

District School Board of Pasco County

2026-2027

Athletic Handbook

A Guide for Student Athletes, Parents, Guardians,
and the Athletic Community



Superintendent

Dr. John Legg

School Board

Al Hernandez - District 1

Colleen Beaudoin - District 2

Cynthia Armstrong - District 3

Jessica Wright - District 4

Megan Harding - District 5

Senior Supervisor of Athletics and Electives

Dr. Julieann Usry

Letter from the Senior Supervisor of Athletics

Dear Pasco County Schools Athletic Community,

The District School Board of Pasco County's athletic program is designed to enhance the district's vision of creating a community which works together so all Pasco County student athletes will reach their highest potential. We believe our athletic programs offer student athletes the opportunity to further their academic, social, personal, and physical growth. Participation in athletics promotes team building, goal setting, self-discipline, sportsmanship, collegiality, cooperation, and leadership.

The information found in this guide is a compilation of different sources and is meant to be a general guide and resource for parents/guardians, students, coaches, and members of our athletics community. It is not inclusive of all the Pasco County Schools and the Florida High School Athletic Association's rules, policies, and/or procedures. For more comprehensive information, it is recommended you visit the following websites:

District School Board of Pasco County: <http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us>

Pasco County Schools Athletic Website: <https://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/athletics/>

Florida High School Athletic Association: <http://www.fhsaa.org/>

All students who participate in the district's athletic programs are subject to the rules, regulations, and guidelines provided in this manual, those, which are mandated by Pasco County Schools, and those, which are mandated by the Florida High School Athletic Association. After reviewing these policies and procedures carefully, please direct any questions you may have to your coach and/or school's athletic director.

The Athletic Department would like to thank the parents and coaches in advance for their commitment and support of the athletic program(s) and the district's student athletes.

I look forward to an exciting year of athletic competition. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely, .

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julieann Usry', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julieann Usry Ed.D

Senior Supervisor of Student Experience and Athletics

Jusry@pasco.k12.fl.us

Pasco County Schools Athletic Mission and Vision Statement

Mission: To provide a world-class education for all students.

Vision: All of our students achieve success in college, career, and life.

Athletics Commitment Statement:

We are committed to supporting the district's vision and strategic plan through comprehensive and inclusive athletic programs. These programs are designed to foster the academic, social, personal, and physical development of our student athletes.

Participation in athletics cultivates essential life skills such as teamwork, goal setting, self-discipline, sportsmanship, collaboration, and leadership. Interscholastic competition provides a dynamic environment for students to develop and apply these skills in meaningful ways.

We believe coaches play a vital role in shaping the character and experiences of student athletes. Therefore, Pasco County is dedicated to providing coaches who:

- Demonstrate expertise in their sport and assigned responsibilities
- Uphold the highest standards of moral character
- Respect and follow the rules of the game in both letter and spirit
- Promote respect for all participants and the values of athletics
- Model and teach sportsmanship
- Honor the integrity and decisions of athletic officials
- Recognize and support each athlete's individuality

All coaches are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of the DSBPC, FHSA, SAC, and NFHS. They are responsible for fulfilling duties assigned by the head coach, athletic director, school, and district administration.

We emphasize the importance of clear and respectful communication among student athletes, parents, and coaches. The appropriate chain of communication includes assistant coach, head coach, athletic director, assistant principal, principal, county senior supervisor of athletics, and then the superintendent's staff.

Athletics is a vital part of both the school and the broader community. It fosters engagement, builds partnerships, and creates open lines of communication among all stakeholders.

Above all, the well-being of student athletes is our top priority. While we value and strive for victory, it must never come at the expense of athlete safety, fairness, sportsmanship, or the core values that guide the development of our student athletes.

At the beginning of each sport season, coaches and athletic directors will schedule time to meet with the expected athletic participants and their parents. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss athletic programs and build relationships and community support.

All Pasco County School District High School Athletic Departments are members of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) and we follow the athletic rules, procedures, and requirements set forth by this Association.

1. Handbook Purpose:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide our athletics community with the rules and regulations of our athletics program to ensure compliance with the state requirements and school board policies. Specific rules and regulations will differ from sport to sport. Its intent is to lay a standard foundation so that parents/guardians and student athletes will know what is expected regardless of what sport in which the student athlete participates. Final interpretation of the rules will be made by the coach, athletic director and principal of the school. This handbook is designed to set forth minimum standards for student athletes in all the Pasco County Schools. A complete copy of all state governing body regulations is available online via the <http://www.fhsaa.com/>.

2. Athletic Philosophy:

Athletics is an integral part of our school's educational program. It provides meaningful experiences that support the physical, mental, social, and emotional growth of all students. Participation in athletics offers opportunities to build character, develop leadership, strengthen resilience, and foster a sense of belonging within our school and district community.

Students must remember that they are student athletes. Academic achievement comes first and serves as the foundation for future success in college, career, and life. Participation in athletics is a privilege that complements, but never replaces, a commitment to academic excellence.

While competition and the pursuit of victory are natural and valued elements of athletics, they do not define the nature of our program. Winning is celebrated, but it is never placed above safety, personal growth, teamwork, integrity, and respect. The element of competition exists in a healthy and controlled manner to ensure that the educational value of athletics remains our primary focus.

We expect our student athletes to always demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship. They are ambassadors of their school and representatives of the district's athletic community. Their conduct, on and off the field, should reflect respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators. Positive behavior, humility in victory, and grace in defeat are standards we uphold.

Through athletics, we strive to cultivate responsible, disciplined, and compassionate individuals who are prepared not only to compete, but to contribute positively to their communities long after their playing days have ended.

Athletic Objectives of Our Program: Excellence, Integrity, and Growth

1. Excellence- Prepare to Win. Perform with Discipline. Succeed in the Classroom and in Competition.

Objectives:

Student athletes will maintain academic eligibility and prioritize academic achievement above athletic participation.

Teams will prepare intentionally and compete at a high level while upholding program values.

Athletes will demonstrate discipline, punctuality, and responsibility in practices, competitions, and the classroom.

Coaches will create competitive environments that challenge athletes while keeping education as the primary purpose.

The program will promote habits that prepare students for success in college, career, and life beyond athletics.

Student athletes will embrace leadership roles by modeling work ethic, accountability, and positive communication within their teams, on their school campuses, and throughout the broader community.

2. Integrity- Play with Character. Compete with Honor. Represent with Respect.

Objectives:

Student athletes will demonstrate sportsmanship toward teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators always.

Student athletes will follow team, school, and district rules and accept accountability for their actions and FHSAA rules and policies and the rules of the FHSAA.

Teams will compete with honesty and fairness, respecting both the rules and the spirit of the game.

Coaches, athletes, parents, and spectators will model positive sideline and social media behavior as representatives of the school community.

Student athletes will handle victory with humility and defeat with composure and maturity.

3. Growth- Train with Purpose. Develop the Whole Athlete. Improve Every Day.

Objectives:

Student athletes will commit to continuous skill development through practice, conditioning, and constructive feedback.

The program will foster physical, mental, social, and emotional growth through structured athletic experiences.

Athletes will develop resilience, perseverance, and teamwork through both success and adversity.

Coaches will emphasize effort, preparation, and improvement over outcomes alone.

Student athletes will set personal and team goals focused on long-term development and character building.

Handbook Requirements and Program Procedures:

The policies and expectations outlined in this Student Athletic Handbook are in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the entire calendar year. Participation in athletics always requires adherence to these standards.

School administrators and/or athletic directors may establish additional sport-specific procedures and guidelines at the school level as needed. Individual coaches may also develop team rules; however, all such rules must be submitted to and approved by the principal and athletic director prior to implementation. Approved team rules may be more restrictive than handbook policies, but under no circumstances may they be less restrictive.

Prior to the start of each athletic season, coaches are required to conduct a parent/guardian meeting. Coaches must communicate the meeting date, time, and location to their onsite Athletic Director in advance. Parents/guardians are expected to attend these meetings in order for their athletes to participate on the team to foster a collaborative commitment to the success of our student athletes. These meetings should be scheduled at times that maximize attendance and must be properly advertised. Parents/guardians who miss the required meeting due to circumstances beyond their control will contact the coach to arrange a make-up session with the coach to secure their athlete's eligibility for team participation. During the meeting, coaches will review program expectations, team procedures, practice schedules, and contest calendars. Copies of practice and competition schedules will be provided to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are encouraged to seek clarification or request interpretation of any handbook policies or team expectations to ensure a clear understanding of program standards.

General Rules for Participation and Athletic Eligibility

Interscholastic athletics are designed to support and enhance the overall academic achievement of each student participant. Participation in competitive athletics is a privilege that complements the educational mission of the school. The following rules and consequences outline the fundamental expectations that must be upheld by any student who chooses to represent their school in interscholastic competition.

Athletic Eligibility/Transfers: Current information relative to athletic eligibility and transfers can be found on the [FHSAA website](#). Other provisions regarding eligibility shall be as provided by applicable Board Policy, the Student Code of Conduct (SCOC), the Student Progression Plan and Florida Statute.

Athletic Transfers Policy

Schools and student athletes must follow the guidelines set forth by the FHSAA to meet the guidelines of Senate Bill 538 for student athlete transfers.

- Students may not participate in sports at two (2) different schools during the same school year unless they meet one of the following criteria:
 - Make a full and complete move as determined by the school, district, & FHSAA.
 - Active Duty military move, foster care placement, and court-ordered custody
 - Other rules determined by FHSAA Board of Directors
- A student who is participating at another school because their school of attendance does not offer the sport is not considered a transfer.
- These rules apply to all Non-Traditional Students as well. A non-traditional student is defined as any student participating in an academic program outside of full-time enrollment in Pasco County Schools. This includes students enrolled in Home Education, Personalized Education Program (PEP), Charter schools, Private schools, Florida Virtual School (FLVS), Alternative programs, as well as students that are enrolled in another Traditional Public School outside of Pasco County Schools.
- Essentially, once a student plays a sport at one school, that is the only school they can play a sport at for that entire school year, unless they meet one of the approved circumstances listed by the FHSAA.

Athletic Eligibility

1. All high school student athletes must maintain an overall cumulative, unweighted 2.0 GPA. This is based off of the previous semester's final, posted cumulative, unweighted GPA. For the first semester, whatever cumulative unweighted GPA is posted by the

district on the first day of school will be what a student athlete's first semester academic eligibility will be based off of. Second semester academic eligibility is based off of the cumulative unweighted GPA that is posted by the district after grades are finalized in January. All incoming 9th graders are academically eligible for their first semester. See FHSAA Policy 9.4.1.

2. All middle school student athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester. This is based off of the previous semester's final, posted, unweighted GPA. For the first semester, the unweighted GPA that is posted by the district on the first day of school will be what a student athlete's first semester academic eligibility will be based off of. Second semester academic eligibility is based off of the unweighted GPA that is posted by the district after grades are finalized in January. All incoming 6th graders are academically eligible for their first semester. See FHSAA Policy 9.4.1
3. If a student athlete is making up credits and/or trying to improve their GPA over the summer, all coursework must be 100% completed and submitted prior to the sixth day of school in order for it to be calculated into the first semester's posted GPA for FHSAA academic eligibility purposes. See FHSAA Policies 9.4.3 and 9.4.5.
4. If a student athlete starts a semester off academically ineligible or eligible, they will remain as such for that entire semester. See FHSAA Policy 9.4.6 as it pertains to a change in eligibility status.
5. Students assigned to Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be ineligible to participate in practices and interscholastic competitions on the day(s) on which he or she is assigned. If the assignment to OSS includes a Friday and Monday, the student will be unable to participate in interscholastic competitions and/or practices on the weekend. Students assigned to OSS are not allowed to be on school board property on the day(s) on which he or she is assigned, per the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct. Therefore, if a student athlete competes on the day(s) they are assigned to OSS, the individual and/or team will forfeit the game(s)/competition(s) in which that ineligible student athlete competed. Student athletes who miss tryouts due to serving OSS stemming from a Level 3 SESIR coded offence or higher, will not be afforded an alternate tryout.
6. Students who are alternatively placed during a district alternative placement hearing will no longer be able to participate in any athletic sports until the student resumes placement in the traditional school setting. Students who are alternatively placed are not permitted to attend any sporting events during the time of their alternative placement period.
7. If a student athlete is arrested or charged with a felony, please refer to the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct for further guidance.
8. A student athlete found in possession, using, or buying tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, or drugs in any form will be suspended from all interscholastic practices, competitions or performances for a length of time corresponding to the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct.

- a. Per the Student Code of Conduct, the student athlete must be enrolled and complete the approved substance abuse or tobacco abuse program (depending on nature the of offence) through the Pasco County Schools's Substance Abuse Educator. Failure to attend and complete the substance or tobacco abuse program will result in dismissal from all athletics for the remainder of the school year. (Please note, if the scheduled time for student athlete's attendance to Substance Abuse Education Program is after the minimum suspension has been served, the student athlete may return to practice, competition. However, the above consequences do apply for student's failure to attend the Substance Program at the scheduled time. These programs are not rescheduled, and the student athlete must attend on scheduled dates).
 - b. A second offense will result in a student's dismissal from all athletics for the remainder of the school year. The student will not be allowed to continue to be a part of the athletic program or a team in any capacity.
 - c. Students caught selling or distributing drugs/alcohol/tobacco/vaping products will be removed from athletic participation for one calendar year.
9. A student athlete who checks out school equipment and/or uniform(s) is responsible for the equipment and/or uniform(s). The student athlete is expected to keep equipment and/or uniform(s) clean and in good condition. Loss of any equipment and/or uniform(s) is the student athlete's financial obligation. Failure to pay for any lost or damaged equipment and/or uniform(s) will result in the issuance of a notice of obligation. In high school, said notice(s) of obligation must be satisfied by the end of the current school year. If left unsatisfied, student athletes may not be allowed to compete the following school year. If the student athlete is a senior, they may not be able to participate in graduation activities. In middle school, said notice(s) of obligation must be satisfied before starting their next sport. If left unsatisfied, student athletes may not be allowed to compete in their next sport.
10. If a student is ejected from a sporting event, the student will be required to pay a \$100 minimum ejection fine as well as complete the NFHS "Principles in Leadership" Course before they can engage in any sports in Pasco County. Please note, that ejection fines may be higher depending on the reason for the ejection.
11. If a student athlete quits a team or is removed from a team for disciplinary reasons, said student athlete must return all checked out equipment and/or uniform(s) before they will be allowed to participate in another sport. Said student athlete must also be approved to start another sport by both the vacated sports coach and the receiving sports coach. Coaches will work together with the parents/guardians and student athlete to develop a schedule that best supports the needs of the athlete as well as supports the success of the team. The School Athletic Director and School Principal reserve the right to make the final decision on said student athlete's ability to start a new sport. If an athlete wishes to participate in two different sports during the same season, the athlete must declare their intention to the coaches of both teams so appropriate coordination can occur to support the success of both teams.

12. Student athletes competing in a respective sport's season are expected to finish out said season and fulfill their obligations to that team through the postseason. Said student athletes must be offered a tryout at the conclusion of the proceeding sport's season. (For example, a fall sport student athlete finishing their fall season, must be afforded a tryout for a winter sport regardless of when their fall sport's season concluded). Athletes will have up to a week from the conclusion of the previous sports season to arrange a tryout with the coach of the new sport. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the tryout.
13. While we recognize the significance and value of club/travel teams (including, but not limited to, AAU, USSSA, etc.), we encourage student-athletes and their families to carefully consider participation in such teams during the respective sport's sanctioned FHSAA season(s). Simultaneous participation can sometimes contribute to overuse injuries, unreported injuries, increased physical and mental demands, technique and scheme confusion, and scheduling challenges. If a student-athlete chooses to participate on a club/travel team during the same time as their sanctioned FHSAA school-affiliated season, the school team is expected to remain the primary commitment throughout the sanctioned season. In the event of a scheduling conflict between a club/travel team activity and a school team practice, game, or team function, the school team should take precedence. Absences from school team practices or competitions due to participation in a club/travel team will generally be considered unexcused unless approved in advance by the coaching staff. Repeated unexcused absences may impact playing time, team role, or continued participation on the team, at the discretion of the coaching staff.
14. Student athletes, parents and/or guardians should refrain from using social media of any kind to post any negative or inappropriate comments about a team, specific players, coaches, opponents or officials. Doing so may result in disciplinary action or even removal from the team.
15. Student athletes who transfer schools are subject to FHSAA policies. Please see the [FHSAA website](#) for updated policies and procedures for transfer students.
16. Non-traditional student athletes must adhere to all FHSAA policies, meet the same proof of residency requirements as traditional student athletes and will be required to submit additional non-traditional student specific paperwork prior to any interscholastic athletic participation per FHSAA Policy.
17. A student will be ineligible until deemed eligible by administration and/or FHSAA when it is found that the student or parent falsifies documents or accepts a prohibited benefit. Pasco County School officials reserve the right to verify residence and investigate allegations.

Non-Traditional Student Athletic Participation and Enrollment

A non-traditional student is defined as any student participating in an academic program outside of full-time enrollment in Pasco County Schools. This includes students enrolled in Home Education, Personalized Education Program (PEP), Charter schools, Private schools, Florida Virtual School (FLVS), Alternative programs, as well as students that are enrolled in another Traditional Public School outside of Pasco County Schools.

Before you can join a sport in Pasco County, the student athlete's parent/guardian must use the MyStudent System to Co-Enroll for Athletics. There will be two different processes based on the student athlete's current status with Pasco County Schools. Processes and procedures for non-traditional student athletic participation can be found on the [Pasco County Schools Athletic Website](#).

College Bound Student Athletes:

Student athletes that aspire to further their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level must meet rigorous academic requirements to be eligible for scholarship opportunities, some of which may be above and beyond normal graduation requirements. For information on the requirements, please visit the links below:

NCAA – DI, DII and DIII

<https://web1.ncaa.org/hportal/exec/links?linksSubmit=ShowActiveLinks>

NAIA <https://play.mynaia.org/>

NJCAA – Junior College <https://www.njcaa.org/eligibility/index>

NOTE: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) schools through which students receive athletic scholarships, do not recognize courses, credits, or grades that were earned based on less than the full completion of a semester course. Potential NCAA candidates cannot participate in credit recovery but must instead repeat the entire course. Therefore, Edmentum and/or similar credit recovery programs are not recognized by the NCAA.

Sports Offered in Pasco County Schools

Middle School Sports			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cheerleading	Cheerleading	Cheerleading	Boys Track and Field
Football	Boys Soccer	Boys Basketball	Girls Track and Field
Girls Volleyball	Girls Basketball	Girls Soccer	

High School Sports		
Fall	Winter	Spring
Boys Cross Country	Boys Basketball	Baseball
Boys Golf	Boys Soccer	Boys and Girls Lacrosse *(See Below)
Boys Swimming & Diving	Boys Wrestling	Boys Tennis
Football	Competitive Cheerleading	Boys Track and Field
Girls Cross Country	Girls Basketball	Girls Flag Football
Girls Golf	Girls Soccer	Boys Weightlifting
Girls Swimming and Diving	Girls Weightlifting	Girls Tennis
Girls Volleyball	Girls Wrestling	Girls Track and Field
Sideline Cheerleading		Softball

*Boys Lacrosse only offered at (JWMHS, SLHS, WCHS, PHS, LOLHS, WRHS, CCHS)

*Girls Lacrosse only offered at (JWMHS, SLHS, RRHS, WCHS, PHS, LOLHS, WRHS, CCHS)

Adding Sanctioned Sports - Should a school have the desire and backing to add a new, additional sport for FHSAA sanctioned competition, it must first submit a request to the District Athletic Director and then be approved to submit for FHSAA sanctioned competition.

Sideline Cheer - While sideline cheer is not a recognized, sanctioned FHSAA sport and is considered a school club, it is overseen by each school's Athletic Director. All sideline cheerleaders must meet the same requirements and expectations as all other student athletes of FHSAA sanctioned sports. This includes but is not limited to the entire Athletic Clearance process as well as academic, attendance and behavioral requirements and expectations.

Sideline Cheer Try Outs – May take place on or after May 1st. Tryouts can include current students, non-traditional students who would be eligible per FHSAA policies to compete at said school, as well as incoming 9th graders whose school path is that of the school in which they are trying out for. Students who are transferring to a new school the following school year cannot try out until the summer. Incoming 9th grade students are prohibited from leaving their Middle School early to attend high school tryouts and/or practices.

Sideline Cheer Team Game Attendance Expectations:

Football - All JV and Varsity football games*

Basketball – All in county home games for boys and girls *Unless previously agreed upon by the principal or designee and the AD.

NOTE: These are minimum expectations, sideline cheer teams are strongly encouraged to attend more games and events.

Sideline Cheer Sponsors – If a sideline cheer sponsor would like to have their sideline cheerleaders stunt, they must complete the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) “Cheer and Dance Safety Certification” course once every four years. The

course completion certificate must be submitted to the onsite Athletic Director and the Senior Supervisor of Athletics.

Transportation

Bus/Van Departure and Procedures:

1. Student athletes must conduct themselves in a proper manner while on the provided transportation. Hands and arms shall stay inside the windows, there shall be no littering, athletes will stay in designated seats, and there shall be no clowning or boisterous behavior or other lewd or inappropriate behavior as outlined in the SCOC. Changing clothes will not be allowed on the provided transportation.
2. Before student athletes are transported to a game, they must complete the required Pasco County Schools Transportation Form. There are times when the school will not provide transportation to an event and the parent or guardian will be responsible for transporting their athlete to these events. A parent/guardian may request to have a student athlete ride home from an event with them. In such case the parent/guardian must speak with the coach, provide proof of identity and sign the student athlete out. Student athletes will not be allowed to utilize private transportation to or from athletic events or competitions without a completed and submitted Consent for Private Transport form and the proper approval from the principal or designee.
3. All student athletes must have transportation home within 30 minutes after the end of the game, after practice, or upon arrival back from an away game. Student athletes should discuss this requirement with parents/guardians. Students who attend a game or competition as fans must also have transportation home within 30 minutes after the end of the game or competition. If this is a continuous problem a student athlete may be dismissed from the team and student fans may not be allowed to attend after school games or competitions. Coaches are responsible for staying with their student athletes until they are picked up, while an Administrator or designee is responsible for staying with student fans.
4. Coaches are required to follow PCSD policies and procedures on transportation of student athletes including completing the proper bus/van requests and athletic field trip forms within the deadlines requested.

Ticket Pricing and Athletic Fees for Secondary Schools

Pasco County Schools uses the Go Fan ticketing system for all games. Please ensure that tickets for sporting events are purchased ahead of time using Go Fan.

Middle School
All Sports- \$5.00
High School

Varsity Football	JV Football	All Other Sports
\$7.00	\$6.00	\$5.00
Children under the age of 5 and adults over the age of 65 are permitted into all Pasco County Schools sporting events for free.		
All Pasco County School Board Employees are Admitted Free with their Pasco County Schools Identification Badge (Current Employees Only) does not apply to preseason or post season play		
Note: Processing and/or Digital Ticketing platform fees may be added to ticket price		

Traditional Student Athletic Fees for Sports Participation		
	Middle School	High School & Combination Schools
First Sport	\$70.00	\$90.00
Second Sport	\$50.00	\$60.00
Family (Same School)	\$190.00	\$240.00
Individual Cap	\$120.00	\$150.00

Athletic Fees Private School and PEP Students Approved July 21st, 2026		
	Middle School	High School & Combination Schools
Per Sport	\$310	\$400

**** All other non-traditional student types will pay the traditional student fee per Senate Bill 538****

- Athletic Fees must be paid prior to competing in interscholastic competition.
- Student athletes and families who are unable to pay the athletic fees may submit a hardship request to the school Athletic Director and Administration.
- All required athletic participation forms and physical forms must be completely filled out and turned into the Athletic Director prior to the student actively engaging in a physical activity, including tryouts.
- No Tryout Fee: Students have three (3) days to pay fees after they make the team. No one will participate in game competition until fees have been paid.
- Please note the participation fee does not guarantee playing time, only the opportunity to be on the team if selected.
- If a student athlete has participated in a practice, game or competition for any length of time, and then decides to quit or is removed from the team for disciplinary reasons, the athletic fees will not be refunded.
- District, Region, Section and State events, including ticket prices and digital ticketing platforms, are subject to the rules of the FHSAA, which is the state governing body to which all Pasco County Schools belong. Schools hosting preseason and/or regular season

tournaments or competitions reserve the right to set different ticket price points due to the unique nature of these events.

Sports Media Journalists Access

Sports Media personnel may attend athletic events as spectators. Whereas media credentials may be used to enter a sporting event free of charge, media personnel must follow the same guidelines as spectators at events. Media personnel are not permitted to be in locker rooms or other district buildings without escort by a Pasco County Schools employee. Request for interviews of student athletes should be directed to the head coach of the program. If approved by the head coach, it is the coach's responsibility to supervise and be present for this interview. Under no circumstances should media personnel have unsupervised access to students.

Athletic Clearance Paperwork Needed for Participation

All Pasco County School District schools that offer interscholastic athletics must utilize the FHSAA student athlete registrar and scheduling platform, Home Campus. In conjunction with Home Campus, all Pasco County School District schools that offer interscholastic athletics must utilize the Athletic Clearance student athlete registration platform for FHSAA and Pasco County Schools athletic paperwork collection and housing.

Student athletes and parents/guardians must upload, submit and digitally sign all of the required paperwork in order to be eligible to participate in any interscholastic sport's activities in or out of season. Student athletes will not be allowed to participate or compete in any form or fashion until they are 100% cleared through the Athletic Clearance platform.

All forms may be found online at:

<http://www.fhsaa.com> and <https://athleticclearance.fhsaahome.org/> and

Other forms may be needed, and the collection of those additional forms may vary from school to school. Please speak with your coach or Athletic Director.

Parent Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are demanding roles that require patience, understanding, and commitment. When we take the time to appreciate the responsibilities each carries, we can better support one another and ultimately serve our student athletes more effectively. As parents and guardians, you deserve to know the expectations placed on your child when they participate in our athletic programs. This starts with open and clear communication from your child's coach.

As your child participates in their school's athletic program, they will enjoy many memorable and rewarding experiences. However, there may also be times when situations do not unfold as you or your child had hoped. During these moments, open dialogue with the coach is

encouraged. Effective communication, along with continued support of the coach, is essential to working through concerns and reaching a positive outcome.

Preseason Meeting: Communication to Expect from the Coach

During the preseason meeting, coaches will clearly share important information to help you and your child understand the program. This includes:

- The coach's philosophy and approach to the team
- Practice and game schedules, including locations and times
- Team requirements (fees, equipment, off-season commitments, etc.)
- Procedures to follow in the event of an injury
- Safety guidelines and potential risks (duty to warn)
- Behaviors or actions that could result in limited or denied participation

This communication is intended to ensure everyone is informed, prepared, and aligned for a successful season.

Appropriate Methods of Communication

There may be times when concerns need to be addressed directly with the coach. These conversations are encouraged, as they allow both the coach and the parent/guardian to better understand the situation and work toward a positive resolution. The following steps outline the recommended lines of communication for most situations. Please note that certain circumstances may warrant adjusting this order.

- Student athlete communicates with the coach by arranging a time before or after practice
- Parent/guardian meets with the coach by scheduling an appointment
- Parent/guardian meets with the coach and athletic director by scheduling an appointment
- Parent/guardian meets with the principal, athletic director, and coach by scheduling an appointment
- Parent/guardian meets with the district Senior Supervisor of Athletics by scheduling an appointment

Following these steps helps maintain clear, respectful, and effective communication for everyone involved.

A) Appropriate Topics to Discuss with a Coach:

- Your child's overall well-being, including mental, physical, emotional, and social aspects
- Ways to support and help your child improve as an athlete
- Concerns related to your child's behavior
- Questions or concerns regarding injuries

B) Topics Not Appropriate to Discuss with a Coach:

- Playing time or comparisons with other athletes
- Team strategy or decisions regarding personnel
- Specific play-calling decisions
- Issues involving other student athletes or their families

Maintaining focus on appropriate topics helps foster respectful, productive conversations that support both the athlete and the team.

It can be challenging to accept when your child is not receiving as much playing time as you had hoped. Coaches are trained professionals who make decisions based on what they believe is in the best interest of the entire team and all student athletes involved. Ultimately, playing time is determined by the coach.

Parents and guardians are asked not to approach a coach before, during, or immediately after a practice or contest. A 24-hour “cooling-off” period is expected for everyone involved. Scheduling a meeting or conference at a later time is the most effective way to address concerns and work toward a positive resolution.

Athletic Injury Communication and Documentation

There may be occasions during athletic tryouts, practices, or competitions when student athletes sustain injuries. If an injury occurs while on Pasco County School property or during a school-sponsored athletic activity, school personnel, including the coach, athletic director, or administration, will make every effort to promptly notify the parent/guardian.

In all cases, the school is required to complete official injury documentation. To ensure accuracy and compliance, parents/guardians and/or student athletes may be asked to provide additional information so that all required forms are completed in full.

If, for any reason, an injury is not communicated at the time of occurrence and your student later informs you of an incident after returning home, please notify the coach, athletic director, and school administration as soon as possible. This will allow the school to properly document the injury in accordance with district procedures.

Timely communication is essential to ensure the health and safety of our student athletes and to maintain accurate records.

Student Athlete Sportsmanship

Students who take part in interscholastic athletics and performance groups are expected to uphold strong ethical standards while developing positive character traits and essential life skills. As role models, they should demonstrate respectful behavior toward themselves, their families, and others, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or physical ability. As representatives of Pasco County Public Schools, students are asked to commit to the following:

I understand that being part of a team and wearing the uniform is a privilege, and I will represent my school in a positive manner.

I accept the responsibility to take pride in my team's traditions, maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle, and demonstrate appropriate behavior both on and off the field or court.

I recognize that academics are my top priority, and I will manage my time effectively to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA.

I am committed to working hard to build strength and improve my skills each year I participate.

I will put the team before myself, follow all training expectations, and strive to elevate the success and reputation of the team.

I will show respect to my teammates, opponents, officials, and coaches at all times.

I will take proper care of all equipment and facilities.

I will always keep safety as my top priority.

I am grateful to my parents and guardians for their continued support throughout my athletic experience.

Athlete Conduct – Behavior during and after play

A. Participation in athletics requires strong sportsmanship and appropriate behavior at all times. If unsportsmanlike conduct is observed and reported, the coach will address the situation and may implement appropriate athletic-related consequences.

B. If a game official submits an official report of unsportsmanlike conduct or an ejection to the FHSAA, the coach, athletic director, and principal will be notified. Disciplinary action will be taken within the athletic program, and additional school-based consequences may be assigned by school administration if necessary.

C. The FHSAA may impose suspensions ranging from Level 1 to Level 4 in accordance with Policy 30. Student athletes and coaches may also be held financially responsible for any fines issued as a result of an ejection.

Hazing:

Hazing, as defined in the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct, is strictly prohibited in all forms and will not be tolerated. Any incidents will be reported to local law enforcement for investigation and potential prosecution. Individuals found responsible will be immediately removed from the sport for the remainder of the season. Additional disciplinary actions, including the loss of eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities, may be enforced by school administration in accordance with the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary Action:

The Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct is incorporated into this handbook. Except where otherwise specified above, all disciplinary matters will be handled in accordance with the guidelines outlined in that code.

Dress Code for Athletes

- Athletes may not wear athletic attire during the school day unless it meets the dress code outlined in the Student Code of Student Conduct and is permitted by the principal. This means that cheerleaders and other athletes would need to change into their athletic attire for pep rallies or other special school athletic events.
- It is at the principal's discretion whether or not student athletes may wear athletic uniforms during the regular school day.
- For specifics detail regarding the district's student dress code, please visit the following webpage:
- [District School Board of Pasco County's Secondary Student Dress Code](http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/communications/dress/secnd_dress.html)
- http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/communications/dress/secnd_dress.html

Gameday Policies & Procedures**Game Entry**

1. Tickets sales are on Go Fan (online). Schools should accept cash for families who do not have access to Go Fan. No families should be turned away for failure to access Go Fan.
2. No Re-Entry to games once a patron leaves the game.
3. FREE ENTRY ONLY: Pasco County School District Employees (with ID Badge present), Senior Citizens 65 and older, kids UNDER the age of 5. Veterans, employee spouses, and others do not get in free. **Free entry is for regular season games only.**

Bag Procedure

All bags are subject to search upon entry. Bags and items not permitted on Pasco County Schools property must be returned to the patron's vehicle.

1. **ONLY clear plastic, clear vinyl, or clear Ziploc bags** are permitted inside an event venue.
2. Student athletes are permitted to bring bags. These bags are subject to search.
3. Small clutch or wallet style bags no larger than 4 inches by 6 inches are permitted for entry but will be subject to search. All other styles of bags such as backpacks, fanny packs, purses and duffle bags are not permitted.

4. An exception will be made for medically necessary items, diaper bags, and properly credentialed school and professional photographers' camera bags. These bags will be subject to search prior to entry, unless the item meets the clear bag guidelines.

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Firearms
2. Weapons of any kind
3. Knives
4. Any item that could be used as a missile
5. Fireworks
6. Glass
7. Recreational Balls
8. Horns/Lasers
9. Illegal Drugs
10. Alcoholic beverages of any kind
11. Pets (exceptions will be made for service animals)
12. Coolers
13. Sticks/Poles/Camera "Selfie" Sticks/Extenders or Gimbals
14. Unmanned Aircraft Systems & Radio Controlled Model Aircraft/Drones (strictly prohibited on stadium property including parking lots, stadium exterior and inside the stadium)
15. No outside food

Allowed Items Include the following:

1. Umbrellas
2. Ponchos if worn, carried over the arm, or in original sealed clear package
3. Blankets and/or towels if unrolled or unfolded
4. Small, handheld radios or TVs with earphones
5. Binoculars, worn around the neck or carried (not in a case)
6. Cameras with carry strap (not carried in a case)

7. Sunscreen lotion
8. Banners and/or flags without sticks or poles
9. Laptops/tablets (not in a case)
10. Seat cushions
11. Sealed non-alcoholic drinks by ticketed adults only

Concession Stand

- Outside food or drinks are not permitted at any Athletic Events at any time unless special arrangements have been made by the school principal for special events.
- This policy applies to all faculty, coaches, and staff members who will be using the athletic facilities.
- All Employees and Volunteers that work in the concession stand must read all 26 slides on the following PPT. The names of all who complete the Concession Training PPT should be documented and kept in each concession stand for compliance with the Health Department.
- Slide Deck link: [26-27 Health Department Concession Stand Training](#)

Patron Code of Conduct

Students are expected to abide by the Pasco County Schools Student Code of Conduct. Pasco County Schools is committed to creating a safe, comfortable and enjoyable experience for all fans, both in the stadium and in the parking lots. We want all fans attending our events to enjoy the experience in a responsible fashion. When attending a game, you are required to refrain from the following behaviors:

1. Behavior that is unruly, disruptive or illegal in nature
2. Intoxication or other signs of alcohol or drug impairment that results in irresponsible behavior
3. Foul or abusive language or obscene gestures
4. Interference with the progress of the game (including throwing objects onto the field)
5. Failing to follow instructions of school officials
6. Verbal or physical harassment of opposing team fans

Event patrons are responsible for their conduct as well as the conduct of their guests and/or persons occupying their seats. Staff will promptly intervene to support an environment where event patrons, their guests and other fans can enjoy the event free from the above behavior. Event patrons and guests who violate these provisions will be subject to ejection without refund and loss of ticket privileges for future games.

Inclement Weather Guidelines

The safety of student-athletes, spectators, coaches, officials, and staff is a top priority during periods of extreme heat and inclement weather. Schools are responsible for monitoring weather conditions, communicating safety procedures, and taking appropriate action when conditions become unsafe.

Schools will utilize the DTN Weather App to monitor weather conditions, including Wet bulb temperature, which combines air temperature, humidity, sunlight, and wind to indicate how effectively the body can cool itself through sweating. Wet bulb readings help determine when outdoor activities may need to be modified, postponed, or suspended.

School Responsibilities During a Weather Event

- Maintain an emergency action plan for severe weather situations.
- Continuously monitor weather conditions before and during athletic events.
- Issue timely announcements and instructions when weather conditions threaten safety.
- Suspend activities and direct all participants and spectators to appropriate shelter when necessary.
- Keep activities suspended until weather conditions are deemed safe for return.

Spectator Responsibilities During a Weather Event

- Pay close attention to announcements and instructions from school officials.
- Be aware of weather conditions and prepare to seek shelter if directed.
- Immediately move to a designated safe shelter when a weather alert is issued.
- Do not remain in open areas, bleachers, near fences, or under trees during a lightning event.
- Remain in a safe location until school officials announce that it is safe to return.

Lightning Safety Guidelines

Schools are required to follow these guidelines during games and athletic events: Participants and spectators must seek shelter when lightning is within 10 miles.

The DTN Weather App provides automatic alerts when lightning enters the designated "seek shelter" range. When an alert is issued, school personnel will direct student athletes and spectators to safe shelter locations and provide updates regarding the status of the event.

Working together to follow these procedures helps ensure a safe environment for all student athletes, spectators, and staff during athletic activities.

Policy on Crowd Control

In accordance with FHSAA policy, the home school administration is responsible for maintaining appropriate spectator behavior during athletic events and is encouraged to provide uniformed security to assist with this responsibility. Game officials, however, are responsible for overseeing the conduct of the contest itself.

Athletic programs operate within the values of education, and all teams are required to follow FHSAA rules to ensure fair and consistent standards for all student athletes. Participation in athletics, whether as a player or spectator, is a privilege and carries the expectation of respectful behavior that supports the educational purpose of school activities. It is important to remember that student athletes, coaches, and officials are not perfect, and mistakes are a natural part of competition. While winning is a worthy goal, it should never come at the expense of integrity, sportsmanship, or common sense.

By following these expectations, we create a positive and safe environment for everyone involved student athletes, coaches, officials, families, and fans. Our shared goal is to provide the best and safest experience possible, and your cooperation is essential in achieving that. Spectators are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- All spectators are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. Repeated or severe unsportsmanlike behavior may result in the event being stopped and individuals being removed. Trespass warnings may also be issued.
- Spectators who are intoxicated or show signs of impairment from alcohol or drugs, resulting in inappropriate behavior, will be removed and may face trespass warnings.
- Spectators are not permitted in locker rooms or restricted competition areas and may not enter the playing surface at any time. Actions that interfere with the event, such as throwing objects, are prohibited and will result in removal and possible trespass warnings.
- Entering or “storming” the playing surface is strictly prohibited due to safety concerns and may result in penalties from the FHSAA.
- Parents, fans, and spectators should not approach coaches before, during, or immediately after a contest or practice. Please follow the 24-hour rule, allowing time for reflection before addressing concerns. Meetings should be scheduled for the following day.
- All participants and spectators are expected to leave the facility within 15 minutes after the conclusion of the event.
 - Note: Exceptions may be made for special events such as homecoming, senior night, playoff games, or championship competitions.

Closing Remarks

Thank you for taking the time to review the Pasco County Schools Athletic Handbook. We appreciate your continued commitment to our student athletes and the important role you play in supporting their growth, development, and success both on and off the field of play.

As we prepare for the 2026-2027 athletic season, we are excited about the opportunities ahead for our student-athletes, coaches, families, and school communities. We look forward to a year filled with competition, sportsmanship, teamwork, and personal achievement. By working together and maintaining high standards of character, accountability, and respect, we can help ensure a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved in Pasco County athletics.

Thank you for your partnership and dedication to making the 2026-2027 athletic season a successful, memorable, and impactful one for all of our student-athletes. We look forward to a great year ahead and wish all of our teams the very best as they represent their schools in athletics competition this school year.