



# Paris School District Athletic Handbook



## Table of Contents

Topic	Page
Athlete Responsibilities	2
Attendance	3
Booster Clubs	4
Competing to Win vs. Emphasis upon Participation	1
Complaints	4
Dress	5
Eligibility	5
Equipment, Uniforms, and Facilities	5
Freshmen	6
Forms	6
Holiday Practice and Games	6
Independent Teams	6
Injuries	7
Insurance	7
Law Enforcement	7
Lettering	7
Miscellaneous	12
Off Season	8
Parent Information Meeting	9
Philosophy	1
Priority of Participation	8
Quitting	9
School Decorum	10
Social Networking Policy	12
Sportsmanship	10
Spring Sports	11
Summer Workouts	11
Transportation	11

Volunteers	11
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# Paris School District

## Athletic Handbook



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The purpose of the Paris Public Schools athletic department is to maintain a broad-based program that will afford all students with athletic interest an opportunity for safe participation in the sports of their choice. In order for us to be successful in the pursuit of athletic achievement and the character training of young persons, the following “Athletic Policies” must be understood and agreed upon by the school, the student athlete, and the parents/guardians.

### **Philosophy**

We believe in the value of athletic participation in all its forms. Such participation fosters the qualities of team membership, individual commitment, and personal excellence. Because every sport offers opportunities to develop these qualities, we are philosophically committed to a range of sports activities for every athlete who has the time and desire to play them. Furthermore, we are opposed to recommendations that athletes restrict participation to a single sport.

The Athletic Department is a team much like the teams we try to build among our students. Our coaches will make every effort to advance their programs, but **NOT** at the expense of other school programs, athletic or academic. The overall good of the student will be our guiding light in decision making and conflict resolution. Even so, at times, the good of the team must prevail over that of the individual. Every coach should encourage athletes to take part in all sports. It should never be implied that an athlete should give up one sport in favor of another. Do not encourage athletes to give up a sport to participate in the off-season program of another sport. In-season sports should always take precedence over off-season sports.

### **Competing to Win vs. Emphasis upon Participation**

1. **7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** The Paris School District athletic department believes that athletics at any level is separate and apart from recreation. However, the degree that we emphasize competition and winning varies greatly from our youth programs in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade to our varsity high school teams. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, while we recognize that winning is positive, we believe that participation, **having fun**, learning skills and team work are more important than winning at this level. Coaches should work to find ways for every participant to achieve some form of success.
  
2. **8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grades:** While our conference, some parents, some community members, the media and many coaches place great emphasis on winning and championships at the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade levels, the Paris School District athletic department recognizes this level as a continuing developmental level where many of the players are not physically, mentally or emotionally prepared for pressure situations. Here, while more emphasis is placed upon winning, successes can also be found in improvement, **having fun**, learning new skills and participation. Our coaches should seek ways to actively involve as many players as possible in practice and/or games. Attrition in sport is natural and ongoing for many reasons; however, we never want players to choose to leave athletics because they did not get the opportunity to develop.
  
3. **10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades:** We recognize that the varsity teams in each sport are our marquee teams. While participation, **having fun**, and developing skills, leadership and teamwork remain central to our philosophy at this level, we also know that the success of our teams is inspirational to our school, our community and, especially, to aspiring young athletes in our district. Our coaches should always try to involve every athlete that can compete successfully in our league; however there will be times that participation during games or matches is limited. Winning instills great pride and tradition in our schools. Coaches use their best judgment to play those student athletes that give our teams the best opportunity for success. In addition, our coaches should prepare our athletes and teams to compete at the highest levels of high school athletics within the boundaries and guidelines of our educational philosophy.

## **Athlete Responsibilities**

Being a member of a Paris Eagle athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition of many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain responsibilities that must be maintained.

When an athlete wears the blue and white of our school, we assume that he/she is willing to accept the responsibilities that go with being an Eagle.

1. In the classroom: Our athletes are expected to become good students. A good student means trying to do the best with what you have and following all classroom rules.
2. On the field/floor: Eagle athletes are expected to compete with a burning desire to win with honor, dedication, pride, and sportsmanship. Conduct outside the realm of sportsmanship and fair play will not be tolerated.
3. In the community: Many closely observe the conduct of an athlete and it is important that an athlete's behavior be above reproach at all times. Appearance, expression, and actions always influence people's opinions of the athletes as well as the entire program. Once you have volunteered to be a member of a squad, you have made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of all athletes.
4. Subordination of self-interest to team values: Team goals must take precedence over individual desires. An athlete must have self-discipline and be willing to make personal sacrifice for team goals.

Be proud to be a part of the Paris Eagle tradition; it is a privilege, not a right.

### **Attendance**

All athletes are required to attend class regularly. Lack of attendance in classes may result in failure of academic work, resulting in ineligibility in athletics.

A student must be in school on the day of an event in order to participate in an activity that evening. Exceptions could be allowed for emergencies and must be cleared through the Principal's office.

All team members of each sport will be expected to attend all scheduled practices, games, and meetings. Attendance at practices and games requires proper attire and full participation. If circumstances dictate that students cannot attend a practice, game, or meeting, the coach should be notified prior to the event by personal contact, phone call, or written permission from parent/guardian. (Examples of excused absences include – death in the family, sudden illness, injury, family emergency, school function, or family holidays during school holidays.)

Athletes should not obligate themselves to a job that in any way interferes with practice or competition time..

An athlete missing a team function for any unexcused reason will be expected to make up for the absence upon returning to practice.

After the third unexcused absence in any sport, the student athlete, Head Coach and Athletic Director will meet to discuss possible removal from athletics altogether.

### **Booster Clubs**

Booster clubs are meant to provide support for their respective teams only. Booster clubs are to work directly with the athletic director and head coaches to approve purchases and expenditures. The primary goal of a booster club is to raise funds to support the program and athletes within the program. The booster club might also be asked to assist in purchasing end of year lettermen awards to be passed out during the sports banquets.

Booster clubs are responsible for scheduling, stocking, and working the concession stands at their respective games. Parents are encouraged to participate and volunteer to spread the workload out among the members.

### **Complaints**

The following procedure should be followed in reporting a complaint. Confer with:

- The coach who had direct supervision of athlete at the time

- The Head Coach of the sport the athlete is participating in
- The Athletic Director
- The Principal
- The Superintendent

If the complaint is about a game decision, the person reporting it must wait until at least the next day to do so. No coaches will be confronted immediately following a game.

All athletes have the right to due process and may appeal any ruling concerning athletics according to the Paris School District student appeals procedure.

### **Dress**

The way an athlete looks is of great importance. Therefore, proper dress, appearance, grooming and personal cleanliness are expected. Proper dress and appearance will be established by the coach and is an ongoing process.

Coaches may designate appropriate dress for team travel.

### **Eligibility**

Paris School District will follow the eligibility requirements of the Arkansas Activities Association.

The Paris Public Schools athletic department encourages academic excellence of all athletes.

Coaches will be responsible for monitoring the academic progress of their athletes. The athletic department may require participation in athletic study halls or other academic improvement programs if a student's academic performance falls below an acceptable level.

### **Equipment, Uniforms, and Facilities**

An athlete and his/her parents/guardians are financially responsible for all equipment, lock, and lockers checked out to him/her. The amount to be paid for destroyed or lost equipment will be based on the cost of replacing said item(s).

1. All equipment must be turned in before participation in another sport or immediately following the end of the season.
2. No equipment shall be altered or modified in any way without approval from a coach.
3. Missing or abused equipment must be paid for before participating in another sport or in the same sport.
4. The coaches may assign lockers to individual athletes. Each athlete is responsible for the care, maintenance, and cleanliness of his/her locker.
5. Any damage to equipment or facilities should be reported to the coaching staff immediately.
6. It is the responsibility of each athletic team member to keep his or her locker, shower, and dressing room area in proper order.
7. Only authorized footwear will be allowed on the gymnasium floors.

## **Forms**

Each year athletes must have the following forms signed, completed, and on file in the athletic department-

1. Physical examination
2. Consent to drug test

## **Freshmen**

Occasionally a coach might see a benefit in promoting a freshmen athlete to the high school team. This might occur at the beginning of the season, or immediately following the final game



of the junior high season. In these cases the coach must receive prior approval from the athletic director, principals, and parent of the child. Freshmen athletes who are moved up at the end of the season will be allowed to practice with the high school after school only. They will not be allowed to get into senior high athletics, unless he/she was promoted from the start of the season.

Multi-sport athletes who are promoted will progress to their next sport immediately following the end of the junior high season. For example, if a volleyball/basketball player is promoted to the high school team at the end of her season, she will be expected to move into basketball practice during her freshmen class period. She will be able to practice with senior high volleyball after school. If coaches communicate and develop a separate plan, it must be pre-approved by the athletic director.

### **Holiday Practices and Games**

Coaches may schedule practices during the holidays. Missing these practices or games will fall under the regular athletic attendance guidelines.

### **Independent Teams**

Students should not participate with an independent/club team in an organized event during a similar in-season sport per AAA guidelines. Such participation could render the student ineligible for athletics for the remainder of that season.

### **Injuries**

Any injury, large or small, should be reported to the coach in charge immediately.

Any injuries requiring a doctor's care should be noted and a doctor's release required before the athlete is allowed to play or practice.

The Head Coach will assess the athlete's ability to play or practice after any injury that does not require a doctor's care.

## **Insurance**

The school will provide a supplemental insurance policy for all athletes. It should be understood that this is a secondary policy and that all parents/guardians are encouraged to secure a primary accident policy for their child.

Claim forms can be obtained through the coach's office and should be filed as soon as medical charges are incurred. Parents are responsible for submitting all necessary forms and paperwork to the supplemental insurance provided through the school.

## **Law Enforcement**

Any student athlete referred to law enforcement authorities will be subject to punishment within the athletic department.

## **Lettermen Policy**

Student athletes will have the opportunity to letter in each sport offered through our athletic department. Each head coach will determine the lettering procedure for their sport and make the athletes aware of the guidelines. Student athletes who quit or are asked to leave the team will not receive a letter for that sport.

The following will be awarded students for their lettering in a sport.

Freshmen Lettermen in Varsity Sport: Certificate

1<sup>st</sup> Year Lettermen: Certificate

2<sup>nd</sup> Year Lettermen: Certificate

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Lettermen: Blanket

Athletes who letter in multiple sports will not receive an award for each sport. For example, three-sport lettermen in his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> year will receive only one blanket. However, the blanket will recognize all three accomplishments. If an athlete is a 1<sup>st</sup> year lettermen in one sport and a 2<sup>nd</sup> year lettermen in another, he/she will receive both awards that year. Multiple 3<sup>rd</sup> Year lettermen will receive a respective sport patch to add to their blanket during the fall or spring sports banquet.

Lettermen jackets can be ordered at the end of an athlete's first varsity season they lettered in, for example, a freshmen may purchase a jacket if they letter in Senior High varsity basketball. Purchasing a lettermen jacket will be the responsibility of each individual.

## **Off-Season**

The purpose of an off-season program is to prepare a student physically and mentally for participation in athletics; therefore, it is in the student's best interest to have completed a conditioning program before participating in a sport. Such programs are at the discretion of the head coach and may be required for participation on a particular team.

Coaches will be expected to coordinate their off-season programs so that every athlete has equal opportunity to participate in the sport(s) of his/her choosing.

## **Priority of Participation**

In some cases, student athletes might run in to conflicts between sports, activities, and school functions. Ultimately it is the student's decision to prioritize their decision of participation. Coaches should refrain from punishing student athletes who are competing or performing in multiple school functions. Coaches are also expected to communicate with each other and not through the student athletes.

Below is a priority list that coaches should use as a guideline to work together with multi-sport/activity student athletes. The top priority is listed first.

1. National Competitions/Meets/Games
2. State Competition s/Meets/Games
3. Regional Competitions/Meets/Games
4. Conference Competitions/Meets/Games
5. Non-Conference Competitions/Meets/Games
6. In-Season Practices
7. Off-Season Practices

## **Parent Information Meeting**

Communication is one of the best ways to avoid misunderstandings with parents and preseason parent information meetings provide coaches with an organized means to begin the communication process. **Every head coach should conduct a preseason parent information**

**meeting with required attendance of at least one parent or guardian.** This is your first and best chance to set a positive tone for the season. If players and parents understand Paris' Athletic philosophy, rules and expectations most misunderstandings which could lead to conflict will be eliminated. We must have parent support for our programs to be successful; therefore, time spent cultivating a positive relationship is time well spent. The following is a check list of topics that coaches may want cover at preseason parent information meetings:

1. Introduce coaches.
2. State the Paris School District philosophy, goals and objectives.
3. Lay out your ground rules for communicating with parents. Clearly state the things that you will and will not discuss with parents and when and where those discussions should take place.
4. Distribute student participation packets.
5. Review and discuss all required signature forms: Physicals, Field Trip Permits, Insurance, Team Rules and Acknowledgment of Risk.
6. Collect correct names, parent names, addresses and phone numbers.
7. Distribute practice and game schedules and ticket information.
8. Review all new policies and other relevant policies such as travel, grooming, dress and etc.
9. Address team rules, citizenship and discipline policy.
10. Discuss basic eligibility rules (emphasize academic regulations) and pass out rule's sheet from Arkansas Activities Association.
11. Announce steps being taken to insure safety and especially note precautions against heat related problems.
12. Emphasize players **may not** practice without: a physical and a completed and signed participation packet.
13. Stress the importance of sportsmanship and what is expected of our fans and parents.
14. Stress the negative impact Social Media has on players, coaches, and the school.

## **Quitting**

An athlete who quits a sport or is dropped from a team for disciplinary reasons can be removed from athletics completely until that season has finished. He/she may return to athletics after the completion of the season upon receiving permission from the Head Coach, Athletic Director, and Principal.

This may be waived if unusual or extenuating circumstances exist. Coaches and administration will resolve the situation.

Note: Each Head Coach may adopt a “grace period” at the beginning of their season to allow athletes the opportunity to try the sport without suffering the consequences of quitting if the athlete chooses to leave the team before the end of the grace period.

## **School Decorum**

All athletes are expected to govern their conduct in accordance with the rules and regulations of the “Student Handbook.” Violation of the student’s obligations contained in that handbook may result in punishment through the athletic department, including removal from athletics.

## **Sportsmanship**

We will model/teach sportsmanship and citizenship. Coaches and players alike will compete with a working knowledge of the rules of their sport. Our coaches and teams should compete with maximum effort, enthusiasm, dignity, and class representing our school as a place where those qualities are a daily expectation. No person, while representing our athletic program, should publicly conduct him or herself in a manner which would reflect poorly upon the Paris School District.

The Arkansas Activities Association defines sportsmanship as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Good sportsmanship is abiding by the rules of a contest and accepting victory or defeat graciously. It should be evident in all school functions and should demonstrate the ability to accept defeat without complaint, to enjoy victory without bragging, and to treat opponents with fairness and courtesy.

The Arkansas Activities Association recognizes schools who demonstrate positive sportsmanship, from the coaches to the players to the fans. Our goal at Paris School District is to be selected to receive the AAA Sportsmanship Award for our classification. In order to qualify for this award, the following criteria must be met:

1. Must be a AAA member school.
2. Must not have experienced an ejection of a coach, player, or spectator from an interscholastic contest by an AOA-registered official for unsportsmanlike conduct during the school year.

3. The successful recipient must have demonstrated in one or more instances a special effort that reflects a true understanding of sportsmanship as it relates to interscholastic activities

Schools are ranked by conference opponents on the level of sportsmanship displayed by each group:

Cheerleaders, Student Body, Players, Coaches/Bench Personnel, Support Groups, Adult Spectators, and Administrative Supervision.

### **Spring Sports**

All coaches should work together to insure that athletes are allowed to participate in as many sports as possible. The expectation is for coaches to work together during off-season and track season and communicate a practice plan between sports.

Baseball and softball practice will be conducted after school.

### **Summer Workouts**

All athletes are expected to maintain their physical conditioning throughout the summer. Coaches should inform the athletes and their parents of any special workout programs to be followed.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to interscholastic events will be provided by the Paris School District.

All those who travel to the game on the bus will return on the team bus unless released by the Head Coach to his/her parents or guardians after the game.

Buses will leave at a time specified by the coach. It is the individual athlete's responsibility to board the bus on time with all necessary equipment. If an athlete is not on the bus when the bus leaves for that particular event, he/she may not be allowed to participate in that event.

Conduct on the bus will be monitored by the coach and will be subject to disciplinary action.

No unauthorized personnel will be allowed to ride the bus.

## **Volunteers**

All volunteer help associated with the Paris High School Athletic Department in any capacity shall be screened and approved by the Athletic Director.

Volunteers are expected to become familiar with the policies and procedures of our athletic department and agree to abide by them. Continual violation of policies or the development of a negative situation will result in termination of the use of a volunteer.

Under no circumstances should volunteers attempt to enforce disciplinary actions with the student-athletes.

Head coaches are responsible for the actions of volunteers under their direction.

## **Miscellaneous**

1. The Head Coach may set other rules pertinent to a particular sport after clearing them through the Athletic Director and Principal. These rules should be given to the team members both orally and in writing.
2. The coaches reserve the right to administer discipline for any action that is not specified in the preceding regulations and is subversive to good order.
3. No visitors should be in the locker room without the Head Coach's approval.

## **POLICY ON STUDENT-ATHLETE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND MEDIA USE**

The Paris School District Department of Athletics recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of online social networks. In this context, however, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for the Paris Eagles is a privilege, not a right. As a student-athlete, you represent the school, and you are expected to portray yourself, your team, and Paris Schools in a positive

manner at all times. Any online postings must therefore be consistent with federal and state laws, and team rules.

## Guidelines

If you participate on a social networking site or use social media, you must keep the following guidance in mind:

- Everything you post is public information – any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online – even if you limit access to your site. Information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters) may be accessible even after you remove it.
- Use caution when adding someone or inviting someone to be a friend. Many individuals are looking to take advantage of students-athletes, to get close to student-athletes to give themselves a sense of membership, or to gain information about you, your teammates, or your team for the purposes of negative publicity, bullying, etc.
- Limit information about your whereabouts or plans to minimize the potential of being stalked, assaulted, or the victim of other criminal activity.
- What you post may affect your future. Many employers and college admissions officers review social networking sites as part of their overall evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters).
- Similar to comments made in person, the Paris School District will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as
  - Derogatory or defamatory language;
  - Comments that create a serious danger to the safety of another person or that constitute a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person;
  - Comments or photos that describe or depict unlawful assault, abuse, hazing, harassment, or discrimination; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other illegal or prohibited conduct

Student Athletes who violate the Social Media policy could be subject to discipline, including but not limited to suspension or dismissal from team.

Parents are highly encouraged to refrain from speaking poorly of school personnel, whether in a social media or public forum. We must remember that coaches are human beings, performing a job to the best of their ability. Before you speak poorly of a coach think about the ramifications it



could have on the coach, his or her family, the team, your child, or you personally. Parents who feel the need to lash out publicly, and/or by using social media, at a staff member at Paris High may lose their right to attend events involving Paris Schools. In extreme cases, the coach or the school might seek legal advice in order to resolve the issue.