

DR. PHINNIZE J. FISHER MIDDLE SCHOOL



ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

MISSION: *The mission of the Athletic Department is to inspire, educate, empower, and prepare its participants for high school programs while providing a positive lifelong experience that promotes the development, both socially and physically, of young athletes.*

Our philosophy: *We believe athletics teach students many invaluable, intangible traits-- necessities for productivity in our society--such as, but not limited to, self-discipline, personal commitment, loyalty, sportsmanship, teamwork, the value of preparation, and a hard work ethic. We believe participation in athletics enhances student academic performance and school attendance. We believe athletic activities have a positive effect upon the participant's self-image, mental alertness, social competence, and ethical awareness. We believe that the spirit of competition and the will to excel--necessary elements associated with athletic activities--are valuable to the development of a healthy mind and a productive citizen. We believe in teaching the skills and fundamentals of the game; that athletes are here to learn how to play, then how to win as best we can. Student athletes are highly visible persons and representatives of our school. Public opinion is formed about the school and the individual by their attitude, appearance and behavior. Our students must behave accordingly.*

Principal: Jeremie Smith

Director of Athletics: Justin Girone

Athletic Administrator: Tracy Burns

GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS
EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Vision Statement: We envision a school system that offers an extracurricular program for its students that is considered a model for all other districts in South Carolina. Our vision for the extracurricular activities program is that it will match the expectations the District has for its academic program, will be considered an asset to the academic mission of the schools, and will enhance all aspects of school life. We envision a program that offers quality facilities that are student and people friendly and quality coaching for its administration. Ultimately, we envision an extracurricular program that all of its participants, students, parents, coaches and administrators, can be proud of and one that promotes lifelong personal and community wellness and contributing, productive citizens.

MISSION: The mission of the extracurricular activities program is to inspire, educate, and empower its participants with positive lifelong educational experiences that produce contributing, productive citizens in our American society.

***“Inspire, educate, and empower students
through interscholastic extracurricular activities.”***

BELIEFS:

- *We believe the extracurricular activities program is for all students.*
- *We believe that extracurricular activities are an integral part of the total education program and a unique part of the American high school experience.*

- *We believe extracurricular activities teach students many invaluable, intangible traits--necessities for productivity in our society--such as, but not limited to, self-discipline, personal commitment, loyalty, sportsmanship, teamwork, the value of preparation, and a hard work ethic.*
- *We believe participation in extracurricular activities enhances student academic performance and school attendance.*
- *We believe extracurricular activities have a positive effect upon the participant's self-image, mental alertness, social competence and ethical awareness.*
- *We believe that the spirit of competition and the will to excel--necessary elements associated with extracurricular activities--are valuable to the development of a healthy mind and a productive American citizen.*
- *We believe extracurricular activities are a wholesome equalizer because individuals are judged for what they are and for what they do, not on the basis of the social or economic group to which they belong.*

GOAL: **To provide the participants with an extracurricular program that is highly regarded as one of the best in all of South Carolina.**

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide our participants with the best possible administration, supervision and instruction available.
- To provide our participants with quality facilities and equipment that is both safe and people and student friendly.
- To provide our participants with safe, quality transportation to and from all competitions and activities.
- To provide our participants with proper funding to meet all of their needs in the extracurricular arena.

GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT

I. Expectations of Conduct for Students Who Participate in Extracurricular Activities –

Participants on a school team, club, or organization represent not only themselves and their families, but also their teammates, their coaches or sponsors, their schools, and the Greenville County School District. Additionally, extracurricular activities often draw high public interest, visibility and focus of attention in the media. The student's behavior commands a public interest and attention that is unique in its capacity to elevate or denigrate the school district, the school, and the team or organization. Since public support is an essential ingredient of public education, the behavior of students who

participate in extracurricular activities has a significant impact on the school district's pursuit of its mission. High standards of conduct and citizenship are essential precepts of the school district's extracurricular program. These high standards include instilling students with a positive attitude, building strong character, teaching responsibility, and demanding integrity. Participants must set a positive example and be role models for all. To maintain high standards for all extracurricular programs throughout the entire school district, a firmly and fairly enforced code of conduct is necessary. Therefore, all participants shall abide by a code of conduct specifically for extracurricular activities.

II. The Privilege of Participation – Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. School officials may deprive a student of the privilege of participation when they determine that the student's continued participation is not consistent with the high standards of conduct expected of all participants. In particular, whenever a student violates this code of conduct, the student is subject to losing the privilege of participation in extracurricular activities.

III. Unacceptable Conduct

A. The prohibition of unacceptable conduct: Certain conduct by any participant is absolutely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Examples of such unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to, theft, vandalism, disrespect, hazing, harassment, violation of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances restrictions, major infractions of *The Student Code of Conduct*, or violations of law. This unacceptable conduct rule shall be in force twelve months of the year. This means that the school district may penalize or punish a participant who engages in unacceptable conduct during the school term, over a holiday break, or while school is out of session. This also means that the school district may impose sanctions for unacceptable conduct which occurs at school, at a school sponsored event, or off school grounds. The penalty for engaging in unacceptable conduct can include revocation of the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities.

B. Definitions of specific kinds of unacceptable conduct:

- **Theft-** stealing or taking personal property that belongs to another person, school, team, or organization.
- **Vandalism-** willful or malicious breaking, destruction, or defacement of public or private property.
- **Disrespect-** actions that show or express a lack of high regard or respect for others (fellow students, opponents, teachers, coaches, administrators, parents, or adults). This includes actions that result in OSS and the use of unacceptable language (cursing).
- **Hazing-** any action that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers another person, regardless of that person's willingness to participate. These actions may include initiation rituals into a team, club or organization.
- **Harassment-** actions, comments, threats, verbalizations, coercion, jokes, teasing, or intimidation that is based on or takes place because of the race, color, sex, religion, or national origin of another person, who reports the actions as unwelcome.
- **Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal substances restrictions** – Any illegal use or possession of alcohol or tobacco or use, sale, possession, or purchase of any illegal or controlled substance, including prescription drugs.

This list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive and the appropriate staff members may impose disciplinary action for conduct not specifically listed here.

C. Punishment for Unacceptable Conduct:

Generally, when a school official has reason to believe that a student participant has engaged in unacceptable conduct as described in this code of conduct, the responsible school official shall notify the student of the violation and provide the student with the opportunity to present his or her account and explanation. **The responsible school official will then confer with the Athletic Director or designated administrator to determine the appropriate sanction or penalty to be imposed.** The level of discipline imposed is at the school official's discretion, and sanctions may range from reprimands to suspension from a game or contests, or in the most serious incidents of misconduct, dismissal from a team or permanent denial of participating for the remainder of the student's high school career.

Suspension means that the student is not allowed to dress out or participate in a contest or event. It may also include suspension from practice. However, the participant may be required to continue to practice with the team or program.

Dismissal means that the student is no longer a part of the team or program. If dismissed, the participant's uniform and equipment will be taken up and his/her name will be removed from the team or program roster. Re-instatement into the athletic program will be considered only after one calendar year. The principal, after consultation with the District Director of Athletics, must approve any re-instatement.

Some forms of unacceptable conduct may also violate the general code of conduct applicable to all students in the school district. In those situations, the participant is subject to punishment under both the general code of conduct and this code of conduct for extracurricular activities. Under no circumstances will any student who has been suspended from school pursuant to the general code of conduct participate in extracurricular activities during the suspension period.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Substance Abuse: When a coach, teacher, or principal determines that a participant has violated the alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances restrictions, the following penalties shall apply:

First Violation Penalty: The participant will be suspended immediately from a minimum of 20% of the scheduled contests in the participant's sport or activity. If the sport or activity is out of season, then the penalty will be administered at the very next season in which the student is a participant. The student may also be required to submit to on-demand drug testing.

Second Violation Penalty: The participant will be suspended immediately for a minimum of 50% of the scheduled contests. If the sport/activity is out of season, the penalty, or remainder thereof, will be administered at the very next season in which the student participates. The student may also be required to submit to on-demand drug testing.

Third Violation Penalty: The participant will be dismissed from participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the student's high school career.

***Note:** When violation of the alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse restrictions also results in criminal charges, subsection D (below) will also apply.

D. Criminal infractions: Some forms of misconduct may violate local, state, or federal criminal law. If a student participant is charged with a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation, the student shall immediately be suspended from participation in extracurricular activities until the responsible school officials have an opportunity to review the circumstances surrounding the arrest. After reviewing the circumstances that led to the student's arrest, the school official may elect to continue the period of suspension until the criminal charges are resolved or impose disciplinary consequences, to include suspension from games or contests, based on the conduct that led to the student's arrest. Depending on the amount of time necessary for the criminal matter to be resolved and the facts of the matter, the responsible school official shall have the discretion to lift the suspension and return the student to participation on probation pending resolution of the matter.

If the participant is convicted of the offense or pleads "no contest," the responsible school official will impose a minimum one game suspension up to a maximum dismissal of the participant from all extracurricular activities. If criminal charges are dropped or if the participant is found not guilty, he/she may return to regular participation (except to the extent that punishment under either the general or extracurricular code of conduct precludes a return to participation). It is important to note, however, that regardless of the outcome of any criminal charges, a participant will be subject to punishment under the two codes of conduct if the responsible school official determines that a student has engaged in conduct that violates either code of conduct.

IV. Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) – During the period that any participant is serving an out-of-school suspension, the student will not be allowed to participate in practice or games or contests. The participants may return to participation in any activity only after being readmitted to school and attending school for one day. Offenses that lead to OSS may also warrant punishment under this code of conduct for extracurricular activities.

V. Attendance Rule – A student shall not participate in a contest or practice on the day he/she has been absent from school without just reason. Just reason shall be anything beyond the control of the student (ex: school field trip, doctor/dental appointments, bereavement, religious holiday, etc.). However, confirmation notes will be required by the sponsor or coach of that activity. It is expected that students attend at least half a day of school on performance nights to be allowed to participate.

VI. Individual School/Teacher/Sponsor/Coach Rules – Individual schools, teachers, coaches, or sponsors may establish additional rules and regulations for their programs with the approval of the athletic or activities director and principal. The teacher, coach, or sponsor must give all participants written copies of any additional rules and must explain the additional rules to all participants at the start of an event or season. Penalties for violations of the rules shall also be in writing.

VII. Appeal Procedure – A student may appeal any decision of a teacher, sponsor, or coach under this code of conduct by filing with the principal a written appeal within five days of the decision to be reviewed. The appeal must state specifically why the decision should not be implemented. The principal shall render a decision within five days. The

decision of the principal is final. If the principal made the original decision to impose the disciplinary sanction, the student shall be permitted to appeal the sanction to a designated District-level administrator, whose decision will be final.

Message to Student-Athletes...

Participants must be role models and must set a positive example for all. It is our job as coaches, administrators, parents, and the community to instill, build, teach, and demand these lasting qualities in our student athletes. Participation in athletics is a PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT. An athlete must earn this privilege through desire, discipline, and commitment. School officials may deprive a student of the privilege of participation when they determine that the student's continued participation is not consistent with the high standards of conduct expected of all participants. In particular, whenever a student violates this code of conduct for athletic activities, the student is subject to losing the privilege of participation and/or removal from the team.

Student Athletes are expected to:

- ⊖ Exhibit high standards of conduct including high levels of respect, integrity, and responsibility, which are essential precepts of Dr. Phinnize J. Fisher Middle School's Athletic Program, at all times.
- ⊖ Show respect for the judgment and integrity of coaches and officials, and accepting their decisions in a sportsmanlike manner.
- ⊖ Participate fully to the best of their abilities regardless of any discouragement.
- ⊖ Follow all school and athletic department rules.
- ⊖ Behave modestly when successful and be gracious in defeat.

Eligibility:

Requirements for Participation

- ⊖ Pre-participation Physical Evaluation History and Physical Examination Form
- ⊖ Acknowledgement of Risk
- ⊖ Concussion Statement of Acknowledgment
- ⊖ Steadman Hawkins Consent to Treat Form
- ⊖ Birth Certificate
- ⊖ Proof of Academic Eligibility (Prior semester report card)
 - Must be a current 7th or 8th grade student
 - Must have been academically promoted to 7th or 8th grade
 - Second semester athletes must meet GCS Athletics GPA requirements at end of the first semester

All forms must be submitted and approved to PlanetHS.com before a student-athlete is eligible.

Student-Athletes must meet all requirements of eligibility in order to tryout or participate on any athletic team.

Student-athletes must attend all required tryout dates to be eligible to make the team.

Seventh and eighth grade students are allowed to play on high school athletic teams according to the rules of the South Carolina High School League. Student-athletes must follow Greenville County Schools “Request for Change in Level of Play” policy and begin the request with the Director of Athletics at their middle school.

Students below the seventh grade may not participate in interscholastic athletics.

Students who turn 15 before July 1st prior to the current school year beginning will not be eligible to play middle school sports.

Athletic Insurance

Greenville County Schools provides an “excess” insurance policy for purchase by student-athletes on high school teams. This is a requirement for all athletes. There are no exceptions. **Currently this policy is a once per year \$45.00 fee for high school student-athletes and \$23.00 for middle school student-athletes. Our current policy is with McGriff Insurance, formerly BB&T.**

All injuries that occur during practice or a game MUST be reported to the coach/athletic trainer immediately. If the injury requires medical treatment it will be NECESSARY to complete an injury report claim form.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT ATHLETIC INSURANCE: Parents and athletes, please understand the benefits and limitations of athletic insurance. It should NOT be implied or stated that athletic insurance will pay for all medical expenses or all expenses leftover from your personal insurance, and is NOT Gap coverage. Athletic insurance plans are designed to offer basic coverage at a very low premium. When discussing an injury with students and parents, the school cannot determine if a claim is payable, you must submit a claim form and all necessary documents/bills (Primary Insurance EOB, CMS-1500 Form and/or UB-04 Form), to A-G Administrators Inc. Details of where to email, fax, or mail this info will be provided by the school’s Athletic Director or Athletic Trainer.

Transportation

Position on Parents Driving Students to School Sponsored Athletic Events:

Providing transportation for our athletic teams to athletic events is a required expectation of every school. Therefore, the corollary expectation is for every athlete to ride on the bus with his or her teammates to all athletic events. **This action is considered an important part of being a member of the school’s athletic team (“Riding with the team is part of being on the team.”)**. This principle is to be communicated by every school athletic director and coach to all team members and their parents at the beginning of each season.

It is permissible to allow a parent to transport their son/daughter to a scheduled event or home from the event only if the parent has a logical reason for doing so. **Assessing the reason the parent has is purely a judgment by the school official, AD or coach.**

However, the reason can never be based upon the school not wanting to spend money on bus transportation or avoiding the use of an activity bus to transport the team.

Under no circumstances is a school athletic director or coach to allow an athlete to travel to or away from a scheduled contest with the parent or guardian of another athlete. This opens the door directly to an athletic director's or coach's personal liability—especially in light of this position statement.

Parent Responsibility Regarding Transportation:

Parents are expected to pick their children up in a reasonable amount of time after an athletic event. This includes preseason activities, practices, tournaments, games, and any other team sponsored event. A reasonable amount of time is up to 10-15 minutes after an athletic event. It is understood that there are circumstances beyond your control in some instances, so tardy pickups are dealt with on a case by case basis whether or not the tardy pickup will be forgiven. If a tardy pickup is upheld, the policy is as follows:

1st offense- Verbal warning from coach to parent.

2nd offense- A letter is sent home to the parent with documented tardy pickup incidents.

3rd offense- Conference with parent and administration to discuss possible dismissal of student-athlete from team.

Message to Parents...

PARENTS/SPECTATORS CODE OF CONDUCT:

Spectator Expectations: Respect decisions made by contest and school officials. Refrain from taunting, booing, heckling, and the use of inappropriate language. Recognize and acknowledge outstanding performance on both teams. Respect athletes, coaches, officials, and fans. Let the coaches do the coaching for all teams. Violation of these expectations will result in the removal of the person from the event. Repeated or severe actions violating these expectations could result in a ban of all athletic events.

Playing time will not be discussed with a coach before or after a game. An appropriate time can be set up, at the coaches' convenience, to speak with coaches and the Athletics Director about concerns.

All spectators must stay off of the playing court or field before, during, and after games. Violation of this may result in removal from the athletic event, and possibly a ban at future athletic events.

Students who attend athletic events are expected to abide by the Spectator Expectations. Students are still held accountable to the PJFMS Student Handbook at athletic events. Students will follow the same transportation rules for student-athletes:

Parent Responsibility Regarding Transportation:

Parents are expected to pick their children up in a reasonable amount of time after an athletic event. This includes tournaments, games, and any other team sponsored event. A reasonable amount of time is up to 10-15 minutes after an athletic event. It is understood that there are circumstances beyond your control in some instances, so tardy pickups are dealt

with on a case by case basis whether or not the tardy pickup will be forgiven. If a tardy pickup is upheld, the policy is as follows:

1st offense- Verbal warning from administration to parent.

2nd offense- A letter is sent home to the parent with documented tardy pickup incidents.

3rd offense- Student is banned from attending athletic events.

Support the program: volunteer to assist the team outside of coaching. Be your child's best fan: encourage them unconditionally and acknowledge their effort and support of teammates, following coach's instructions, etc. Support and root for all team members; foster team unity. Support the integrity and authority of the coach, whether you agree with them or not. It is important that athletes respect the differences between the coach and their parent's views and wishes. Understand and display appropriate game behavior – make positive remarks, watch, do not berate coaches or officials. Monitor eating and sleeping habits of your student athlete. Help your child keep his or her priorities straight – maintain balance with schoolwork, family responsibilities and free time. Keep sports in its proper perspective – it should be fun for you and your child. Highly skilled students and their parents must be careful to maintain a balanced view. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, maintain a calm demeanor. Keep your goals and needs separate from your child's experience; if your child comes off the field or court when their team has lost and has played their best, help them to see it as a "win." Remind your child to focus on "process" and not only on "results." Striving to win, playing well, and playing hard are important life skills.

GOVERNANCE:

Greenville County Schools:

The high school extracurricular program will be administered under the policies and regulations of Greenville County Schools. The Board of Trustees is the governing authorities whose responsibility it is to initiate and enforce all the policies and regulations. The current "Policies and Regulations Manual" is available in every school's library and principal's office. Policies and regulations that pertain directly to extracurricular activities are included in this handbook located in the "District Policies and Regulations" section.

Under the current organizational structure (1 July, 1999), the Superintendent reports directly to the Board of Trustees. The principals of all schools report directly to the Superintendent. All Assistant Superintendents and Executive Directors and Directors also report directly to the Superintendent. High school athletic directors report directly to the school principal. The role of the District Director of Athletics is to work in cooperation with the Deputy Superintendent for Operations, the Asst. Superintendents for Schools and the High School Principals to enhance the extracurricular programs at all schools. This necessitates this person to work closely with school athletic directors in a leadership and managerial role to formulate and administer district policies and solve problems in the extracurricular arena. Additionally, the position is called on to give input and direction in other extracurricular activities such as fine arts, marching band, chorus and drama.

The Greenville County Middle School Athletics Department

All middle schools in the District are governed by the Greenville County Middle School Athletics Department. **The rules and regulations governing athletics contests for middle schools are established by Greenville County Schools. Middle Schools are governed by the rules and regulations published in its “Handbook.” This “Handbook” contains the Greenville County Middle Schools Athletics Department Constitution, By-Laws and all other rules and regulations of governance. All athletic directors and coaches must be thoroughly familiar with these rules and regulations.** The coach is responsible for properly administering all rules governing his or her particular sport. The school athletic director is responsible for making sure all District rules are properly adhered to by all coaches under his/her management. These regulations include: age of contestants, eligibility, official dates for start of practices, game standards, officials, etc. Guidelines for disciplines issued by the League for violation of rules and regulations are also listed in the Handbook. Coaches are to be familiar with these violations and fines which accompany them. In the event that a violation occurs and a monetary fine is placed upon your school, the coach in charge of the sport in which the violation occurred shall have the responsibility of paying that fine. If the violation involves the negligence of duty of any other members of the athletic department, he/she too shall be responsible for an equal share of the fine. **Neither your school nor Greenville County Schools will pay any monetary fines for violations that occur because of negligence on the part of any member of your athletic department** (see policy in the District Policy and Regulations Section).

NOTE: Should any school within the district become aware of or suspect any violation of District rules or District policy and regulations by another school within the District, they are first obligated to report such to the District Director of Athletics immediately. The alleged violation will be investigated and validated. Should a valid violation involve District guidelines, the Director of Athletics will mediate a meeting between the schools’ principals and athletic directors to resolve the issue.

The National Federation of State High School Associations

The South Carolina High School League is a member of this national organization. A major function of this organization is to write and produce all rules and regulations for all sports played by your schools’ teams. National Federation rules are used in all games. There will be no deviation other than those adopted by the Executive Committee or Legislative Assembly of the South Carolina High School League. These deviations must be approved by the National Federation and are communicated to member schools through the required rules meetings for each sport. These rules meetings are mandatory for all head coaches. Dates for rules meetings are published in the League Handbook and the Bulletins mailed each month to member schools.

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association is a subsidiary professional organization of the National Federation. All school athletic directors are encouraged to join this organization and its state subsidiary, the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association. **Visit the National Federation Website: www.nfhs.org (NOTE: NIAAA has link at this website)**

***-Thank you for your interest and support of Dr. Phinnize J. Fisher Middle School Athletics.
FLY HIGH FIREBIRDS!***

-PJFMS ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT