

# STROTHER PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## Handbook for Parents of Athletes

Being a parent is often challenging. This effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility. Hopefully, you will find it useful. You might want to take some time and share this information with your son or daughter. Have a great season!

**GO YELLOW JACKETS!**

Tim Harper

Strother Public Schools Athletic Director

## **Strother Public Schools Athletics Mission Statement:**

The Strother Public Schools support the philosophy that a quality interscholastic athletic program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students. The interscholastic program enhances and supports the academic mission of the school system. We are committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all athletic contests. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others.

Interscholastic athletics is a voluntary program. Students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation. Thus, competition in Junior high/High school athletics is a privilege and not a right. Accompanying this privilege is the responsibility to conform to standards established for the junior high/high school athletic program. This privilege may be revoked if the athlete fails or refuses to comply with the rules outlined in this guide and the rules and policies set forth by the coaches of each sport. Being a member of the interscholastic program is a privilege to be earned and maintained throughout the season. Each time participants step into a school or onto the practice field and anytime they participate in a game they are expected to represent themselves, family, team and school in a responsible sportsmanlike manner.

It is our responsibility to provide challenging opportunities for our student-athletes to compete successfully at the county, region, and state levels.

There are many relationships, which are involved in being the parent of an athlete.

## **The Player-Coach Relationship:**

Unfortunately, through televised games and the more recent proliferation of cable TV, many adults feel that they understand or perhaps know more than many coaches. Everyone becomes an expert. While this newfound expertise may heighten your appreciation of a sport, as a parent, however, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Unfortunately a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect their playing time or whether they win a starting position.

## **The Parent-Coach Relationship:**

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner. A good rule to remember is to let 24 hours pass before you request a meeting. That gives you enough time to collect your thoughts. A parent may rightfully discuss his child's attitude, work ethic, behavior, eligibility, efforts to improve, and how a coach treats his child, physically and verbally.

One of the responsibilities, which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest, is to have a brief meeting with his/her players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

### **The Parent-Player Relationship:**

Some parents may try to live through their child's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this fundamental reason for playing.

When you do speak with your child after a contest don't dwell on his or her play, how many points they scored or if they started. Instead, first ask how the team did. Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100% and have a good experience.

### **Relationship with Officials:**

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of the game. A contest cannot be played without them.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls (who does?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same officials several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship, which can easily be damaged by spectators.

## **Athletic Chain of Command:**

Strother Public School Athletics has a chain of command that is in effect. If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there were no resolution, he or she would then go to the head coach, etc.

1. Player talks to the head coach
2. Parent may talk to the head coach
3. Parent may contact the athletic director

A parent who contacts a school administrator who has not followed this procedure is referred to the policy and then sent back to the coach. Remember the chain of command is...

1. Player
2. Head Coach
3. Athletic Director
4. Principal

## **Expressing Concerns:**

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
2. Call the following day and make an appointment, which is convenient for both you and the athletic director and coach to meet. Prior to this meeting please inform us of what issues you want to discuss. We exclude the matters of playing time, play calling, other student athletes and team strategies.
3. Raise your concerns in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.

4. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation, which is given.
5. Remember you are there concerning your child. Your child can /will be included in this meeting. You should not discuss another student- athlete's ability with the coach.
6. Letters or e-mails must have a return address with a name or a subject line on the envelope. Without such identification, the contents will be disposed of or deleted. We do not deal with nor give credence to anonymous letters.

### **Sportsmanship:**

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others-players, coaches, officials and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. Consequences for bad sportsmanship that leads to an ejection from an athletic contest is as follows: 1) First offense for being ejected from an athletic contest will result in a one (1) game suspension to be administered at the next athletic event. 2) Second Offense for being ejected from an athletic contest will result in a school year long suspension from all athletic contests where Strother Public Schools participate.

### **Responsibilities of an Athlete:**

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual.
2. An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
3. Players must be receptive to coaching.
4. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
5. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team

rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff and the school.

6. If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to the coach.

### **Requirements of Athletic Participation:**

1. A completed physical on the OSSAA form. The form is not valid unless it is filled out completely and signed by the parent/guardian and athlete.
2. The Strother Board of Education, in an effort to protect the health and safety of the students from illegal and/or performance-enhancing drug use and abuse, thereby setting an example for all students of the Strother Public School District, has adopted a policy for drug testing of students in extracurricular activities for students in grades 7-12. Student participants in extracurricular activities shall be provided a student drug testing consent form that must be read, signed, and dated by the student, parent/guardian, and principal before participant shall be eligible to practice in any extracurricular activity.
3. Proof of insurance. A copy of the student-athlete's type of insurance must be presented.
4. The forms in this handbook signed by the athlete and parent and returned to the athletic director's office.

### **Grade Eligibility:**

In order to represent Strother School in any interscholastic activity where two or more schools participate a student must meet the minimum eligibility requirements set forth by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association (OSSAA). A complete copy of these requirements is on file in the principal's office.

Coaches may institute higher expectations than the OSSAA regulations. Some of the rules include:

1. Regularly enrolled student who is attending classes,
2. Not under any significant disciplinary action,
3. Present at least half of the school day of the activity to participate that evening.

A student who is absent Friday will not be permitted to participate in a Saturday event.

(Exception: If a student has a documented dental or medical appointment, or a required attendance of a similar emergency nature, and it is cleared through an administrator, the student will be allowed to participate)

4. Passing all classes on a week-to-week basis with certification of eligibility each Friday for the upcoming week.

**Note: Any student who may have been placed on the “probation” or “ineligible” list at the end of the school year, will automatically be placed on the designated list of the proceeding school year.**

After school tutoring will be used at the coach’s discretion.

A written agreement signed by both the student athlete and their parents/ guardians acknowledging this policy will be kept on file in the athletic department.

**Drug Testing Policy:** – See attached policy

### **Hazing:**

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an important activity for team bonding. However, it is actually a form of harassment and represents a Strother Public Schools Disciplinary Code offense. A more complete explanation of harassment can be found in the Strother Public Schools Student Handbook.

Hazing, therefore, cannot and will not be condoned or permitted in the athletic program at Strother Public Schools. This means on the fields or courts, in the locker rooms, on the bus, or at any other activity in which athletes represent Strother Public Schools.

### **Varsity Letters and Athletic Jackets:**

The student athlete must be a freshman and have earned a varsity letter to be eligible for an athletic jacket. The student athlete must be presently a participating member of an athletic team at Strother High School and must complete a full season in good standing with all school policies and the policies of the individual sport and coach. Any

senior who has been a member of the team at least two seasons and does not meet the criteria for that sport, is eligible at the coaches' discretion.

### **Football**

To earn a varsity letter, a student athlete must dress for varsity games and complete the season in good standing. The only exception would be a football related injury keeping him from completing the season.

### **Girls and Boys Basketball**

Players must dress for varsity games that year and dress in the District Tournament. Any senior who has been a member of the team at least two seasons and does not meet the above criteria, is eligible at the coaches discretion.

### **Baseball and Softball**

Players must dress for regular season games and the district tournament, or be a senior and been a team member for two years.

### **Girls and Boys Golf**

Players must play in the Regional Tournament or have participated in at least 50% of their regular season matches/tournaments.

### **Girls and Boys Track/Cross Country**

Players must participate in a minimum of 50% of competitive meets and/or the Regional Meet competition.

### **Cheerleading**

Cheerleader must be a participant and compete in the Regional Competition.

### **Manager (all sports)**

Team managers who have been in a particular sport for two years in good standing and recommended by their coach may letter. The coach may recommend after one year at his/her discretion

### **Risks of Athletic Participation:**

In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when someone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At Strother Public Schools, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes.

### **Athletic Department Travel Policy:**

All team members must travel as a group to and from all athletic contests. The head coach and/or school administrator must approve any other exceptions to this mode of travel, in advance.

The following procedures should be followed if an athlete must have alternate travel from a contest:

1. A form seeking permission to transport the athlete home after a contest must be obtained from the school and be filled out 48 hours prior to the date of the contest and be received by the coach and approved by the principal or his designee. No e-mail notes allowed.
2. The form should specifically explain the reason for not traveling home with the team. This explanation may be needed in order for the coach/administrator to make an informed decision consistent with previous requests.
3. Prior to leaving the contest, the coach must actually speak with the parent to confirm that he/she, and not another student or friend, is driving.

## **Practice Sessions and Games:**

Practice sessions are normally closed to all spectators and there is very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

Spectators at games, however, are very much encouraged. Positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance in athletic contests.

## **Athletes Changing Teams:**

Whether by being cut, by quitting or by being dismissed, an athlete's membership on a team can be altered. While we want to promote participation, we also want to safeguard fairness and an ethical approach with regard to all coaches and teams. Any player cut or that quits a squad during tryouts is free to immediately try out or join another team. However if a player quits during that sports season he or she may not try out for another team until that season has ended, unless approved by both the sending and receiving coaches.

## **Sports Booster Clubs:**

Sport booster clubs exist to support individual teams and the entire athletic program. Each booster club should have three primary goals: 1) to raise funds to assist the athletic programs, 2) to increase school spirit and to encourage and 3) promote good sportsmanship.

Booster clubs are not a vehicle to remove coaches, to advance vested interests or to alter Athletic Department policy. They are service and support organizations, which work in harmony with the Strother School Board of Education and its athletic program.

All booster clubs must stay in compliance with state and local board guidelines. The close coordination of booster clubs and the athletic department is a must.



I/We hereby acknowledge that I/we have read the Strother Public Schools Athletics Handbook for Parents of Athletes and agree to adhere to the policies listed therein and the individual team rules set forth by the student-athlete's coach.

---

Student-Athlete's Name (Please Print)

---

Parent's Printed Name and Signature

---

Date

---

Parent's Printed Name and Signature

---

Date