As your child becomes involved in his/her programs at the middle and high schools, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you and your child wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding and resolution.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. The treatment of your child
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior
4. Concerns about your child's academic performance
5. Safety of your child

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you had hoped. Coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. The five items listed below should be left to the discretion of the coach.

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Offensive/defensive philosophies
5. Other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and player, or coach and parent. These conferences are encouraged. It is important that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. Be willing to accept opinions and/or knowledge that you may not want to hear.

When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be used to help resolve any concerns.

1. Student-Coach — open-door policy for all coaches
2. Parent-Coach — done by appointment

IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH, THE PROCEDURE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IS:

1. Do not attempt to confront a coach immediately before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive resolutions.
2. Call the coach to schedule an appointment. The phone number for the high school will be posted at parent meetings.
3. If the coach cannot be reached, call the school athletic director, he/she will set up a meeting for you.

THE NEXT STEP

What can you do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

1. Call and schedule an appointment with the school athletic director. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.
2. Call the school principal to discuss the situation.
3. Contact the Central Office only after going through school athletic director and school principal first.

SCHOOL CONTACT NUMBERS

High Schools

Jesse Carson High School	704-855-7297
East Rowan High School	704-279-5232
North Rowan High School	704-636-4420
Salisbury High School	704-636-1221
South Rowan High School	704-857-1161
West Rowan High School	704-278-9233

Expectations for Parents and Spectators

1. Ensure that your child understands that win or lose, you love him or her.
2. Assist your child in setting realistic goals.
3. Emphasize "improved" performance, not winning.
4. Emphasize academics first, athletics second.
5. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
6. Control your emotions at games and events.
7. Be a "cheerleader" for your child and other children on the team.
8. Respect your child's coaches. Communicate with them in a positive way. Encourage others to do the same.
9. Respect the officials at your child's games. Officials are human and do make mistakes. An official has never won or lost a ballgame due to a call.
10. Never approach an official after a game. Emotions are usually pretty high at that time.
11. Be a positive role model for your child. Children do pay attention to your actions.

Be sensible, responsible and keep priorities in order. There is a lot more at stake than a team's record.

"The Student Athlete First, Winning Second"