

High School Interscholastic Athletic Program



Irvine Unified School District Athletic Handbook

ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to enrich the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of all students by providing competitive opportunities in which the lifelong values of sportsmanship, individual effort, character development, teamwork, integrity, and commitment are emphasized.

*Adopted originally by the Irvine Unified School District in 1991
Revised: January 2016*

*All IUSD Athletic Programs follow the
Non-Discrimination Board Policy 5145.5



Irvine Unified School District

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***Notice of Non-discrimination in Athletics**

IUSD does not discriminate in enrollment in or access to any athletics program available. Admission to these programs is based on age appropriateness, team roster space, aptitude and meeting academic and behavioral eligibility requirements. The lack of English skills shall not be a barrier to admission to or participation in the District's activities and programs.

IUSD's facilities and equipment provided for students are comparable and equitable to both sexes without disparity or imbalance, consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil's record.

For additional information see www.iusd.org (Board Policy 5145.5)

A study published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, of which the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) is a member, showed that only two percent of the nation's high school athletes get college athletic scholarships. The average athletic scholarship is just less than \$11,000.

- The study adds that 0.08 percent of all high school football players will be selected in the NFL draft, 0.45 percent of high school baseball players will play Major League Baseball, and 0.03 percent of high school boys' basketball players will be taken in the NBA draft *(as reported by Steve Fryer, Orange County Register)*.

Athletics offers the opportunity to learn many skills valuable in all aspects of life. Engagement and success in school overall is one clear benefit. The data below was collected using information from the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) and archival sources.

The results for each of the seven categories are shown below:

		Athletes	Non-Athletes	Conclusion
1	Average GPA	2.9	2.5	Athletes work hard in the classroom
2	Participation in Advanced Placement Classes	35%	26%	Athletes seek challenges
3	Average Yearly Absences	7	11	Athletes show up
4	Percentage of Discipline Referrals	19%	49%	Athletes practice discipline daily
5	Graduation Rate	99%	91%	Athletes finish
6	Percentage Receiving Non-Athletic Scholarships	44%	35%	Athletes are wanted
7	Number of Drop Outs	15	1293	Athletes do not quit

Beliefs & Values

- We believe **students** are our highest priority.
- We believe the **dignity, worth, and self-esteem of participants** should be paramount in all athletic activities.
- We believe the most important result of competition is the **development of life-long values, skills, and a positive character**.
- We believe in CIF's "Pursuing Victory with Honor" and agree that the essential elements of character building and ethics in CIF sports are embodied in the concept of **sportsmanship and the six pillars of character** (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship).
- We believe the athletic program is an **integral part** of the high school experience and that participation in sports is a **privilege, not a right**.
- We believe high school athletics should be **fun and rewarding**.
- We believe athletic programs are most beneficial when they are **competitive**.
- We believe **winning is an attitude** resulting from optimum preparation, concentrated effort and a deep commitment to excel.
- We believe well-designed athletic programs promote **community and school pride**.
- We believe **open communication and mutual respect** among coaches, parents, and athletes provides the foundation of a successful athletic program.
- We believe morale, satisfaction, and performance are enhanced when **athletes work together** as a team.
- We believe **well qualified coaches and program administrators** are important components in a successful athletic program.
- We believe **positive parent support** and involvement enhance student growth and program quality.
- We believe that we all have a responsibility to ensure that the **first priority** for our student athletes is a **commitment to a quality education** and developing the academic skills and character to succeed.

Athletic Programs and Personnel Complaint Procedures

Complaints concerning District athletic programs and personnel are welcomed when motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the athletic program and to perform tasks more effectively.

Personnel or Program Complaints

1. Complaints regarding an individual coach must be made directly to the coach by the complainant. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem at this level. The first step is for the athlete to talk to the coach. The second is for parents to talk with the coach.
2. Complaints not resolved with the individual coach must be submitted in writing to the Athletic Director. Please use the General Complaint form found on the Irvine Unified School District website. The written complaint must contain:
 - a. The name of the coach or the specific sport, level of competition, and/or the general athletic concern involved.
 - b. A brief but specific summary of the nature of the complaint and the facts surrounding same.
 - c. The suggested resolution that is desired.
 - d. The complaint must be signed by the complainant.

Note: Because playing time and level or position placement are the sole responsibility of the coach, complaints regarding these items will not be heard beyond the Athletic Director.

3. For complaints not tied to an individual coach or a specific program, the first contact for concerns about any phase of the athletic program is the Athletic Director. This may be done using the General Complaint Procedures.
4. Complaints regarding an individual coach or program not resolved with the Athletic Director will be referred to the school's administrator in charge of athletics for resolution following the IUSD General Complaint guidelines. The administrator in charge of athletics shall receive a copy of the written complaint and a written report of the efforts made to resolve the problem. The complainant shall receive a written response.
5. Complaints not resolved by the school's administrator in charge of athletics and/or the principal may be referred in writing to the Director of Secondary Education, for study and resolution following the IUSD General Complaint Procedures.

- Fundraising and donation guidelines must follow IUSD's permissible fees guidelines at <http://www.iusd.org/student-fee-info/>
- Optional costs should be kept at a minimum to ensure maximum potential for participation.
- Booster Club budgets and spending decisions should be created in consultation with the head coach/advisor. The Boosters then conduct their fundraising activities to meet the needs of the program. All budget issues and spending decisions should take place at Booster Club board meetings.
- Every account should be set-up to require two signatures at some point in their prescribed processes for any withdrawal (whether internally or on the actual check). No coach or advisor may be a signer on a Booster Club account.
- All disbursements (payments) should be made by check and no checks should ever be made out to "Cash." Boosters should not release checks without the proper documentation and back up. The Booster Club treasurer should maintain a record of all receipts in preparation for an annual audit.
- Treasurer reports, budget updates, and financial reporting should be kept current. Members should be updated at all Booster meetings or in a timely manner upon request. Accurate record keeping is essential for Booster Club operation.
- If the Booster Club contributes towards stipends for an assistant coach, the money is paid to the district and the coach is paid through payroll from a stipend form. **Boosters cannot write checks to individuals for coaching services. ONLY THE DISTRICT CAN EMPLOY COACHES AND ADVISORS.**
- **Insurance is required** if the Booster group is on campus and doing any kind of fundraising activities, etc. if the activity has any risk involved. Please review "Use of School District Facilities" for more complete details on requests, insurance certificates, and permission for activities.

Perspective on Athletics

The type of athletic program offered in the Irvine Unified School District emphasizes discipline, character, and cooperation. It emphasizes the classroom and getting an education first. It does not emphasize winning at all costs nor displaying one player so that a given athlete is more important than the team. We want every athlete who is deserving of a scholarship to get one. Coaches in IUSD will do everything they can to help athletes go to college and to procure a scholarship, if one is merited. IUSD will offer a quality program that emphasizes education.

- Balance between blaming others and accepting responsibility.
- Balance between holding onto perceived injustices and moving forward positively.

Booster Clubs

Purpose

Booster Clubs are school-connected organizations. As such, Booster Clubs should reflect and work collaboratively within school and district guidelines. The role of a Booster Club is to be supportive of programs rather than to influence the direction or content of programs.

Membership and Fundraising

Parents do not have to pay to join a Booster Club in order for their students to participate in any program. Boosters may solicit membership to support the programs, but parents are not required to join. Whether solicitations are made on behalf of the school or on behalf of another charitable organization, the Board particularly desires that no students shall be made to feel uncomfortable or pressured to participate in fundraisers or be required to pay a fee to play. Staff is expected to emphasize the fact that donations, fundraisers and individual student contributions are always voluntary. No students shall be barred from an activity because they did not participate in fundraising.

Regulations

The school district governing board and administration have and must maintain exclusive control and management of its public school system to facilitate legal compliance and to protect the district as a whole against risks (e.g., liability) by law and permitted by the governing board of the public school district, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Any solicitation conducted on any district school premises, and/or
- Any solicitation conducted *on behalf of* any district school and/or the student body represented to be benefited by such solicitation.

Booster groups are asked to work collaboratively with school administrators, athletic directors, and coaches as they develop and initiate events or programs to support teams and clubs.

Financial Guidelines

The following recommendations ensure clubs do not violate any rules and regulations:

- Booster Clubs have their own charter and elected board of directors.
- Booster Club accounts are not run through the school district or the school ASB. Booster Clubs must have their own federal tax identification number.

Athlete Eligibility

Students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Have passed a minimum of 20 units during the previous grading period. Only five units can be in physical education (no probation possibility).
2. Have a GPA of at least 2.0.
3. Not be (currently) under suspension and/or expulsion consequences.
4. Submit all required paperwork, including records of a current physical examination.
5. Adhere to CIF bylaws and guidelines.

Policy adopted by the Board of Education provides that participants with less than a 2.0 average for the last marking period may choose to be placed on “Academic Probation” for the subsequent quarter. Students on Academic Probation will work with school staff to monitor progress and provide guidance and support. Eligibility will be reassessed at the end of each grading period. During the four high school years, no student will be placed on Academic Probation more than once.

Before a student can participate in a sport, he/she must have clearance from the Athletic Department stating the student athlete has health insurance, the concussion information form, the parent consent form, signed the athletic code and has had a physical.

The student must be living with the parent/guardian within the boundaries of the school attendance area. If not, the student must be eligible under an intra- or inter-district permit.

Athletic Injuries

IUSD takes seriously its role in helping to minimize the risk of injury and promoting safety in all athletic endeavors. Even with this focus, injuries do occur within athletics. Please report all injuries to the coaching staff and Athletic Trainer. Together with your doctor they can help with recovery and bring the athlete safely back to competition. The following guidelines should be observed:

1. If an athlete is seen by a doctor they **MUST** provide a doctor’s note to the Athletic Trainer and Health Office with appropriate signature.
2. Following an injury, athlete understands they **MUST** be cleared by the Athletic Trainer before returning to play.
3. If a concussion is suspected or if an athlete is diagnosed with a concussion, the athlete will follow a Return to Play protocol administered by the Athletic Trainer **AFTER** medical clearance is given in writing by an appropriate doctor. Adherence to state laws and CIF guidelines is key in this area.

4. Proper equipment is critical for safe participation in athletics. While donations help sustain programs, they should not become a barrier to participation. Equipment will be provided to all athletes as needed.

NCAA Standards

Many college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization that has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid. If students are applying to college and plan to participate in sports, they must be certified by the NCAA. Students wanting to participate in college athletics should start the certification process by the end of their junior year.

Student athletes must complete appropriate course work in order to qualify for NCAA programs. Therefore, it's important that you and the school's coaches **monitor changes in NCAA course work requirements** and communicate such changes to your student athletes.

(NCAA website: <http://www.ncaa.org/> or http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp)

Standards for Conduct

It is recognized that each member of the educational community has a responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that promotes and models the attributes that we hope to build in our student athletes. In CIF's "Pursuing Victory with Honor" we are reminded that, "Everyone involved in competition including parents, spectators, ASB leaders, and all auxiliary groups has a duty to honor the traditions of the sport and to treat other participants with respect. Coaches have a special responsibility to model respectful behavior." Each community member must help to ensure that the "academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of our student athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win." (Pursuing Victory with Honor, #9)

Conduct of Coaches

Above all else, athletics at the high school level is an educational endeavor. Athletes learn lessons that serve them for their entire lives. Among these are sportsmanship, perseverance, teamwork, and appropriate responses to winning and to losing. For these lessons, each coach is the teacher.

The coach sets the tone for these lessons, and the **coach's behavior serves as a model** to the crowd and most of all, to the athletes. Athletic coaches in the Irvine Unified School District are expected to reflect a positive attitude in all their approaches to and their interactions with officials and opponents.

Learning Through Winning in Competition

In winning, as in losing, the long-range value of the experience is promoted under certain conditions. An undue emphasis on winning can easily leave the false impression with student athletes that their athletic activity has value **ONLY** if the competition results in a "win." A winning-is-everything approach leads directly to unsportsmanlike behavior and to cheating, and translates to unacceptable ethics and life-long values. In an educational setting, we emphasize preparing in a fashion to be competitive and we focus on doing our best. Often, though certainly not always, sound preparation and focusing on doing our best results in winning the contest. However, the experience of winning carries an enhanced value if parents can help students, even in winning, **focus on the efforts and strategies**, both by individuals and by the team, that resulted in the win.

Parents can help athletes learn the real value of winning by:

- Offering congratulations for winning **AND** identifying and discussing the efforts made by individuals and by the team.
- Rewarding the winning efforts **AND** rewarding the growth in individuals and in the team - the growth that contributed to the win.
- Emphasizing competitiveness.
- Emphasizing doing your best.

Keeping Parent Support in Perspective

All parents should be proud parents. All parents should be advocates for their children. All parents should help and encourage their children to pursue their potential. When these important parental attributes are taken to extreme, however, athletes can miss important life learning and can miss significant growth opportunities. Unfortunately, we have all seen parents who seem satisfied *only* when their athletes are starting and/or winning. Some parents seem to have difficulty maintaining perspective.

Supporting student athletes, even though one may disagree with the coach's judgment, regarding playing time and level or position placement, is an important parental role. However, challenging the coach's judgment regarding playing time or selection is not appropriate. Supporting the athlete in the pursuit of improved skills or alternate interests is the appropriate parent role.

Balance is the key and includes:

- Maintaining a balanced perspective between savoring the possibility of one's student athlete becoming a professional athlete and a realistic assessment of skills and possibilities.
- Keeping a balance between protecting one's athlete from adverse events and helping student athlete learn from the lessons of adversity.

Subsequent appeals should follow Complaint Procedure guidelines. The final appeal can be made through the Director of Secondary Education who will review the case and may convene a panel consisting of all high school Athletic Directors to consider the appeal.

Parents Supporting Their Athletes
Learning From Loss in Competition

The life lessons learned through participation in athletic competition are held in high regard by current and former athletes. Particularly beneficial is the experience of working cooperatively toward a common purpose in a close knit group, the values of team work, and the development of the concept of fair play. While the Board of Education takes great pride in district teams winning, it does not condone “winning at any cost,” and discourages any and all pressures which might tend to neglect good sportsmanship and good mental health. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted in such a way as to justify it as an educational activity. The educational side of athletics is to help students benefit from the lessons learned through participation. While winning is usually more fun, the lessons learned from losing are often beneficial.

Parents can help athletes learn from their losses by:

Moving from the Loser’s Column	Moving to the Winner’s Column
- Blaming ◊ The coach ◊ Other players ◊ Officiating	- Crediting ◊ The other team ◊ Players on the other team
Focusing too long on errors or mistakes	- Focusing on what might be improved next time ◊ By my athlete ◊ By the team
What didn’t work	What did work
Bemoaning the loss	Giving one’s best effort
Denial and anger	Acceptance and moving on

There can never be justification for physical or verbal abuse of an athlete, nor malicious behavior in any form. Coaches are expected always to treat every athlete with dignity and respect. In the Irvine Unified School District athletic programs, **swearing and the use of obscenities are always inappropriate**, whether at practice or during an event.

Conduct of Parents and Spectators

At the high school level, the importance of parents behaving as model spectators cannot be overstated. Spectators, both students and adults, are an important and integral part of all athletic events. Spectators serve to validate the positive values learned through athletic experiences and to support the personal efforts and successes of individual athletes.

Occasionally, the excesses of spectator behavior can unnecessarily taint the activities at an athletic event. What follows is an effort to provide clarity about inappropriate behavior and about the consequences of such behavior.

- At athletic events, to reduce the potential for conflict among spectator groups, it is **appropriate** to:
- Sit on the team side or team seating area, if designated.
 - Cheer for your own team and not demean the opposing team.
 - Apply the CIF principles of “Pursuing Victory with Honor” and incorporate the Beliefs and Values stated in this document.

- At athletic events, it is **inappropriate** for spectators to engage in:
- Violence
 - Verbal abuse
 - Vandalism
 - Throwing objects
 - Taunting other team
 - Obscenity or obscene gestures
 - Possession or use of alcohol
 - Using illegal substances
 - Harassment of officials

Each of these inappropriate spectator behaviors, whether by students or adults, shall be cause for **immediate removal** from the event. A pattern of these behaviors shall result in being barred from future events. (Following CIF and League Guidelines) All parents, spectators, students and staff will abide by the IUSD Civility Policy #1313.

Conduct of Athletes

Athletics within Irvine Unified School District follow CIF policies and procedures, as well as guidelines for conduct of participants.

With this as a base, schools and coaches may communicate additional expectations and consequences. While "Pursuing Victory with Honor," we expect our student athletes to:

- Treat one another and opponents with respect.
- Respect the judgment of officials, abide by the rules of the game, and promote positive behavior from parents and fans.
- Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing the school community, displaying positive public action at all times.
- Promote sportsmanship and help to foster the development of good character in such a way that enhances academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development.
- Remember that academics is a priority and that character building is essential.

An important part of the educational aspect of high school athletics is the learning of behavior appropriate to the circumstances and setting. Because athletes often perform publicly, their behavior is subject to more than the usual scrutiny.

With this in mind, there are some behaviors that are particularly concerning and are subject to standard consequences. This does not preclude the coach from administering other consequences.

Leaving a Team or Dismissal from a Team

An athlete who quits or is dismissed from a team after competition begins cannot participate for another sport until his/her original season has ended.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

If an athlete is ejected from a game for any reason (unsportsmanlike conduct, fighting, etc.), the athlete shall be prohibited from participating in the next contest per CIF rules.

Interaction with Officials

If an athlete physically assaults an official, the athlete shall be banned from interscholastic athletics for the remainder of the student's eligibility (CIF Blue Book Sect. 552).

Illegal and Banned Substances

Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal and non-prescriptive drugs, anabolic steroids or performance enhancing drugs, in or out of season, on school time or at a school district event, or based on verifiable information outside of school, shall result in immediate disciplinary action.

General Student Conduct

Academic and personal integrity is to be adhered to at all times. Any issues related to problems of a disciplinary nature, in or out of school, including threats, bullying, harassment, or hazing may result in disciplinary consequences. Students convicted of a crime, including theft or acts of violence/vandalism, will also warrant consequences.

Disciplinary Consequences

First offenses for conduct issues will include removal of the athlete from participation in all athletic contests for not less than 10 school days. If the student is out of his/her athletic season, the student will not participate from the beginning with the first game of the season and not less than 20% of consecutive games during the season. For a multi-sport athlete the percentage will be 10% of each season. (Athletic contests are counted according to the CIF Bluebook.)

If a student athlete incurs a second offense of the code of conduct, he/she will be immediately removed from the athletic program for the period of one full calendar year from the date of the infraction. The student athlete will be given an opportunity for review of their suspension following the completion of coursework and/or counseling that is directly related to the infraction. Once the student athlete has completed the requirements, they and their parents can request a review by a panel made up of school site and administrative personnel, including athletic directors. The panel may consider reducing the student athlete's suspension to no less than 50% of each sport in which they participate.

A subsequent offense shall result in immediate removal from the team for the remainder of the season, up to one complete year from the date of the offense, with a review process available to the student at the end of the year.

Due Process

Parent support for this Athletic Code of Conduct is crucial to its success. Participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is a privilege and not a right. Therefore, failure to meet standards of citizenship and good behavior may result in the removal of those privileges.

If the family believes a specific case merits review, a request in writing may be submitted to the Athletic Director who will follow the IUSD General Complaint guidelines. A local panel may be convened by the Athletic Director and school administrators to review the specifics of the case.