

# 2024-25 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK MIDDLE SCHOOL



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# Overview

## Introduction

This publication is presented to you because your student has indicated a desire to participate in the YCSD middle school athletics program, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him or her to participate. By supporting policies that govern school competition and the conduct and training for school athletes, parents/guardians, team members, and coaches can maintain a sports program with positive opportunities and experiences which foster the personal growth of all team members. As a member of a middle school athletics team, athletes should know they serve as representatives of their team, school, and community. Participation in athletics is a privilege and carries many responsibilities for the student-athlete. Those who choose to participate will be expected to follow the guidelines established by the York County School Division. **The YCSD middle school athletics program follows the Virginia High School League (VHSL) handbook and policy manual to the greatest extent possible.**

We believe that athletics can foster valuable skills that promote success in life. Through competition, we can develop the qualities of commitment, teamwork, dedication, loyalty, perseverance, goal attainment, and self-discipline. Athletes must dedicate a tremendous amount of time and effort to be successful on the playing field. It is our expectation that student-athletes bring that same discipline and dedication to the classroom.

One of the things that can be learned from sports is that winning is an attitude we bring to the game, not just the numbers on the scoreboard. It is this **attitude** that makes us winners or losers, not the final score of the game.

Through communicating the specific policies necessary for a well-organized sports program to you and team members, the members of the athletics department ask you to join in a community of support for a sports program characterized by the willingness of all participants to reject mediocrity and demonstrate excellence.

Although participation by students is highly desirable, there are no guarantees that all athletes will participate in all games. Playing time for athletes is the sole decision of the head coach and his/her staff. Coaches are encouraged to give each student the opportunity to participate in as many games as practical.

## The Athletics Statement

Participation in athletics is a privilege, which carries with it varying degrees of honor, responsibility, and sacrifice. Since participation is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate shall be expected to follow the rules established by the athletics programs and the other specific coaches' rules for their sport. Student-athletes represent their school and student body. Student-athletes' duty is to conduct themselves in a respectful manner that represents themselves, their family, the York County School Division, and the community well. The school division's athletics programs encourage and support broad participation for as many boys and girls as possible, with teams competing on an equitable basis with other schools without sacrificing sportsmanship, scholarship, general welfare, and the health of the school and student.

## Our Beliefs

The York County School Division believes that:

- Athletics is a partnership among students, parents/guardians, and school personnel
- Athletics help foster success in an honest and sportsmanlike manner

- Athletics provide experiences that mirror events students will face in the real world, and help students prepare for adulthood
- Student-athletes should represent the highest ideals of any school
- Student-athletes should balance athletic participation and academic responsibility

### York County School Board Policy

Participation in athletics is a privilege—not a right—that provides student-athletes with the opportunity to grow athletically, academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. All stakeholders must view athletics participation and competition as a lifelong learning experience. Good sportsmanship not only is required of the division's student-athletes and coaches, but also of all persons who support and attend athletic-related events. Spectators, including parents/guardians, are expected to support the events through courteous behavior at all times toward all participants, coaches, officials, staff, and fellow spectators. Persons who engage in inappropriate behavior are subject to immediate removal from the event and the event premises, and possible additional attendance restrictions. The School Board empowers principals, assistant principals, athletic directors and coaches to enforce the good sportsmanship code at all times.

## Requirements and Responsibilities

### Middle School Academic Requirements (In-person and Virtual Virginia)

Athletics were never meant to take the place of studies. A “D” or “F” grade on report cards or interim reports will result in a 10-day academic probation. During the probation, student-athletes may continue to practice and play, provided they submit a daily/weekly academic report to the athletic director. Failure to turn in the academic report will result in the athlete being ineligible to practice or play. The athlete has 10 school days to improve performance in the specified class/classes. Satisfactory improvement will be determined by the athletic director through consultation with the student, coach, teachers, and administrators. Failure to improve performance during the probation period will result in a “benched” status and continued failure to improve academic performance may result in removal from the team. Summer school grades and courses do not replace fourth quarter grades and courses for fall athletics eligibility purposes.

### Eligibility (In-person and Virtual Virginia)

In order to participate on a middle school athletics team, student-athletes must meet the following requirements:

- Students must be currently enrolled in the 7th or eighth grade (*6<sup>th</sup> graders may serve as team managers, but do not participate in games, cheer routines, or competitions*).
- Students must have a VHSL physical form dated within the required timeframe
- Students must **not** have reached the age of 15 on or before the first day of August
- Students must have passed three out of four core subjects on the most recent report card (minimal)
- Students must be in good standing with the York County School Division Student Code of Conduct, which may include no out-of-school suspensions for the school year
- Students who are dismissed from a team for behavioral difficulties are ineligible to participate in middle school sports for the remainder of the school year

### Attendance Expectations (In-person and Virtual Virginia)

School attendance is critical to learning. Student-athletes have great demands on their time, and attendance will be monitored to facilitate academic success. The attendance office will notify the athletic

director when a student-athlete has had excessive absences during the school year. The principal (or his/her designee), athletic director, coach/sponsor, and counselor may decide on a course of intervention to help improve an athlete's attendance. Athletes may not participate in practice or games if they are absent from school. Athletes must attend school for at least half of the school day (3 hours, 15 minutes). Prior approval may be given by the Principal or Athletic Director, for special circumstances. Athletes attending school-sponsored field trips or activities are considered in attendance at school. Players who are dismissed early from school due to illness should not attend practice or games on the same day. Players must be present for half of the school day (at least 3 hours) in order to be eligible to participate in practice or games on the same day. Athletes leaving school early for doctor appointments, funerals, or other family emergencies may return to school and participate in practices and games provided they have an excuse note from their parent/guardian and have attended classes for half of the school day.

### **Game and Practice Attendance (In-person and Virtual Virginia)**

Student-athletes are expected to be present for all competitive events, regular season, post-season, and make-up games. There are no consequences for student-athletes who miss a practice or game for absences due to school-sponsored trips, other academic activities **required** by the school, or religious holidays. For all other missed games or practices, the consequence is at the discretion of the coach; in such cases, consequences may include dismissal from the team.

### **Uniforms/Equipment**

Each athlete will be assigned a uniform that is the property of the respective school. Athletes are expected to promptly return the uniform to the coach upon request. Reimbursement from the athlete will be expected for loss or destruction of issued team equipment and apparel. Athletes and parents/guardians need to be aware that they are responsible for returning uniforms in the condition in which they were issued. Failure to return an issued uniform or damage beyond ordinary wear and tear will result in the athlete and parents/guardians being charged for the replacement of the uniform. Replacement costs are often higher than the original cost.

All uniforms and equipment issued to student-athletes must be returned within a week after the conclusion of the season. Student-athletes assume financial responsibility for missing, lost, or damaged equipment or uniforms, and students may not participate in other sports and activities until equipment obligations are met. Students will not be permitted to participate in any other sport until all fees are paid.

### **Conduct of Athletes (In-person and Virtual Virginia)**

It is expected that all student-athletes will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on themselves, their school, and community. Failure to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and behavior guidelines will result in consequences that may lead to dismissal from the team. Coaches will adhere to the following guidelines if offenses occur during practices and/or games. Administration will collaborate with coaches when offenses violate the YCSD Student Code of Conduct.

Disrespect or disobedience, tardies, damage/destruction of school property, offensive language/profanity, unsatisfactory citizenship, or assignment to after-school detention:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense – warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – benched status determined by coach
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – 2-week suspension\* from the team; no practice or games
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense – dismissal from the team

Disruptive behavior, lying, cheating, stealing, unsportsmanlike behavior that results in ejection from a game, or assignment to alternative to suspension (ATS):

1<sup>st</sup> offense – benched status, minimum of one game

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – 2-week suspension\* from the team; no practice or games

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – dismissal from the team

Threats of force against other students, encouraging others to fight, verbal or physical abuse of a student or teacher, fighting, or any behavior that results in a suspension from school:

1<sup>st</sup> offense – During length of suspension, no practice or team activity, suspended for next scheduled game (or more depending on number of games during the length of suspension)

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – 2-week suspension from the team; no practice or games

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Dismissal from the team

*\*Team suspensions will include non-student days (holidays/vacations) for times that the team continues to practice.*

It is a violation of School Board Policy for students to have, use, or sell alcohol, illegal drugs, inhalants, or other noxious chemicals (glue, silicone, lighter fluid). This includes using over-the-counter medications and prescribed drugs in a non-prescribed manner. Violation of the policy will result in dismissal from the team. It is a violation of the law for middle school age students to buy tobacco. Smoking or chewing tobacco and violations will result in dismissal from the team.

### **Consequences of Misbehavior (In-person and Virtual Virginia)**

Student-athletes who violate the YCSD Student Code of Conduct or violations of law may, at the discretion of the principal, incur penalties that impact athletic participation.

Bullying is the systematic and chronic inflicting of physical hurt or psychological distress on another person. The Code of Virginia §22.1-276.01 defines bullying as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying, the use of electronic means for purposes of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Bullying does not include isolated incidents of ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict.

The York County School Division School Board adopts the definitions of bullying and cyber bullying as stated in the Code of Virginia and expounds upon it for further clarification to ensure an anti-bullying learning environment is maintained in all schools.

Bullying involves physical and emotional behaviors that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful that create harassing, intimidating, hostile or otherwise offensive educational environments. Bullying is unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult that is severe or pervasive enough to create feelings of intimidation, alienation, or humiliation and/or unreasonably interferes with the school performance or participation of others.

Cyber bullying which occurs off school grounds or does not involve the use of the York County School Division network or computers may result in disciplinary actions if it causes a substantial disruption to the

operation of a school or the School Division, if it threatens the safety and mental or physical well-being of students or staff, or if it threatens the safety of school buildings or school property.

Participation in any hazing/bullying will result in suspension for a period of time, to be determined by the principal, from the next competitive event, current sports team, and/or the next sports season in which the athlete would participate.

Violation of any portion of the YCSD Student Code of Conduct and regulations herein and all student-eligibility requirements may result in one or more of the following actions by the coach, athletic director and/or principal:

- Suspension of the student-athlete from the team for one or more games
- Removal of the athlete from the team for the remainder of the sports season
- Forfeiture of award(s) for the particular sport
- Restriction or prohibition from any further interscholastic competition
- Other appropriate disciplinary action deemed necessary and appropriate by the athletic director or school principal

Coaches are granted broad discretion and autonomy over general team matters, including team rules, roster selection, participation, playing time, selection of starting athletes, recognition of athletes, and recommendations for award recipients.

Administrators will notify the athletic director of any behavioral concerns during a student-athlete's off-season. An administrator, athletic director, coach/sponsor, and counselor may require intervention or assistance for a student-athlete who demonstrates a need.

## **Hazing**

Hazing is defined as an activity that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing occurs when an act is committed against a student or when a student is coerced into committing an act that creates a substantial risk of harm to the student or to any third party in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with any group, club, athletics team, grade level, activity, or organization.

Committing an act or acts against a student, or coercing a student to commit an act that creates risk of harm to a person in order to be initiated into groups such as, but not limited to, student organizations, athletic teams, or classes is forbidden. Hazing is a Class 1 misdemeanor (Code of Virginia § 18.2-56).

### **Virginia's Anti-Hazing Law**

§ 18.2-56. Hazing unlawful; civil and criminal liability; duty of school, etc., officials; penalty.

It shall be unlawful to haze so as to cause bodily injury, any student at any school, college, or university.

Any person found guilty thereof shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Any person receiving bodily injury by hazing shall have a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or infants.

The president or other presiding official of any school, college or university receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall, upon satisfactory proof of the guilt of any student hazing another student,

sanction and discipline such student in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The institution's policies and procedures shall provide for expulsions or other appropriate discipline based on the facts and circumstances of each case and shall be consistent with the model policies established by the Department of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, as applicable. The president or other presiding official of any school, college or university receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall report hazing which causes bodily injury to the attorney for the Commonwealth of the county or city in which such school, college or university is, who shall take such action as he deems appropriate.

For the purposes of this section, "hazing" means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily injury on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity.

Code 1950, § 18.1-71; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 2003, cc. 62, 67; 2014, c. 627.

The chapters of the acts of assembly referenced in the historical citation at the end of this section may not constitute a comprehensive list of such chapters and may exclude chapters whose provisions have expired.

### **Sportsmanship (In-person and Virtual Virginia)**

Good sportsmanship is a top priority in our schools. The manner in which our school is represented is far more important than who wins or loses. Good sportsmanship is about respect – respect for the teams, coaches, officials, and the game itself.

The responsibility for good sportsmanship rests with each and every one of us. One fan behaving inappropriately can ruin the game for many. Cheer for your team, but respect the other team and the game officials. Be a fan, not a fanatic. Remember, our school will get the praise or the blame for the conduct of our fans.

During games, all spectators are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Treat all players, coaches, officials, and opposing fans with respect.
- Cheer for your team. Do not taunt/harass or boo your opponents.
- Use appropriate language – profanity, name calling, and discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated.
- Noisemakers are prohibited at indoor events. Whistles (except those used by the officials) are not permitted at any event.
- Understand your admission is a privilege that carries with it the expectation that you will engage in positive fan behavior.

The Virginia High School League requires school districts to monitor spectator behavior at all school-sponsored activities. Accordingly, an event supervisor may request any person involved in misconduct to leave the premises and contact the police for assistance. The school has the authority to suspend individuals from attending all school-sponsored activities for spectator misconduct. The York County School Division appreciates positive support from all spectators.

It is the goal of York County School Division to provide all students with opportunities to engage in athletic activities that enrich their education and further develop the core values of respect, responsibility, fairness, trust, and good sportsmanship.

Engaging in planned instruction teaches good sportsmanship and proper behavior. It is the responsibility of the administration, staff, coaches, parents/guardians, and the community at large to create a climate that fosters the development of these behaviors. This is accomplished by encouraging and modeling positive and appropriate behavior within the sporting environment while, at the same time, striving for excellence.

Expectations for the behavior of athletes, coaches, and spectators at athletics contests, practices, and events are outlined below.

**Athletes are required to meet the following expectations:**

- Be courteous to visiting teams and officials.
- Play hard and to the limit of your ability, regardless of discouragement. True athletes do not give up nor do they argue, cheat, or taunt opponents.
- Retain composure at all times, and never leave the bench or enter the playing field/court to engage in a fight.
- Be modest when successful, and be gracious in defeat. A true competitor does not offer excuses.
- Maintain a high degree of physical fitness by conscientiously observing team and training rules.
- Demonstrate loyalty to the school by maintaining a high scholastic standing and by participating in or supporting other school activities.
- Play for the love and honor of the game.
- Understand and observe the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of officials, and accept their decisions without question.
- Respect the facilities of the host school, and demonstrate the behavior expected of guests.

**Coaches are required to meet the following expectations:**

- Exemplify behavior that is representative of the educational staff of the school and a credit to the teaching profession.
- Demonstrate high ideals, good habits, and desirable attitudes in personal behavior, and demand the same standards of your players. Make sportsmanship the #1 priority.
- Emphasize to players and bench personnel the importance of proper sideline behavior and the necessity of restraining from entering the playing field/court.
- Recognize that the purpose of competition is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of individual players and that the most important values of competition are derived from playing the game fairly.
- Be a modest winner and a gracious loser.
- Maintain self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions without public display of emotion or dissatisfaction with the officials.
- Cooperate with the school administration in the planning, scheduling, and conduct of sports activities.
- Employ accepted educational methods in coaching, giving all players an opportunity to use and develop initiative, leadership, and judgment.
- Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players, refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of the team.
- Teach athletes it is better to lose fairly than to win unfairly.
- Demonstrate integrity. Do not allow gambling, profanity, abusive language, or similar violations.
- Refuse to criticize opponents, officials, or others associated with sports activities.
- Properly supervise student-athletes under your immediate care and specifically observe a coach's responsibilities during events off school grounds.

**Parents/Guardians and Spectators are required to meet the following expectations:**

- Realize that you represent the school and community and, therefore, have an obligation to be a true sportsman, encouraging through positive behavior the practice of good sportsmanship by others.
- Recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team.
- Recognize that since the primary purpose of athletes is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of contests, victory or defeat is—in reality—of secondary importance.
- Treat visiting teams and officials as guests, extending to them every courtesy.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Respect the judgment and integrity of officials, realizing that their decisions are based upon game conditions as they observe them.

YCSD student-athletes are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship during practices and competitive events.

**Athlete/Parent-Guardian/Coach Communication**

As children become involved in athletics, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. However, there may be times when things do not go the way you and your child might expect them to go. Discussions with the coach about the treatment of your child, ways to help your child improve, and concerns about your child's behavior or academic performance are encouraged. You may contact the coach through email or by phone at the school. It is requested that parents/guardians do not attempt to have conferences before, during, or after games.

It may be difficult to accept that your child is not getting to play as much as you would like. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all student-athletes and the team. As mentioned above, certain concerns can and should be discussed with the coach. However, playing time, team strategy, positions, and other players on the team are areas that must be left to the discretion of the coach/coaches.

**Communication you should expect from your child's coach:**

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements (i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning)
- Procedure, should your child be injured during participation
- Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation

**Communication coaches expect from parents/guardians:**

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification well in advance of any scheduling conflicts
- Specific concern in regards to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent/guardian. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

## Conflict Resolution

It is desirable for conflicts to be resolved by an athlete with his/her coach. Occasionally, however, situations arise where conflicts are not able to be resolved through this interaction and the assistance of the assistant principal and/or principal is needed.

## Individual Coach's Rules

Coaches may establish additional rules and regulations with the approval of the athletic director for their respective sports. These rules pertaining to a particular sport must be given by the coach in writing to all team members and explained fully at the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will also be in writing and shall be administered by the coach. Copies of all additional team rules by coaches are on file in the athletic director's office.

## **Safety**

### Safety and Insurance

Adequate insurance coverage for an athlete is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. The school system does offer parents/guardians an opportunity to enroll their child in a supplemental insurance program.

### Energy Drinks

National Federation of State  
High School Associations



#### **Position Statement and Recommendations for the Use of Energy Drinks by Young Athletes (Revised and Approved January 2021)**

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

**Background:** Energy drinks are popular among adolescents and young adults and are the second most popular dietary supplement after multivitamins. The distinction between energy drinks and sports drinks is important. Energy drinks are drinks that contain stimulants and claim to “provide energy” while sports drinks contain electrolytes and sugar meant to rehydrate athletes after a workout. Energy drinks are marketed as a quick and easy way to maximize physical performance and mental alertness.

In addition to the regular-sized energy drinks, energy shots are a concentrated form of the same formulation containing caffeine, sugar and other substances. A notable study found that the number of people who visited an Emergency Room with energy drink-related complications doubled between 2007 and 2011, and that 10 percent required hospitalization. Despite efforts to educate consumers, a survey done in 2018 found that 40% of American teens had consumed an energy drink within the previous three months.

Energy drinks can contain up to 500 mg of caffeine, which is five times as much as a typical cup of coffee and 10 times as much as found in a 12-ounce soda. The effects of this can lead to abnormal heart rhythms and even death. After a period of increased alertness, symptoms of caffeine withdrawal predominates. The drinks also contain large quantities of sugar, which causes a spike in blood sugar levels that may be followed by a “sugar crash” with fatigue, shakiness and anxiety. The marketing of these beverages is

targeted toward adolescents and young adults. Despite the decrease in the consumption of soft drinks, the sales of energy drinks continue to rise, increasing 47% from 2016 to 2021.

**The NFHS SMAC strongly recommends that:**

1. Water and appropriate sports drinks should be used for rehydration as outlined in the NFHS **“Position Statement and Recommendations for Maintaining Hydration to Optimize Performance and Minimize the Risk for Exertional Heat Illness.”**
2. Energy drinks SHOULD NOT be used for hydration prior to, during, or after physical activity.
3. Information about the absence of benefit and the presence of potential risk associated with energy drinks should be widely shared among all individuals who interact with young athletes.
4. Energy drinks ARE NOT sports drinks and should not be used by athletes in training or competition.
5. Athletes taking over the counter or prescription medications should not consume energy drinks without the approval of their physician.

**WARNING:** The exact content and purity of energy drinks cannot be ensured, as there are no regulatory controls over these products. Thus, there is the risk for negative side effects (see below), potentially harmful interactions with prescription medications (particularly stimulant medications used to treat Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)), or resultant positive drug tests due to impurities with banned substances.

**What are the possible negative effects of using energy drinks?**

- Central nervous system- Caffeine often has the effect of making a person feel “energized.” Studies have shown some performance-enhancing benefits from caffeine at doses of 6mg/kg of body weight. However, these and higher doses of caffeine may produce light headedness, tremors, impaired sleep, suppression of appetite, and difficulty with fine motor control.
- Gastrointestinal system- The high concentrations of carbohydrates often found in energy drinks may delay gastric emptying, resulting in a feeling of being bloated. Abdominal cramping may also occur. Both carbohydrates and caffeine in the high concentrations found in most energy drinks may cause diarrhea.
- Dehydration- Energy drinks should not be used for rehydration. The high carbohydrate concentration can delay gastric emptying and slow absorption from the gastrointestinal tract, and may cause diarrhea. Caffeine can act as a diuretic and, therefore, may result in increased fluid loss.
- Positive drug tests- Like all nutritional supplements, there is little or no regulatory oversight of energy drinks. The purity of the products cannot be ensured and it is possible that they may contain substances banned by some sports organizations.
- Positive drug tests- Like all nutritional supplements, there is little or no regulatory oversight of energy drinks. The purity of the products cannot be ensured, and it is possible that they may contain substances banned by some sports organizations. Furthermore, the structure of some of the ingredients found in energy drinks are similar to banned drugs and can lead to a positive drug test result. Energy drinks can cause positive results for THC (the active ingredient in marijuana), barbiturates and cocaine.
- Consumption of energy drinks by adolescents and young adults has been linked to heart arrhythmia (irregular and/or rapid heart rate), other cardiovascular events such as high blood pressure and heart attacks, and liver problems.
- Sales of certain energy drinks have been banned in Denmark, Turkey, Uruguay, Germany and Austria. Some states in the United States have introduced legislation to restrict sales of energy drinks to adolescents and children. Recently, health-care providers have voiced increasing concerns about the consumption of energy drinks in association with alcohol because of the interaction of the stimulant effects of energy drinks and the depressant effects of alcohol. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has published a position statement condemning the use of energy drinks by youths.

## NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time.

## Concussions

### YCSD Concussion Information

The York County School Division follows concussion guidelines in accordance with Section 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia, as well as best practices suggested by the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Education, and Virginia High School League, resulting in YCSD policy JJAC: *Student-Athlete Concussions During Extracurricular Activities*.

In order for students to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing the short and long-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information (Form O-41), in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

This policy was first adopted in June of 2011 and revised in November of 2021, and mandates annual concussion education for staff, coaches, volunteers, administrative personnel, students and parents. It establishes appropriate return to play/return to classroom protocols and clearance procedures, and requires that a concussion policy management team annually reviews best practices. To manage concussion procedures, YCSD has partnered with the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD) Sports Concussion Program to have certified athletic trainers (ATC) monitor all sports at both middle and high schools.

The information below outlines general concussion information and best practices, and describes the YCSD Concussion and Clinical Management Plan. Although this information is gleaned from the sources listed above, licensed health care professionals must be included in the management of suspected and diagnosed concussions.

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury which results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Even a mild bump to the head can be serious. Concussions can range from mild to severe and disrupt the way the brain normally works. A student-athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be "knocked out") to suffer a concussion. A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others may develop over the next several days or weeks. The symptoms of a concussion will usually go away within 1 to 3 weeks of the initial injury. However, in some cases, symptoms may last for several weeks, or even months. The symptoms may be subtle and are often difficult to fully recognize. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. A concussion

cannot be seen, and most occur without an outward injury or loss of consciousness. Symptoms may also be subtle and often difficult to fully recognize. If student-athletes report any symptoms of a concussion, or if symptoms of a concussion are noticed, parents are encouraged to seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

Physical		Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache, pressure in head	Neck pain	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Change in sleep patterns
Nausea/vomiting	Balance problems or dizziness	Difficulty remembering	Sadness	Drowsiness
Feeling sluggish or slowed down, low energy	Amnesia	Difficulty concentrating	More emotional	Sleeping less than usual
Balance problems	Don't "feel right"	Confusion	Nervousness	Sleeping more than usual
Visual problems: blurred, double or fuzzy vision	Sensitivity to light or noise	Repeating the same question/comment	Anxiety	Trouble falling asleep

Signs observed by teammates, parents, and coaches may include:

Appears dazed	Vacant facial expression	Confused about assignment	Forgets plays
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Moves clumsily or displays incoordination	Answers questions slowly or with slurred speech	Shows behavior or personality changes
Difficulty remembering information before the head injury	Difficulty remembering information after the injury	Seizures or convulsions	Loses consciousness

*\*Symptoms/Signs adapted from the CDC, AAP, and 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport.*

### **What should happen if a concussion is suspected?**

Any student-athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion will be removed from the game or practice immediately. No student-athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the student-athlete should continue for several hours. YCSD requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established "return to play" best practice concussion guidelines:

1. A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.
2. Student-athletes may not return to play until they have been evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to play from that health care provider.

Parents should inform coaches if they think their child may have a concussion. It is better to miss one game than to miss an entire season.

### **What should parents do in the first 24-48 hours?**

Student-athletes should not be left alone and should be checked throughout the night. It is okay to let him/her go to sleep. Parents only need to wake their child if they are concerned about how they are breathing or sleeping. Student-athletes should not drive while having symptoms. Doctors should be consulted before giving pain medication. The use of an ice pack on the head and neck for comfort is suggested.

### **When should student-athletes be taken to the doctor?**

All student athletes who sustain a concussion must be evaluated by a licensed health care professional who is familiar with sports concussion diagnosis and management. Parents should call their student-athlete's physician and explain what has happened. A follow up appointment should be scheduled with a licensed health care provider or a sports concussion specialist, if directed by the health care provider. If a student-athlete's signs or symptoms are worsening, he/she should be taken to an emergency room facility immediately.

Additional symptoms to watch for:

Headaches that worsen	Very drowsy, can't be awakened	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
Unusual behavior changes	Significant irritability	Less response than normal

### **What medical tests are needed, and when should a student-athlete see a sports concussion specialist?**

Diagnostic testing, which includes CT and MRI scans, are rarely needed following a concussion. While these are helpful in identifying life-threatening brain injuries (ex. skull fracture, bleeding, swelling), they are not normally utilized, even by student-athletes who have sustained concussions with severe symptoms. A concussion is diagnosed based upon the student-athlete's description/story of the injury/event and the licensed health care provider's physical examination. Any student-athlete who has had significant or recurrent head injuries or the symptoms persist beyond 5-7 days may benefit from a specialty evaluation from a pediatric sports concussion program. A licensed health care provider may also recommend a specialty evaluation if they have any concerns or need further assistance with a student-athlete's concussion management. Neuropsychological testing, which should be part of the evaluation when possible, can be helpful to assist with return to academic and physical activity.

### **What is the best treatment and when can a student-athlete return to play following a concussion?**

The best treatment for a concussion is rest, both physically and mentally. There are no medications that can speed up the recovery from a concussion. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television and phones (including text messaging) all may worsen the symptoms of a concussion. You should allow your student-athlete to rest as much as possible in the days following a concussion. As the symptoms lessen, the increased use of computers, phones, video games, etc. can be allowed, but the access must be lessened if the symptoms worsen. After suffering a concussion, no student-athlete should return to play or practice on the same day. Studies have shown that a young brain does not recover quickly enough for a student-athlete to return to activity in such a short time. Student-athletes should not

participate in any high risk activities that may result in head injury such as physical education class, recess, ride a bike or skateboard until cleared by a licensed health care professional. Once a student-athlete no longer has symptoms of a concussion for a minimum of 24 hours and is cleared to return to physical activity by a licensed health care professional knowledgeable in the care of sports concussions, he or she should proceed with activity in a supervised fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exertion. This should occur over a minimum of 5 days.

### **What happens if student-athletes keep on playing with a concussion or return to play too soon?**

Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the student-athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after the concussion occurs, particularly if the student-athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage student-athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries.

### **Why is it so important that student-athletes not return to play until completely recovered?**

A second concussion that occurs before the brain recovers can slow recovery or increase the chances of long-term problems. In rare cases, brain swelling can result, leading to permanent brain damage or even death ("second impact syndrome").

### **How can a concussion affect schoolwork?**

Following a concussion, many student-athletes may have difficulty in school. These problems may last from days to months and often involve difficulties with short and long-term memory, concentration and organization. In many cases it is best to lessen the student-athlete's class load early on after the injury. This may include staying home from school for a few days, followed by a lightened schedule for a few days, or perhaps a longer period of time, if needed. Decreasing the stress on the brain early on after a concussion may lessen symptoms and shorten the recovery time.

### **Helpful website to reference**

CHKD Sports Concussion Program  
<http://www.chkd.org/concussions>

### **YCSD Concussion and Clinical Management Plan**

YCSD is committed to safe practice and play for student-athletes. Central office and school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, school nurses, teachers, student-athletes, parents, certified athletic trainers and licensed health care providers will form a team to work together to identify concussions once they occur and to ensure safe return to play.

#### **Plan components:**

1. Training for athletic directors, coaches, volunteers, administrative personnel, and school nurses on concussion risks, recognition, and management will occur.
2. Education of parents and student-athletes on concussion risks, signs and symptoms, and post-injury management for sports and school will occur. Parents and student-athletes will sign that they are aware of this information.

3. Yearly neurocognitive baseline Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT) testing for student-athletes.
4. Immediate removal from play by the student-athlete's ATC, coach, or team physician of any student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice or game, followed by parent notification of the injury.
5. Written clearance to return to play for the student-athlete by a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of a concussion, before the student-athlete is allowed to return to play (clearance must be received by the ATC and may not be completed by a parent who is a licensed health care professional). Student-athletes must also successfully return to their normal baseline of the ImPACT testing.
6. As needed, an individualized school care plan for academics will be developed by school personnel and implemented to assist the student-athlete's recovery.

**Steps for suspected concussion/concussion response:**

1. Student-athletes will be evaluated by the ATC at the time of injury. If confirmation of a concussion occurs, it will be treated as such, following these possible pathways:
  - a. Immediate transport to an emergency room facility via EMS
    - i. Deterioration of neurologic function
    - ii. Decreasing level of consciousness
    - iii. Decrease or irregularity of respirations
    - iv. Decrease or irregularity of pulse
    - v. Unequal, dilated, or unreactive pupils
    - vi. Cranial nerve abnormalities
    - vii. Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine, or skull fracture, or bleeding
    - viii. Mental sign changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, or agitation
    - ix. Seizure activity
    - x. Vomiting
  - b. Possible transport, dependent on ATC assessment
    - i. Loss of consciousness on the field
    - ii. Amnesia lasting longer than 15 minutes
    - iii. Increase in blood pressure
    - iv. Motor deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
    - v. Sensory deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
    - vi. Balance deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
    - vii. Cranial nerve abnormalities subsequent to initial on-field assessment
    - viii. Post-concussion symptoms that worsen
    - ix. Additional post-concussion symptoms as compared to those on field
    - x. Student athlete is still symptomatic at the end of the game
  - c. Referral to a licensed health care provider
  - d. Referral to a sports concussion specialist
  - e. Management by the ATC
    - i. The student-athlete's signs and symptoms are completely absent within 15 minutes from the time of injury
    - ii. The physical and cognitive examination are normal within 15 minutes
    - iii. Balance testing is normal within 15 minutes
2. If the ATC is not available, the coach will remove student-athlete from game and/or practice, contact the parent, and refer the student-athlete to their licensed health care provider or to an emergency room facility.

3. The student-athlete must be evaluated by his/her licensed health care provider or a sports concussion specialist prior to returning to play, unless they are managed by the ATC.
4. The student-athlete must bring written clearance from his/her licensed health care provider.
5. All student-athletes will participate in the YCSD Gradual Return to Sports Participation Program for a minimum of 5 days, after written medical clearance is received by the ATC or if the ATC is managing the process.
6. If the student-athlete develops any signs or symptoms during the Gradual Return to Sports Participation Program after they have rested for 24 hours and tried a second time to progress, they must be re-evaluated by a licensed health care provider.
7. Athletic directors and ATCs will notify administrators of suspected concussions as they occur. Administrators will work with school staff (athletic directors, coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses) and parents as needed to develop individualized school care plans for academics, to assist the student-athlete's recovery.

#### **Gradual Return to Sports Participation Program:**

A student-athlete's participation in the gradual return to play program will be supervised by the ATC.

Rehabilitation Stage	Functional Exercise	Objective of Stage
No activity	Complete physical and cognitive rest	Recovery
Light aerobic activity	Walking, swimming, stationary cycling keeping intensity <70% maximum heart rate; no resistance exercises	Increase heart rate
Sport-specific exercise	Specific sport-related drills but no head impact	Add movement
Non-contact training drills	More complex training drills; may start light resistance training	Exercise, coordination, cognitive load
Full-contact practice	After medical clearance, participate in normal training	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaches
Return to play	Normal game play	Normal game play

*\*Adapted from 2010 AAP Sport-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents, and 2012 Zurich Concussion in Sport Group Consensus.*

Each stage in concussion rehabilitation should last no less than 24 hours with a minimum of 5 days required after activity is started, to consider a full return to competition. If symptoms recur during the rehabilitation program, the student-athlete should stop immediately. Once asymptomatic after at least another 24 hours, the student-athlete should resume at the previous asymptomatic level and try to progress again. Student-athletes must contact their licensed health care provider if symptoms recur. Any student-athlete with multiple concussions or prolonged symptoms may require a longer concussion-rehabilitation program.

Prior to any contact practice, the student-athlete may be given a post-injury ImPACT test that will be interpreted by a licensed health care provider. ImPACT results will be used in conjunction with the entire history and assessment to help determine "return to play" status.

As each sports concussion is unique, the concussion management plan will be individualized for each student-athlete. The ultimate goal of the concussion program is to allow a safe return to play while minimizing any long-term health problems from a concussion.

## Sudden Cardiac Arrest

### YCSD Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information

In order for students to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on sudden cardiac arrest provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing sudden cardiac arrest, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information (Form O-42), in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

### What is sudden cardiac arrest?

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of students, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in students and adults can be different. A student's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues.

SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

**Causes:** SCA is caused by several structural and electrical diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Most conditions responsible for SCA in children are inherited. Other possible causes of SCA are a sudden blunt non-penetrating blow to the chest and the use/abuse of recreational or performance-enhancing drugs and/or energy drinks.

### How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States?

SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults in this country. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside of hospitals each year. About 2,000 patients under the age of 25 die of SCA each year. It is the #1 cause of death for student athletes.

<u>Warning Signs of SCA</u>	<u>Emergency Response to SCA</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fainting or seizures during exercise</li><li>• Unexplained shortness of breath</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Extreme fatigue</li><li>• Chest pains</li><li>• Racing heart</li><li>• SCA should be suspected in any athlete who has collapsed and is unresponsive.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Act immediately; time is most critical to increase survival rates</li><li>• Recognize SCA</li><li>• Call 911 immediately and activate EMS</li><li>• Administer CPR</li><li>• Use Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)</li></ul>

### Warning signs of potential heart issues

The following need to be further evaluated by your primary care provider:

- Family history of heart disease/cardiac arrest
- Fainting, a seizure, or convulsions during physical activity
- Fainting or a seizure from emotional excitement, emotional distress, or being startled
- Dizziness or lightheadedness, especially during exertion
- Exercise-induced chest pain
- Palpitations: awareness of the heart beating, especially if associated with other symptoms such as dizziness
- Extreme tiredness or shortness of breath associated with exercise
- History of high blood pressure

### **Risk of Inaction:**

Ignoring such symptoms and continuing to play/practice could be catastrophic and can result in sudden cardiac death. Taking these warning symptoms seriously and seeking timely appropriate medical care can prevent serious and possibly fatal consequences. These symptoms can be unclear in athletes, since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

### **What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?**

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

### **Removal from play/return to play**

Any student athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA before, during or after activity must be immediately removed from play. **Play includes all athletic activity.** Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or cardiologist (heart doctor). Clearance for the student-athlete to return to play must be provided in writing.

### **How can we minimize the risk of SCA and improve outcomes?**

The risk of SCA in student athletes can be minimized by providing appropriate prevention, recognition, and treatment strategies. One important strategy is the requirement for a yearly pre-participation screening evaluation, often called sports physical, and performed by the athlete's medical provider.

1. It is very important that you **carefully and accurately complete the personal history and heart health questions about your family** section of the current "VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form" available at <https://www.vhsl.org/forms/>.
2. Since the majority of these conditions are inherited, **be aware of your family history**, especially if any close family member:
  - a. had sudden unexplained and unexpected death before the age of 50.
  - b. was diagnosed with any of the heart conditions listed above.
  - c. died suddenly /unexpectedly during physical activity, during a seizure, from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or from drowning

Information used in this document was obtained from the American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)), Parent Heart Watch

## Heat-Related Illness in Student Athletes

In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student- athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information provided by the local school division on conditions related to heat-illness. After reviewing the materials, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information, in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

### CONDITIONS

“Heat-related illness” is a general term encompassing four specific conditions: (1) heat stroke (a medical emergency); (2) heat exhaustion; (3) heat syncope (fainting); and (4) heat cramps. The prevention of heat-related illness includes proper acclimatization for exercise in hot and humid environments and maintaining appropriate hydration levels.

“Heat acclimatization” involves gradual increases in the duration and intensity of physical activity in hot and humid environments over a 7-14 days period. Appropriate hydration begins prior to engaging in exercise, followed by minimizing fluid loss during activity and replacing fluid during and after activity.

Additionally, local monitoring of ambient temperature and humidity levels, combined with policies that limit practice duration, activity intensity, and the wearing of protective equipment during periods of high temperature and humidity levels, is critical to preventing heat-related illness and promoting student-athlete health and safety.

### STUDENT-ATHLETES

Student-athletes displaying the following signs and symptoms may be experiencing heat stroke and heat exhaustion, the two most concerning forms of heat-related illness, and should be removed from play immediately:

Irrational behavior, irritability, or emotional instability	Altered consciousness
Excessive fatigue, collapse	Disorientation
Dizziness	Headache
Confusion	Nausea or vomiting
Diarrhea	Staggering or sluggish feeling

### COACHES, ATHLETIC TRAINERS, AND OTHER STAFF

Coaches, athletic trainers, and other staff supervising the activity should be monitoring student- athletes for any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness. Coaches, athletic trainers and other staff should be prepared to immediately remove from activity any student-athlete reporting or displaying any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness and to rapidly cool the student-athlete with whole-body by:

- Cold-water immersion, which is essential when heat stroke is suspected;
- Dousing the student-athlete with cold water (cold shower);
- Rotating ice towels and/or ice bags over as much of the body of the student-athlete as possible; and/or
- Using fans to cool the student-athlete

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Each school division shall develop and biennially update policies and procedures regarding prevention, recognition, and management of student-athletes who may be experiencing heat-related illness.

School staff supervising athletic activities in hot and humid environments should be monitoring student-athletes for any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness and should be prepared to immediately cool a student-athlete suspected of heat exhaustion or heat stroke with whole-body cold-water immersion, cold water dousing (cold shower), ice towels and/or ice bags, and/or the use of fans.

A student-athlete reporting signs or symptoms associated with a heat-related illness to a coach, athletic trainer, or team physician in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to be at risk of or experiencing heat stroke shall not return to play that same day.

## **RECOGNITION**

Each school division will ensure school staff have training in the recognition of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses (*heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, heat cramps, differentiating heat cramps and exertional sickling*).

Heat-related illnesses are not part of a continuum in the sense that an individual experiencing heat exhaustion who continues to exercise will in turn develop heat stroke. While some of the signs and symptoms are similar, these are unique conditions. That said, experiencing heat cramps or syncope one day may predispose an individual to more significant heat-related illnesses in the future.

## **PREVENTION**

Each school division will ensure that school staff have training of the risk factors (intrinsic and extrinsic) associated with and the prevention of heat-related illnesses for heat exhaustion and heat stroke, monitoring ambient temperature and humidity, and prevention through heat acclimatization and hydration. Student-athletes should strive to begin exercise properly hydrated while minimizing fluid loss during activity, followed by fluid replacement during and after activity. Additional guidance on maintaining appropriate hydration levels is available in the Resources section of this document.

## **MANAGEMENT**

Each school division will ensure each school has staff trained in the management of heat-related illnesses, including the development of Emergency Action Plans.

## **RESOURCES**

<https://www.vhsl.org/sports-medicine/heat-hydration/>  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/heat-illness-prevention-2>  
<https://ksi.uconn.edu/prevention/heat-acclimatization/>

## Other Information

### Fall Sports

- Football
- Field Hockey
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country (participate with High School)
- Volleyball (Girls)

### Winter Sports

- Basketball (Girls and Boys)
- Cheerleading
- Wrestling (participate with High School)

### Spring Sports

- Baseball
- Softball
- Soccer (participate with High School)
- Track (participate with High School)

## Additional Rules and Regulations

For teams making roster cuts, student-athletes are required to attend tryouts. Exceptions to this rule may include new students who were not enrolled during try-outs, student-athletes with specific medical conditions, and student-athletes who have not completed the school sports season that precedes the try-out period (medical documentation may be required by the assistant principal).

Student-athletes must pass a physical examination and submit a completed physician's certificate and parental/guardian consent form before trying out for an athletic team. Providing or offering false information regarding a student-athlete's physical condition shall result in suspension from athletic activities for that school year.

It is strongly suggested that student-athletes have satisfactory medical insurance before participation will be allowed. YCSD schools provide information about supplemental and/or accident insurance.

Student-athletes may not participate in more than one sport during a sports season unless the athlete has the approval of the two coaches, and the two coaches have met with and received approval from the athletic director. Student-athletes who are given permission will be monitored academically on a more frequent basis to assess their success maintaining dual participation status.

Any student-athlete who quits or is dismissed from a team after tryouts may not play for another team during the same season.

## Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) - VHSL Policy

**28B-2-4 Name, Image and Likeness (NIL)**-Students may receive compensation for the commercialization of their own name, image and likeness (NIL).

Common NIL activities include, but are not limited to commercials, product endorsements, personal appearances, autograph sessions, merchandise or apparel sales, group licensing, and acting as a social media influencer.

Schools and teams may not use NIL opportunities to incentivize a student's enrollment at a school or membership on a team.

A student may not receive compensation, endorsements or gifts of monetary value for Intellectual Property of the VHSL or any member school. Intellectual Property includes, but is not limited to, a school's district's, region's and VHSL name, uniform, mascot, and logo.

(a) This provision is not intended to restrict the right of any student and their family to engage in NIL activities for financial gain, except as prohibited by this guidance.

(b) Student-athletes are prohibited from engaging in the following while participating in NIL activities.

- Making any reference to a school team, school, district, region or VHSL.
- Appearing in the uniform of the student's school. Students may not utilize the marks, logos, etc. of their school team or any school's team during NIL activities.
- Endorsing or promoting goods or service of any third-party NIL partner during school-based team activities and events, including but not limited to wearing third-party apparel, displaying a third-party logo or brand, and displaying insignia or identifying mark unless it is part of the standard school uniform for that sport.

(c) Students may not engage in any NIL activities involving, displaying or endorsing the following categories of products and services:

- Adult entertainment products and services
- Alcohol products
- Tobacco and electronic smoking products and devices
- Opioids and prescription pharmaceuticals
- Controlled dangerous substances
- Casinos and gambling, including sports betting
- Weapons, firearms and ammunition

(d) No school or anyone employed by or affiliated with a member school, including booster clubs, coaches, administrators, alumni or an NIL Collective\*, may solicit, arrange, or negotiate compensation for a student's NIL, other than their own child.

(e) Students must notify the Principal or Athletic Director in writing of the student's school upon entering into any type of NIL contract within 72 hours of entering into the contract

**\*NIL Collective:** A group of alumni, supporters parents, or other people who form a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, non-profit organization foundation, or other entity to provide NIL opportunities to student-athletes of a specific school.

**28B-2-5 Penalty:** A pupil who has lost his/her amateur standing through violation of this rule shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition. Such student may be reinstated as an amateur by the Executive Committee, provided his/her principal requests in writing his/her reinstatement as an amateur and certifies that the student has not during that one-year period violated this rule, and that the student is not now under contract to, or owned by, any professional athletic organization.

### **Athletic Participation Fees (to be paid via SchoolCash)**

The York County School Division's approved operating budget for the 2022-23 school year includes an athletics participation fee of \$30 per student, per season for middle school sports and a \$40 fee per

student, per season for high school sports. Fees collected by the division will be used to defray the cost of equipment, supplies, officials, transportation costs, and VHSL membership fees.

Student-athletes who try out and become an official team member will be required to pay the participation fee prior to the first official contest in order to be eligible to compete. There is no relationship between athletics fees and a guarantee of a student's playing time. Playing time for student-athletes is at the sole discretion of the head coach and his/her staff. The athletics participation fee is non-refundable and not pro-rated. The fee will be waived for student-athletes who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

### **Middle School Regular Season Admission Prices (per person)**

Baseball	\$5
Basketball-Boys	\$5
Basketball-Girls	\$5
Cheerleading Competition	\$5
Field Hockey	\$5
Football	\$5
Softball	\$5
Volleyball	\$5
Sporting Events at High Schools	\$5 (Eighth graders on JV teams for high school)

### **The York County Athletics Pledge**

By signing this pledge (via SchoolCash Online), the student-athlete and parent or guardian affirm each has read and understands all the rules, regulations, and expectations listed in the YCSD Athletics Handbook. Further, it is agreed that all student-athletes must abide by the rules.

By signing, the student-athlete and parent/guardian are advised that participation in interscholastic practice and competition may be dangerous. Furthermore, it is understood that no amount of protective equipment will eliminate potential injury. Even under the safest and most secure conditions, some athletic activity may result in serious, and possibly fatal, injuries. If a student-athlete exhibits unusual symptoms, he or she should immediately stop playing and report the conditions to the coach, athletics trainer, and his or her parents/guardians. The student-athlete will not return to a game or practice until all symptoms are eliminated, the student-athlete has received medical clearance and has met VHSL guidelines. Ignoring this warning may lead to more serious or fatal injury. Remember: anyone deciding to compete in an athletics program does so with a clear understanding of this risk of injury. Additional questions about such risks should be directed to the coach or athletic director prior to participation in practice or competition.

Parents/guardians and supporters of athletics who interfere with a game or participants of the game (student-athletes, coaches, and officials) may result in disciplinary action taken by the school division, the Bay Rivers District League, and/or the VHSL. Such actions may be taken against our student-athletes, our teams, and parent/guardian-spectators. Acceptable and appropriate sportsmanship is a fundamental component of our athletics program. Parents/guardians are advised to direct questions and concerns about their student-athlete to the following individuals: (1) team coach; (2) athletic director (AD); (3) principal. Please start with the coach before speaking with the AD or principal.

Parents/guardians are not to approach coaches during or after any practice or team competition. If there is a concern to discuss with the coach:

- The student-athlete should talk to the coach
- The parent/guardian should set up a meeting with the coach

- A telephone call should be made to set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss your concerns

Our signatures on the sign-off sheet indicate that we have read and agree to comply with the contents of conduct, philosophy, and eligibility expectations herein. We agree that the student-athlete will attend all practices and games in which his or her school athletics team participates. This implies that the school team's activities take precedent over any club, recreational or non-school events.

### **Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Rule**

The student shall have submitted to the principal of his/her school, prior to becoming a member of any school athletic squad or team, Virginia High School League Form (Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form), completely filled in and properly signed, attesting that he/she has been examined and found to be physically fit for athletic competition, and that his/her parents' consent to his/her participation.

#### **Notes:**

- (1) The physical examination shall be required before any student is accepted as a squad member or is permitted to engage in tryouts or practice. Any person licensed to practice medicine or osteopathy may conduct the physical examination and may sign the form, as can a licensed nurse practitioner or a physician assistant under the regulations of the State Boards of Medicine and Nursing and under the supervision and direction of a licensed physician.
- (2) Students taking part in athletic contests should be in fit physical condition. This condition can be attained only through properly conducted and systematic training procedures. It is recommended that coaches and physical education directors insist upon strict observance of the accepted rules of training as a requisite for squad membership.
- (3) Students who have been examined once during the period of May 1 of the current year through June 30 of the succeeding year (14 months) do not have to be examined again during that period unless they have had a serious injury or a serious illness. In case of a serious illness or serious injury, the medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy treating the student may specify in his/her release of the patient that the student is approved for athletic participation for the remainder of the school year.

### **Required Forms to be completed:**

Form **O-41** – Combined Concussions and Return to Play, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and Heat-Related Illness in Student Athletes prior to participating in any extracurricular physical activity (Submit signed hard copy to Athletic Director) **\*Forms located on school athletic website *and* AD's office/Classroom**

The **Athletics Pledge**, and the **Parental/Guardian Statement of Understanding (via SchoolCash)**

***\*Failure to submit required forms will result in the inability of the student-athlete to participate.***

#### ***Virginia High School League Regulations***

VHSL regulations state the following: "Final authority and the ultimate responsibility in all matters pertaining to interscholastic activities of each school, both athletic and non-athletic, shall be vested in the principal who acts under the authority granted by the division superintendent of schools."



302 Dare Rd.  
Yorktown, Virginia 23692

# REPORT IT

YCSD students, parents and staff members have a collective responsibility to report incidences of misconduct, such as threats, bullying, discrimination and/or harassment, to the York County School Division.



**Tell a  
trusted  
adult**



**Report on the  
YCSD App or  
[yorkcountyschools.org/ReportIt](http://yorkcountyschools.org/ReportIt)**



**Call the YCSD Hotline  
at  
757-890-5000**

***Choose the reporting method that works best for you!***

All reports made are confidential. Reports are retrieved and investigated daily (calls and forms submitted after 5 p.m. will be reviewed by 8 a.m. the next business day).

*The York County School Division does not discriminate on the basis of race (Title VI), color, religion, national origin, veteran status, sex, gender (Title IX), age or disability (Section 504), or any other protected class in its educational programs, activities or employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following positions have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:*

**Title IX Coordinator**  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
302 Dare Road  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
757-898-0349

**Section 504/ADA Coordinator**  
Director of Student Services  
302 Dare Road  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
757-898-0455

**YORKCOUNTYSCHOOLS.ORG**