

LION/LADY LION ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

RULES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT VERIFICATION

This document is an acknowledgement form that states that the athlete and parents have read the Lion/Lady Lion Athletic Department Handbook, understand its contents and will follow the stated rules and guidelines. This document may not cover every situation that will arise during the school year but it is a good guideline for the student/athlete to follow. Any situation that is not covered in this document will be dealt with by the athletic director. If you have any questions about any part of this document feel free to call 553-3377 ext. 256 and set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss your concerns.

I, _____ and my parent(s) or guardian(s) have read the Lion Athletic Department Handbook and agree to follow the rules and guidelines therein.

Parent's Signature

Athlete's Signature

Date

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Philosophy of Athletic Competition

Athletics is more than competition between two individuals or two squads representing different high schools. Athletics is a tool for teaching a way of life - a very fine way of life. Athletics teaches fair play and sportsmanship; it teaches understanding and appreciation of good teamwork. It teaches that quitting means failure while hard work eventually brings success. Sacrifice, discipline, persistence, organizational skills and mental as well as physical toughness are all elements that are presented to the athlete as life skills. The success of the lessons is up to the commitment of the athlete to his or her own future.

Classroom Behavior

The concept of student/athlete is the foundation of our program. The purpose of the educational process is an education that benefits not only the student but also benefits the community. The purpose of the athletic program is to enhance and supplement the education of the student. It is our belief that there is not a greater catalyst for education than a successful athletic program.

Some key points to assist the student/athlete:

1. Any student/athlete who fails a subject for the six weeks will be ineligible for the duration of the next six weeks. The student/athlete may become eligible on Friday at 3:30 p.m. of the 4th week if they are passing all of their classes at that time. (State Law).
2. Any student/athlete who is ineligible must be at all practices until eligibility is regained.
3. All student/athletes must attend all study halls provided by the school district and/or their coach. No excuses.
4. All student/athletes should give respectful attention to classroom activities and show respect for students and faculty members at all times. Horseplay and unnecessary talking are not approved habits of behavior and will merit disciplinary actions.
5. Student/athletes should never be tardy. Be early and be ready to participate in the classroom activities.
6. It is very important for the student/athlete to have a good attendance record. Absences are hard to recover from in both the academic and athletic realm.
7. The student/athlete will be neat and well groomed at all times. The school dress code is a set of minimum expectations, the student/athlete will strive to exceed these minimum requirements.

Game and Practice Behavior

Practice and Games are where the athlete publicly represents community, school, parents, coaches and themselves. Practice and Games are at times a very adverse and challenging climate that demands the highest level of self control, discipline and focus on the athlete's part. How the athlete handles competition is a true sign of the greatness of the athlete.

The student/athlete must know and follow the following guidelines:

1. The use of profanity will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
2. The use of illegal or "dirty" tactics will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
3. Displays of temper, loss of self control or any form of unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
4. Clowning, trash talking, taunting, excessive celebrating and unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
5. Disrespect to coaches, officials, fans, or anyone else will not be tolerated.
6. Hazing, undue physical abuse and public degrading of teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and anyone else will not be tolerated.

Any violations will be dealt with according to the Consequences and Corrective Procedures section of this manual. The athletic director reserves the right to make final decisions on all discipline matters.

Behavior in the Community

It goes without saying that an athlete is viewed as an athlete 24 hours a day. Everything that an athlete does reflects back on the athletic department. Drugs, alcohol, profanity and other forms of questionable behavior all have great negative impacts on the team, school and athletic department. It is the goal of the athletic program to help the athlete become a productive member of society that can move forward to help others learn from the lessons of athletics that have benefited the graduating athlete. Don't blow it all for a cheap thrill.

Participation

1. All athletes will be expected to dress out for all practices attended.
2. If ill, the athlete will still dress out, but not actively participate (use better judgment).
3. Injured athletes are to dress out (use better judgment).
 - a. If injury permits, the athlete will aid managers in the task of preparing for practice.
 - b. If injury permits, the athlete will work on the development of his/her body and/or the rehabilitation of his/her injury.
 - c. The athlete will still seek mental preparation even though they are injured.
4. **Entrance into the athletic period. All boys and girls must have the athletic director's permission.**
5. Any student who maintains a job during an athletic season must:
 - a. Clear participation with the athletic director and the sport coach
 - b. Maintain academic standards
 - c. Must maintain training rules
 - d. Work must not interfere with practice or game schedule
 - e. Your team's welfare must come first
6. Dropping out of or transferring from a sport after a team's first official game will be discouraged but allowed with the following conditions:
 - a. The athlete forfeits his or her letter award for the sport they are leaving
 - b. The athlete will not be allowed to participate in any practices or games in another sport until the end of the season of the sport that was dropped is completed
 - c. If the athlete is participating in concurrent sports, they may continue to compete in the other sport without interruption

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- d. Any changing from one sport to another must be done through both coaches involved and the athletic director
- e. Student-Athletes must participate in at least one Sport during the year to be eligible to enter into athletics the next year. (Students will not be allowed to come out their Senior year if they have not been participating in previous year(s) activities. Participation must be cleared by the athletic director).

Practice Policy

1. The athlete should not start a ball game if a practice is missed during the week of preparation for that game and absence was unexcused.
The athlete should not be allowed to play in a game if he misses two practice days during the week of preparation for that game and the absences were unexcused. (Exception-death or serious illness in the family)
2. The athlete will be required to make up conditioning and skill work missed for each practice. (If unexcused the amount of conditioning will be twice that for an excused absence)
3. Practice includes physical participation, skill, and film sessions.
4. There will be extra conditioning for being late to a practice session, if inexcusable.

Absentee Policies and Procedures

1. The athlete must have an illness that is excused following State Law. Any other circumstances will be handled by the coach case by case.
2. On all absences, it is recommended that the athlete should call the coach's office as soon as possible that day to let the coach know the circumstances. The boy's phone number is 553-3377 ext. 256 and the girl's number is 553-337 ext. 244. There is an answering machine at both numbers and they are always on. When phoning in the absence leave your name, grade, time and date you called and the reason for the absence in the message. An absence without a phone call will automatically be assumed unexcused until proven otherwise. Athletes may call the coach directly on cell phone if the coach approves.
3. Injured athletes are required to make all practices, unless excused by the sport head coach to see a doctor (within reason).
4. Excessive unexcused absences will call for corrective procedures.
5. Athletes must be on time to all practices. Being late will not be tolerated. Excessive lateness will result in corrective procedures.
6. If a player has to leave school for any reason and will be unable to make practice, they should contact a member of the coaching staff before leaving school.

Chain of Command

If a player or parent has a problem or conflict with a coach, there is a proper chain of command to follow. **First**, is to set up an appointment with the coach you have the conflict with. A 24 hour grace period will be used after contest to allow a time to collect thoughts. Be respectful, honest, and direct, and you will receive the same treatment in return. If you are not satisfied or the problem is not resolved, then go to step **two**. Talk with the boys or girls head coach of the sport your child is participating. Again, be honest and respectful and you will be treated that way in return. If you still feel the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you should, **third**, take the problem to the athletic director. If you still feel like the problem is not resolved, then take the problem to the superintendent. These steps seem lengthy, but almost any problem can be solved in this manner. By following the proper channels, further conflicts and problems can be avoided.

Consequences and Corrective Procedures

Minor violations of the Athletic Code will be handled by the individual sport coach as they deem necessary. The punishment should be appropriate to the infraction. Persistent minor infractions of the Athletic Code may be referred to the athletic director as a major violation. All major violations of the Athletic Code should be directed to the athletic director. A twenty-four hour period will elapse before any penalty for a major violation will be assigned to a student athlete. The athletic director has the final say on all issues of consequences and corrective procedures.

Any violation of the Athletic Code may result in one or more of the following actions:

1. The athlete might be assigned O.F.I. that must be completed within the prescribed time period before returning to competition.
2. The athlete might be suspended for a period of time by the athletic director. This will involve not being allowed to participate in any athletic events but the athlete may still be required to attend and participate in practice and any other events deemed necessary by the athletic director.
3. The athlete might be written up on a discipline referral to the building principal and will complete the prescribed punishment.
4. The athlete might be removed from the athletic department.

Eligibility

Under the provisions of House Bill 72, an athlete must maintain a 70 average in all classes to be eligible for extracurricular activities. In addition, the athlete must have the number of credits at the beginning of the school year.

- 9th – must be promoted to 9th grade
- 10th – must have 5 credits
- 11th – must have 10 credits
- 12th – must have 15 credits

Forms

All incoming athletes are required to have a physical examination before participating in any athletic activity. An athlete that moves into the district should have a copy of his or her physical exam or make arrangements to get it. In addition to a physical form, all athletes must

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have a completed **Medical History Form, Acknowledgement of Rules Form, and Steroid Form**. Examples of these forms are included in this handbook and copies can be printed off of the District website at www.vernonisd.org. All paperwork must be completed, signed properly, and up-to-date before athlete can participate in a practice or contest.

GROOMING

Students competing in athletics at Vernon I.S.D. will reflect a positive image in their appearance. Hairstyles and clothing should not be disruptive. To attain a team appearance as well as for safety reasons, hair should be neatly trimmed, not exceedingly long, and out of the eyes; Male athletes will be clean shaven. Your appearance should, at all times, reflect class and pride in yourself and in our athletic program. Consequences will be O.F.I.

- 1) At no time will jewelry be worn during a practice or contest. No earrings will be allowed on males inside the fence of the athletic facilities or during any traveling to and from contest.
- 2) Failure to follow travel rules while traveling (each sport)
- 3) All tattoos will be covered and out of site for all practices and contest.
- 4) Facial hair or hair length (O.F.I. consequences)

OFFSEASON Program

The OFFSEASON (Athletic Competition Enhancement) Program is an effort by the athletic department to build better athletes. Speed, power and agility are components in every sport in our athletic program. The OFFSEASON program will help each athlete reach a higher level of athleticism through sound training principles and management and guidance from the coaching staff.

OFFSEASON is mandatory for all athletes in a middle school and high school athletic period. The OFFSEASON program will be done during the athletic period during the school year and will be supervised by the coaches.

Injury, Rehab and Training Policies and Procedures

Any athlete that is injured needs to report it to their supervising coach and the athletic trainer as soon as possible. The athletic trainer will then get the proper medical attention for that injury as soon as possible. If a form of rehab is assigned to the athlete to help in recovery, it is the duty of that athlete to complete the rehab. Any athlete that does not rehab according to the guidelines of the athletic trainer or does not attend rehab sessions will receive corrective discipline. A Coach/athletic trainer must accept a parent's note but will insist on medical attention and documentation as soon as possible. This will be communicated to the parents directly. Any abuse of this system needs to be brought to the attention of the athletic director.

INSURANCE

Vernon I.S.D. has provided a supplemental insurance policy for all the district's athletes. This policy will provide insurance to all athletes regardless of age, sport, or activity. It is important to remember that this coverage will not cover the complete cost of an injury and will pay only after your primary insurer has paid all that it will pay. However, it should cover the deductible if you already have health insurance and help defray your costs if you do not.

Vernon I.S.D. cannot legally assume responsibility of medical and or hospital bills resulting from injury to any student who participates in any activity. It is the policy of the district to communicate with parents to make them aware that any **expense not covered** by the student insurance carrier is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian and not Vernon I.S.D.

Substance Abuse

All athletes in grades 7-12 shall be subject to a mandatory student drug-testing program. Testing shall be performed in accordance with accepted practices and procedures as established by the drug-testing laboratory with which the district contracts. Sample collections shall be made on a random basis. In order for an athlete to participate in ANY extracurricular or UIL activity, the parent or legal guardian must give written permission for random drug testing. If the athlete is legal age or is married, he or she must sign a permission form in order to participate. If an athlete refuses to participate in the drug-testing program, he or she will not be allowed to participate in any athletic activity. If a test is positive, the parents shall be notified of the results. If the student is an adult or is married, the student shall be notified. The athlete must participate in a mandatory drug counseling program.

We will follow LOCAL (FNF) Policy for the following consequences for positive drug test:

1st Offense:

- A) Suspension from participating in and attending extracurricular activities for 15 consecutive calendar days
- B) Mandatory drug counseling as mandated by the administration of the District.
- C) O.F.I. during the 15 day suspension

2nd Offense:

- A) Suspension from participating in and attending extracurricular activities for 120 consecutive calendar days
- B) Mandatory drug counseling as mandated by the administration of the District
- C) O.F.I. during the 120 day suspension

3rd Offense:

- A) Suspension from participating in and attending all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the student's middle school or high school career
- B) Mandatory drug counseling as mandated by the administration of the District

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Alcohol – Tobacco

1st Offense: SUSPENSION of 10% of CONTEST CURRENTLY IN OR WILL COMPETE IN (Includes playoffs but does not

include scrimmages) and 15 CALENDER DAYS O.F.I. The athlete will be required to attend and participate in all practices and training sessions while under supervision but cannot travel with the team. All running will be at 7:00 am on sport scheduled practice/competition days.

2nd Offense: SUSPENSION of 20% of CONTEST CURRENTLY IN OR WILL COMPETE IN (Includes playoffs but does not

include scrimmages) and 30 CALENDER DAYS OF O.F.I. The athlete will be required to attend and participate in all practices and training sessions while under supervision but cannot travel with the team. All running will be at 7:00 am on sport scheduled practice/competition days.

3rd Offense: **AUTOMATICALLY DISMISSED FROM ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR REMAINDER OF MS/HS CAREER.**

Criminal Conduct

All forms of criminal conduct and stealing will be dealt with in the following ways:

1. Criminal Conduct – first offense may result in suspension. Second offense will result in suspension or dismissal from athletics. Any athlete who is charged with a felony will be dealt with according to board policy.
2. Stealing – first offense could result in suspension. Second offense will result in suspension or dismissal.

O.F.I. (Opportunity for Improvement)

These are drills to alert the athlete of the importance of team rules. O.F.I.'s are designed to be strong reminders of what we expect of our athletes while at the same time building strength, endurance and pride. Some examples of O.F.I. are:

1. Laps around the track
2. Sprints
3. Stadium steps
4. Agility drills
5. Combination of the above

Athletic Letters

1. Begin and finish the complete season, with one exception of an injury that prohibits further competition for the extent of the season involved.
2. The Head Coach of the specific sport will make all final decisions. Any disputes will be solved by the athletic director.
3. Special participation made by students such as managers and seniors whose play is limited but who make contributions deemed valuable to the team and sport by the Head Coach may be awarded letters.

Conflicts in Extracurricular Activities

When a student-athlete attempts to participate in many extra-curricular activities, there will undoubtedly be conflicts of obligation. Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many organizations where conflicts are bound to happen. We recognize that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extra-curricular activities and to end the conflict problem we will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts.

If conflicts arise, the sponsors will get together and work out a solution so the student does not feel in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, then the athletic director or principal will have to make the decision based on the following:

- a) the relative importance of each event
- b) importance of each event to the student
- c) how long each event has been scheduled
- d) talk with parents

Once the decision has been made, the student will not be penalized in any way by the sponsor/coach.

Award Ceremonies and Social Functions

An awards banquet will be held annually to honor Varsity athletes who have earned recognition. This event is sponsored by the school and will be by invitation to the athletes and tickets will be available to the public. All coaches will be expected to be in attendance and participate in the program as requested by the athletic director.

LETTERING

1. Begin and finish the complete season, with one exception of an injury that prohibits further competition for the extent of the season involved.
2. The Head Coach of the specific sport will make all final decisions. Any disputes will be resolved by the athletic director.
3. Special participation made by students such as managers and seniors whose play is limited but who make contributions deemed valuable to the team and sport by the head coach may be awarded letters.

LOCKERS/LOCKER ROOMS

During the course of the season you will spend a great deal of time in the locker room. **Take care of it like it was your own; it is.** Keep it clean by putting trash away; do not wear muddy shoes or steel cleats in this area. Make this room a pleasant place for everyone. You are responsible for keeping your locker neat and clean for hygienic and organizational reasons. **Do not keep valuables such as cash, jewelry, expensive clothing, etc. in your locker. Keep these items locked in your car or give them to your coaches for safekeeping.**

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The locker room is where our team family meets. Parents and fans are not allowed in locker rooms without coach's permission.

PARENT, STUDENT, AND FAN BEHAVIOR

You are asked to remember that the athlete on the field or court is participating in a game. Winning is important, maybe even critical, however, it is still a game. All coaches work very hard to keep athletics in perspective, and we are asking you to do the same.

The University Interscholastic League is currently in the process of cracking down on schools whose fans cause confrontations with officials and coaches. Remember that if the UIL disciplines our school, it is our athletics that will suffer the most. In order to prevent discipline from the UIL, we must discipline ourselves. With this in mind, we want you to know that **unruly behavior on the part of fans will not be tolerated.**

Any fan that confronts an **official or coach** and threatens him or her either verbally or physically will be removed from the event and may be suspended from attending any school-sponsored event for a period up to one year.

Any fan that confronts an official or coach and uses profanity with him or her will be removed from the event and may be suspended from attending any school-sponsored event for a period up to one year.

It is a violation of state law to consume alcoholic beverages on school property. Drinking on the part of fans will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave.

We in the Vernon I.S.D. Athletic Department sincerely hope that no incident of this kind occurs and that good judgment and good sportsmanship will prevail.

School Equipment

1. Each athlete is financially responsible for all equipment checked out to him or her
2. Each athlete will receive credit on items returned only if they are items checked out to him or her
3. Each athlete should treat all equipment as though it was his or her own personal property

School Spirit

1. An athlete should think of the school and not necessarily of personal interests
2. The athlete should participate in any sport where his or her presence would help the squad, even though the athlete would not necessarily be a "stand out" in that sport
3. Each athlete should furnish spectator and booster support for sports in which he or she is not a participant

Travel To and From Athletic Contests

Vernon I.S.D. will provide athletes with transportation to and from all athletic contests. All athletes will ride the bus to and back home from all athletic contests, except in cases of emergencies. Athletes may be released to parents if the following conditions are met:

1. The athlete and parents are not returning home after the contest.
2. The coach receives parent's signature on sign-out sheet.
3. The athlete may ride only with his or her own parent.
4. The athlete will be released to the parent.
5. The athlete is responsible for returning all uniforms and equipment to the school as soon as possible.