

Cotton Center Elks
and
Lady Elks
Athletic Handbook
2011-2012



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PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Our philosophy of athletics is one of hard work, discipline, sacrifice, enthusiasm, teamwork, and pride. We feel that each individual that participates in our program will learn about all of these important attributes and, therefore, build a successful and moralistic character.

In our program we will have high expectations for success on the field and set high standards for our actions off the field as well. We believe that our student/athletes will benefit from our well structured, organized, and disciplined program.

Each student athlete is expected to follow the rules of our athletic policy and the rules set by the coach of his/her sport. In doing so, we feel the athlete will gain a sense of accountability and mature to make better decisions in life.

Athletics can and will provide many opportunities for socialization, character building, goal setting, dealing with success, dealing with failure, cooperating with others, overcoming adversity, sustaining enthusiasm through tough times, and, of course, having fun by gaining a satisfaction that is hard to come by through other avenues.

We believe athletics serves a vital role in the education of our youth. So many valuable traits are taught through these settings that are hard to teach in a normal educational setting. Therefore, we feel participation in athletics should be encouraged by our parents, community, school, faculty, and administration.

Our athletic department feels strongly about the strength and conditioning phase of our program as it serves as the foundation for success in each of our sports. We will emphasize this throughout the entire year including the summer months. This reduces the risk of injuries and makes our student/athletes stronger, quicker, and overall better.

Each coach must show an interest in our student/athletes and serve as an example to our young men and women. The coaches must help our youth set goals, point them in the right direction, and lead them as they work to achieve those goals.

We do, however, take the approach that athletics is a privilege and not a right. When a young man or woman signs up for athletics and becomes a member of the team, he/she is making a commitment. That commitment includes the obligation to follow the rules and regulations of the program. The student/athletes should realize that they are not forced to participate. It is voluntary; therefore, they are expected to follow rules in order to remain a member of the team and program.

GENERAL STATEMENT TO ATHLETES AND PARENTS

According to the University Interscholastic League rules, being in athletics is a privilege and not a right. When a young man or young woman signs up for athletics and becomes a member of the team, he or she is making a commitment. The students and their parents should know they are obligated to follow the rules and regulations of the program. The students should realize that they are not forced to participate. It is voluntary; therefore, they are expected to follow rules in order to remain a member of the program.

Parents should encourage their son or daughter to achieve success in athletics. Success is defined as participating at 100% of the individual's ability. We can never expect athletes to do more than they are capable; however, we do want them to obtain their full potential. Supportive parents can instill this desire in student athletes, and it will remain with them long after their playing days are over.

Parents should strive to help their son or daughter achieve their potential by seeing that the student is on time, attends practices and games, and follows rules and regulations set by the athletic department.

Each student must have the following documents on file in order to participate in games:

- a. Complete physical form

- b. Current medical history form
- c. Acknowledgment of UIL rules form
- d. Steroid Form
- e. Acknowledgment of Cotton Center ISD rules form

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES

1. **BANQUETS**

We will provide recognition for each sport at an annual awards banquet to be held at the end of the school year. Do not plan parties, meals, etc. for teams as we could be in violation of UIL rules.

2. **DRUGS**

Drugs will not be tolerated. First offense will result in dismissal from team and program. Returning to the team and program will not be allowed without approval of the Athletic Director and Head Coach of the sport involved, as well as, proof of attendance in a drug rehab program or counseling. In addition, extra conditioning for athletes will be completed.

3. **ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

Alcohol and any form of tobacco will not be tolerated. First offense will result in disciplinary action, consisting of extra conditioning and one game suspension. The conditioning must be completed before an athlete competes in a game. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the athletic director. Second offense, see DRUGS above.

4. **PROFANITY**

We do not allow it. Each offense will result in disciplinary action consisting of extra conditioning.

5. **EARRINGS/BODY PIERCING/TATTOOS**

Earrings and body piercing on male athletes will not be tolerated. Body piercing on female athletes will not be tolerated. Tattoos must be covered up at all times when on school grounds or during school functions, games, and public workouts. Disregarding this rule will result in extra conditioning, as well as, removing the rings or covering the tattoo. Refusing to remove the rings or cover the tattoo can result in dismissal from the program. Rings must be removed before entering the field house (for boys) or before leaving the locker room for practice (girls).

6. **STEALING**

Stealing, especially from your teammates, will not be tolerated. An athlete caught doing so must apologize (to victim, coach, and team) and complete extra conditioning. Depending on the degree of the offense, an athlete may be prosecuted by the law and dismissed from the program. This includes not returning school equipment after the season is completed (see also #15).

7. **CONDUCT**

The athletes that have preceded you have given a great deal of class to our program. Do not do anything to take away from this. We are to be noted for our clean, tough, competitive play. We do not shoot off our mouths on or off the field/court. Praise your opponents and play to the full extent of your ability. We expect you to conduct yourselves as ladies and gentlemen at all times. This means that you are to follow school rules and procedures while attending class at our school. You are to act properly in class and give your teachers and administrator courtesy and respect. We also expect you to act properly in public realizing that you are always representing our school and program no matter where you are. We know that each of you do not have the same ability, but we expect each of you to perform to the best of your ability and to always conduct yourself

in a proper manner.

8. ATTENDANCE

Do not skip class or workouts. Do not be tardy for class or workouts. If you must miss the athletic period and/or practice, be sure that it cannot be helped. Do not make appointments during the time to be devoted to athletics unless another time is not available. **ABSENCES:** If you must be absent, call and talk to one of the **COACHES** before the athletic period. If you fail to call, it will be considered an unexcused absence. If you are absent for any reason, you must bring a note from a doctor, parent, or guardian. A note does not replace the requirement for calling. A note, however, confirms the excused absence. If there is not a note then it will revert back to an unexcused absence. Make up's for excused absences are required except when the absence is due to another school function. If you miss both the athletic period and the sport practice, you will have to do make up for both. Excused make ups must be completed on the first available date, excluding game days. Make up and punishment for unexcused absences is required and must be done before an athlete is allowed to participate in competition.

TARDIES: If you are late for a practice or athletic period, it will result in extra conditioning. Any tardy past 10 minutes will count as an absence (see above) unless you have previously made arrangements with the coach.

9. INJURY OR ILLNESS

If you are injured or ill, you must have a note from a doctor or have seen a coach before you are allowed to sit out of a practice with head coach approval. The coach must be notified of any injury before you leave practice each day so we can give you the attention you may need or if you need to see a doctor, you must have the insurance form from the coach. If you are ill or injured, we do not expect you to do a full workout; however, there may be some make up required. Sometimes there may be supplemental work you can do. If not, then you are expected to wear the uniform of the day and accompany your group from station to station unless given permission by your head coach to do something else. Parent notes will only be accepted for one day, after that we must have a doctor's note if the athlete is to miss more days. If the trainer sets up treatment time and the athlete skips, it will be made up as an unexcused absence.

10. RESPECT FOR COACHES

Coaches should receive a "Yes Ma'am/Yes Sir," or "No Ma' am/No Sir" response from players when talking to them. Players in return will be treated with respect by their coaches. Whenever a coach is speaking with you either individually or as a group, you will give him/her your undivided attention and will establish eye contact.

11. PROMPTNESS

Always be on time. On trips, the bus will wait for no one. During school, you will have 7 minutes after the first bell to be dressed in the uniform of the day and be at your designated station. Tardiness will result in group and/or individual disciplinary action (see #9).

12. DRESS

You should be very professional in uniform and out. Everyone will wear his/her uniform in the same manner. No one will be different. Those that forget their workout clothes will receive a spare set and must turn them back end at the end of the day. Disciplinary action will be taken for not having your workout clothes. Athletic shoes are required for workouts. No boots, flip flops, or other non athletic shoes are allowed. Your appearance away from the field house/gym should reflect the same class and pride that you show in our program. Athletes will be required to wear travel shirts on the day of games as issued by the head coach of that sport if possible. If not, the coach may require certain dress expectations on game day. Caps may be worn on athletic trips

if they are a Cotton Center Elk cap. At all times, these Cotton Center Elk caps are to be worn with the bill in the front.

13. APPEARANCE

To attain a team appearance and for safety reasons, hair should be neatly trimmed and abide by the student handbook. Men should have no facial hair and side bums no longer than the bottom of the earlobe. Tails and long hair will not be allowed. Women should possess a hairstyle that will keep hair out of the eyes. Stay away from unusual hair designs and coloring. If hair is dyed it must be a natural hair color and not distracting. Athletes who disregard this policy will not be allowed to participate in games until the matter is resolved (shaved, haircut, etc).

14. CARE OF FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

You are to hang your equipment and clothes in your lockers. You are to clean your equipment before going into the dressing room. When you change into your workout clothes, your school clothes should be hung in your locker. Latrines and toilets are to be flushed, showers and faucets turned off completely, and all trash thrown into the trash can, especially drink lids and cans. Clean up in and around your locker each day. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in team disciplinary action. Any equipment or clothing issued to an athlete becomes his/her responsibility. The athlete will be responsible for the cost of his/her issued equipment/clothes if they fail to turn it back in or if it has been damaged (excluding normal wear and tear). Other disciplinary action may be taken if the cost is not covered, including: lines, not being allowed to participate in games, removal from the athletic program, and not being able to walk at graduation. If lines are used, it will be 2 lines for every \$1 in value for the article. Value of article is figured on replacement cost including shipping and handling. For example at 8.95 t-shirt may be valued at 10.00 to cover cost of replacing the item (not ordering bulk) and shipping. \$10 would be 20 lines.

15. QUITTING

Anyone quitting a sport after a trial period of 5 days (beginning with the first official practice of that sport) will be allowed to participate in another sport on a case by case basis. Participation may be allowed by the Coaching Staff, and may include any or all of the following: extra conditioning, sitting out time, or extra duties.

The Coaching Staff may decide to make an exception to this rule when an event outside the control of the athlete or his/her family causes the athlete to drop a sport. A clear understanding is to be reached by the time the sport is dropped.

An athlete must inform the coach in person when he/she decides to quit a sport. An athlete is considered to be participating in a sport until he/she has informed, (FACE TO FACE), the coach otherwise. Each practice that an athlete misses without telling the head coach will be considered an unexcused absence and make up must be completed prior to participating in the next sport. A one time 72 hour grace period will be allowed. This means that if an athlete quits a sport and decides to come back to that sport within 72 hours, he/she will be allowed to do so under the following guidelines: 1.) Come to the coach by athletic class the following day and express his/her intentions of rejoining the sport and the reasons why. 2.) Apologize to the coaching staff and team. 3.) extra conditioning. 4.) Make up any practice that he/she missed. All punishment and make up must be completed before participating in an athletic contest.

16. DISMISSAL FROM A SPORT/ATHLETICS

A coach may remove an athlete from a sport, and, consequently, from the athletic program at any time. A dismissal will be based on several factors, including but not limited to, the following: fighting with other athletes, stealing, illegal substance use, chronic attitude problems, repeated

acts of disrespect toward coaches/teachers/officials/other athletes, repeatedly missing athletic periods and/or sport practices/games. A dismissal will be at the discretion of the head coach of a sport with final approval given from the athletic director. The parents/guardians will be notified of the dismissal. Dismissals are our last form of discipline and we do not like to use it. However, there are times it is necessary. An athlete dismissed from a sport (but not the athletic program) may re enter another sport under conditions set in policy #16.

17. GAME DAY ATTENDANCE

Athletes must be in attendance on the day of an athletic contest unless a doctor's appointment makes it necessary for an athlete to miss part of the day. (We strongly encourage you to check schedules before setting appointments; it is very important for athletes to be in class on the day of a contest). For specific questions about attendance, check the student handbooks for middle school and high school.

18. MULTIPLE SPORTS

Athletes are encouraged to participate in more than one sport; however, eligibility to participate in a particular sport will not be based upon participation in a second sport. Athletes still in one sport will not start another sport until the current sport season ends. This applies for major sports such as football, basketball, baseball, and track. This will not include cross country, golf, and tennis.

19. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT

All players must realize the responsibilities they take on in being a member of our athletic program. Remember that you are representing yourself, your school, your coaches, your parents, and the community.

20. DISCIPLINE

If you discipline yourself, others won't have to do so; however, several different means of discipline will be used when necessary. Each situation may require a different type of discipline. Whatever type of discipline is required, the purpose is to help the athletes improve themselves and become a better and more responsible person. Failure to accept this on the part of an athlete may result in dismissal from the team and program.

21. RIDING TO ATHLETIC EVENTS/MEALS

All athletes are required to travel to and from athletic events with the team. Exceptions to this must be approved by the head coach and athletic director. Exceptions must be extreme cases to be approved. In traveling to athletic events, athletes must have prior written approval by both the head coach and the athletic director. In leaving an athletic event, Parent/Guardians must sign out the athlete before they are allowed to take them. No one besides the parent or direct guardian is allowed to do so no matter the relation or age of the athlete. If we are feeding our athletes on a particular trip, the athlete is expected to eat with the team. We will ask during the week which athletes will be eating, if an athlete says they will eat but does not attend, they will be responsible for the cost of the meal. Meals will be provided for our athletes when trips are in excess of 6 hours, or one way travel of 75 miles or more, overnight travel, or in special circumstances as approved by the Superintendent. Student travel is governed by administrative guidelines and subject to approval by the superintendent.

22. OFF SEASON/ATHLETIC PERIOD REQUIREMENTS

All athletes are required to go through off season/athletic period in the fall and the spring in order to participate in athletics. This means that you must go through off season/athletic period the semester preceding the sport/sports in which you will participate. You are also required to

be in off season/athletic period while your sport is in season. This will include seniors as well. Fall sports that require having been in the previous spring semester off season are cross country, football, and basketball. Spring sports that require having been in previous fall semester off season are track, golf, and tennis.

23. SPORTS OFFERED

We offer a wide variety of sports that include team, individual, and team/individual participation. For our high school students we offer cross country, football, basketball, golf, tennis, and track. In our junior high program we offer football, basketball, and track.

24. CELL PHONES

Cell phones are allowed on bus trips only. However, they must be turned off. If a student is caught using a phone without the coach's permission, the coach will take it up from the student and turn it in to the secondary school office, and the Student Code of Conduct will be enforced for violation of cell phone policy.

25. AEP/ISS

ISS: If an athlete receives ISS, he/she must make up the athletic period workout as an unexcused absence. He/she will be allowed to practice after school if he/she is currently participating in a sport.

AEP: When an athlete receives AEP, it is for a serious offense or for repeated problems at school. The athletic director at this time may decide to remove the athlete from athletics permanently. If, however, the athlete is allowed to stay in athletics, he/she must complete the punishment set for his/her offense, as well as, make up the time missed as unexcused absences. This make up must be completed before the athlete can participate in a game or contest. Depending on the offense, the athlete may not be allowed to participate in a sport for the remainder of the year. Also keep in mind that the athlete is not receiving double punishment because he/she is serving AEP and punishment from athletics. Athletics, though offered during school hours, is considered to be an extracurricular activity that is not a required course. AEP is punishment that must be served for the school. Athletics, having its own policies outside the school's, will set consequences as well.

26. GRADE CHECKS

The athletic department will conduct weekly grade checks for all athletes. Grade checks will be accomplished electronically. We want to emphasize the importance of academics and getting a good education. Therefore, we will enforce the following rules on grade checks:

- a.) For every zero the athlete will have extra conditioning.
- b.) For every missed assignment the athlete will have extra conditioning.

Athletes: Please take care of your business in the classroom!

27. CONFERENCES

If you would like to set up a conference with a coach, please do so by contacting either the school office or the coach and requesting a conference during the coach's conference period. Please do not confront a coach directly before or after an athletic contest or practice, as emotions will probably play a big part in what is said. Coaches will not conference with a parent during these times without consent of the athletic director. We also require that all conferences include the athlete in addition to the parent/guardian, head coach. We encourage our athletes to direct any questions they may have toward the coaching staff so we can be made aware of any concerns.

28. COACHES' DISCRETIONS

The head coach of a sport has the discretion to enforce guidelines and set policies within his/her

individual sport provided they are consistent with and do not contradict the set policies of the overall philosophy of our athletic program. He/she will be responsible for notifying the players of these policies and carrying the policies out consistently. Playing time is completely within the discretion of the coach and is not an item for parent discussion.

29. ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION

If the administration and/or athletic director decide that policies need to be added or amended, they may do so at any time and these policies will become effective immediately. Notification of changes will be given to the athletes as soon as possible.

30. LETTERING POLICY FOR ATHLETICS

See lettering policy in student handbook

Seniors or injured athletes who do not meet the criteria for being awarded a letter and/or letter jacket, may be awarded one at the discretion of the athletic director and head coach of that sport. Managers must volunteer for three sports in order to receive a letter jacket. If you are a senior you will be given the opportunity to receive a letter jacket. Each season you manage you will receive a letter.

31. Called Practices/games not on Normal Schedule

Coaches may hold volunteer practices or schedule non mandatory meets or games. These situations will not count as missed games, practices, or meets. Also if an athlete misses while participating in a school event **AT A COMPETITION AND NOT A RECREATIONAL FIELD TRIP** it will not count against them. For example, if the Ag class goes to New York for national competition, it would be excused. However, if the basketball team goes to watch the state tournament, it is not excused since they are not competing and it is not an actual class field trip. In these situations we will often make arrangements to have the athlete back for practice.

PARENT/ATHLETE/COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDE

OUR PHILOSOPHY

- A. Athletic achievement requires sincere commitment from all athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators. For all of us to be successful, effective communication must occur. The school athletic department and administration believe strongly in being accessible to parents and supportive of the coaching staff. We are continually attempting to improve communication with the students and parents. For our programs to be truly successful, it is necessary that everyone understand the focus and direction of the program.

YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- B. It is reasonable to expect your child's coach to inform you:
1. When and where practices and contests are held.
 2. About his /her coaching philosophy.
 3. About the expectations he/she has for all athletes on the squad as well as your individual child.
 4. What is required to be a part of the team, i.e. fees, special equipment, off season/in season conditioning, lettering requirements, etc.
- C. Typical concerns of parents that are appropriate to discuss with a coach are:
1. Any unhealthy mental or physical strain you detect in your child at home (especially when it affects his/her academic performance).
 2. How you can contribute to your child's skill improvement and development.

3. Any dramatic changes you detect in your youngster's behavior.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

A. It is inappropriate to discuss with a coach:

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy or play calling.
3. Other student athletes.

B. Coaches often need parents to tell them:

1. Any specific health concerns about your son/daughter expressed directly and informally to the head coach at a mutually convenient time.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Your commitment to the program, and how you plan to make a contribution to the program's success. For example, one way is to be sure your youngster is at practice each day on time and to supervise that your child gets enough rest and nutrition at home.
4. Strategies that have worked for you in dealing with your son/daughter being successful in the past.

C. If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, what procedure should you follow?

1. Make an appointment with the coach. Never approach the coach after a game unless the coach requests this. It is a part of our athletic policy, and we expect this to be followed.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director to set up the meeting.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or following a contest or practice. These can be busy and emotional times for both the parent and the coach; furthermore, this period does not promote objective analysis of the situation.

D. What should you do if the meeting with the coach does not result in a resolution to the problem?

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
2. Please do not skip the correct chain of command when addressing the problem. For example: do not confront the athletic director, principal, superintendent, or board members without following the correct procedures first.

E. Correct Procedure when there is a problem to address:

1. Meet with the head coach of that sport.
2. Meet with the Athletic Director if meeting with the head coach does not resolve the problem.
3. If meeting with the Athletic Director does not resolve the problem, the athletic director will inform you of the next step to follow.

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I have read the Cotton Center ISD Athletic Policy. I understand all of the policies and agree to abide by them as long as I am in the athletic program. I understand that refusal to follow these policies could result in disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

THIS PAGE IS TO BE RETURNED TO THE COACH PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF PRACTICE

