

# Sweetwater I.S.D. Athletic Handbook

*ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT*

*POLICIES AND GUIDELINES*

## OBJECTIVES OF ATHLETICS

1. The primary objective of our program is to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability in all of our athletes. It is our desire that through competitive athletics our students realize that they can determine the course of their own lives. We believe that through our program we can help our students grow into mature, responsible citizens that contribute to our society.
2. We want to ensure that each one of our athletes has an opportunity to be successful. Not every young athlete will have the same level of talent, but every athlete can be praised for his/her work and effort. Every athlete can feel good about himself/herself and his/her role on the team.
3. Sweetwater ISD coaches will work to ensure that our athletes enjoy participating. When it's time to work, we will work and work very hard, but we also are going to find time for our athletes to have fun.

## SWEETWATER ISD ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

### POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

#### ACADEMICS

All athletes are students first and athletes second. **Your primary reason for being in school is to get an education.** We believe that it takes a special person to be a student and an athlete. You are going to have to work harder, stay up later, and get up earlier, etc., because much of your study time will be taken up by athletics. We know that this is not easy, but we expect you to do it because others before you have been able to do it.

Be organized, do not put off assignments. Write things down. If you are having trouble in class, get help from someone. All of our coaches are also good teachers, and they will be more than happy to help you in any way that they can. However, you have to ask! Your coach will check grades periodically, but it is still your responsibility to get help if you are having trouble. Discipline yourself to do your work so others won't have to!

## ATHLETIC CLASS PERIODS

Our coaches believe that we have one of the finest athletic programs in **TEXAS**. This program is designed to make you a better athlete. It is not for any single sport. Its purpose and design is to make you better at all sports. Emphasis will be placed on strength, agility, and conditioning. All athletes participating in the following sports **MUST** be enrolled in an Athletic Period beginning in the Fall Semester: football, volleyball, basketball, golf, tennis, baseball and softball. Any athletes who participate solely in track are required to be in an athletic period beginning in the spring.

The athletic periods will run according to schedule each day. U.I.L guidelines will be followed. We expect our athletes to work year round to become their very best.

## BOYS' & GIRLS' ATHLETIC PERIOD

Sports that are in season will all go through SAC a minimal of 2 times a week. Head Coaches in season will work with Coach Byrd to set up appropriate workouts. This will remain consistent all the way through the year. i.e This isn't something that we ask baseball to do and then we do something different in football. We believe in making our kids as good athletically as we can, and that will help them regardless of what they play.

## ATTENDANCE

**ABSENCES** – No absence will be excused. Absences because of illness, a school function, a death in the family, will be considered legitimate absence and the athlete will only be required to make up the work that was missed. However, with the exception of an illness, athletes must have their coach's approval **before** any such absence occurs. In other words, if an athlete is going to miss a Wednesday practice because of some school function, he or she should let the coach know as soon as possible and get the coach's approval. If an athlete becomes ill during the day, it is his or her responsibility to notify a coach before they go home.

Any such absence not approved by the athlete's coach before the absence occurred will be considered a deliberate miss and that athlete will be subject to disciplinary action in addition to making up the work missed. If excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) occur during a single season, it will be up to the head coach and athletic director's discretion on means of make-up accountability or suspension of games.

**PROMPTNESS** – **Always be on time!** The athlete is responsible for his/her own time. During school, athletes will have a designated amount of time after the athletic period bell to be dressed and ready to go. Tardiness will result in disciplinary measures according to the sport. On trips, the bus waits for no one. **Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated.** If you must miss or if you are late to an athletic period/practice, be sure that it cannot be helped. Do not make appointments on our time. If you must be absent or late, talk to your coach before the athletic period. If you fail to do so, you are subject to disciplinary action.

## ACADEMICALLY INELIGIBLE

We hope all of our athletes take care of their business in the classroom, but we know there are going to be times where we have some of them come up short. When a student is ineligible they are still expected to attend practice and be a part of the team. Practice is not optional because you are ineligible. We understand if you may be late to practice because you are getting extra help or something, but if you are part of the team then you will be treated like part of the team.

## ATTITUDE – WORK HABITS

Your attitude toward the sport will, many times, determine how successful you are at that sport. If you work hard, attend practice, study the sport and listen when the coach corrects your mistakes, then you will enjoy the sport more and have greater success. Do not be a griper or complainer. Negative attitudes benefit no one. Positive attitudes help us all. Learn to take both praise and criticism from your coach. He or she is only trying to make you better. Different coaches have different personalities, so each one may offer criticism in a different manner, but the intent of the criticism is the same: to make you a better player. **There is no substitute for hard work.**

The harder you work, the better you get. Do not allow yourself to be mentally or physically lazy.

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

If a player or parent has a problem or conflict with a coach, there is a proper chain of command to follow. **First, talk to the coach with whom you have the conflict or problem. Second, visit with the head coach of that sport.** Be respectful, honest, and direct, and you will receive the same treatment in return. If you are not satisfied or the problem is not resolved, then go to step three. **Talk with the girls coordinator or the athletic director.** Again, be honest and respectful and you will be treated that way in return. If you still feel that the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction **then you should take the problem to the Superintendent.** This way seems like the long way to go, but almost any problem can be solved in this manner. By following the proper channels most further conflicts and problems can be avoided.

## COACHES/TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS

Each coach, teacher and administrator at Sweetwater ISD is a professional. Working with young people is what they do to earn a living, and they have spent a great deal of time and money training to be good at what they do. Therefore, they will be treated with the respect to which they are entitled. These people should receive “yes ma’am/yes sir,” “no ma’am/no sir” responses from players when talking to them. They in return will treat players with respect. Whenever one of these people is speaking to you, either individually or as a group, you will give him or her your undivided attention and look him or her in the eye. If a player is disrespectful to a coach, teacher,

or administrator, or in violation of athletic policies, he or she will be disciplined. This discipline may be extra physical work or game suspension(s). If the behavior persists on the part of the student athlete, he or she may be removed for the program.

## **CONDUCT**

The athletes who have preceded you have helped us build a well-respected program. We want to be known as a class act. Do not do anything that would detract from this. Our athletic teams are noted for clean, tough, competitive play. We **do not** “shoot off our mouths” on or off the field. Praise your opponents and play to your ability. We expect you to conduct yourselves as ladies and gentlemen at all times. 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 at all times. Misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary actions according to the sport.

If profanity is used at any time or any place the athlete will be subject to disciplinary action. Re-occurrence could result in further disciplinary action.

## **PROGRAM DISCIPLINE**

Our goal is for all athletes to represent our program in a positive fashion all the time. Unfortunately our student athletes will make some poor decisions and we want to deal with them when they do. We want to reinforce positive behavior and address negative behavior. There are so many things that can come up discipline wise that it is impossible to list them all out. There are lots of gray areas on most of these discipline issues, so they will be evaluated on a case by case basis. We are going to have level of offenses. Each offense will be deemed as a level 1, level 2, or level 3.

Things that will be looked at:

Conduct detrimental to the program

Quitting

Stealing

Fighting

Gang Activity

Disrespectful to school personnel

### **Level 1 Offense**

A level 1 offense is something that results in immediate removal from the program. They are out of athletics and will have to go through the re-entry program procedure before the next season starts. In some instances they may be removed from athletics entirely for the remainder of the school year or for the remainder of their time at Sweetwater.

## Level 2 Offense

A level 2 offense is a poor choice but it had some major implications and they must be addressed. Most level 2 offenses will be dealt with by some form of running punishment. If it was severe enough then there may also be some missed time as well. A second level 2 offense can result in the same disciplinary procedures as a level 1— again it depends on what happened.

## Level 3 Offense

A level 3 offense is minor behavioral problems that we want to get fixed. OCS time or suspensions are level 3 offenses. Most of these will be dealt with in athletics with conditioning. If we continue to have the same problems we will treat them as a level 2 offense.

## ELIGIBILITY

An athlete must maintain a 70 average in all classes to be eligible for extracurricular activities. In addition, the athlete must have the correct number of credits at the beginning of the school year.

	Must be promoted to 9 <sup>th</sup>
9 <sup>th</sup>	Must have 5 credits
10 <sup>th</sup>	Must have 10 credits
11 <sup>th</sup>	Must have 10 credits
12 <sup>th</sup>	Must have 15 credits

In order to attend a Division I or II university on an athletic scholarship, the athlete must meet all requirements of the NCAA. High School student athletes should check with the Athletic Director or High School Counselor for these requirements. If an athlete fails two grading periods in a row they will be put on an athletic academic probationary contract.

## EQUIPMENT and UNIFORMS

Sweetwater ISD will issue the proper equipment for each sport. **The athlete will be held responsible for his or her own equipment.** Athletes will be held responsible for lost or stolen equipment. The athlete it was issued to will pay for equipment lost or stolen. Any athlete caught in the equipment room or borrowing another's equipment will be subject to disciplinary action. **Any athlete who is caught stealing will be automatically placed under a level 2 offense and disciplined accordingly.**

An athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport until his or her equipment record is clear in the previous sport. An athlete that does not take care of his or her equipment or hang it up correctly in their locker will be disciplined according to the sport. Dress should reflect pride and class; both in uniform and out. We will furnish your uniform and each coach will set equipment and uniform guidelines. Take care of your equipment.

## FORMS

- All incoming 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade athletes and any athlete who has never had a physical are required to have a physical examination before participating in any athletic contest. All other physicals are kept on file. An athlete who moves into the district should have a copy of his or her physical examination or make arrangements to get it. In addition to a ***“Medical Examination Form”***, all athletes must have a completed

***“Medical History Form”*** an ***“Acknowledgment of Rules Form”*** a ***“Permit for Participation Form”*** and an ***“UIL Steroid Agreement Form”*** that you received in your physical packets and the ***“Handbook Acknowledgement Form”*** (located in the back of this handbook) on file before participating in any athletic contest. Please see to it that your paperwork is completed, signed properly, and up-to-date.

## GROOMING

- Students competing in athletics at Sweetwater ISD will reflect a positive public image in their appearance. Hairstyles and clothing should not be disruptive. To attain a team appearance, as well as for safety reason, hair for young men will be neatly groomed. Women should wear a hair-style that will keep hair out of their eyes. **Men will not be allowed to wear earrings or any other form of body piercing on campus or at any function where they represent Sweetwater High School. Tattoos will be covered.** Athletes at Sweetwater ISD will also not be allowed to wear bandannas or other headgear not appropriate to their sport. Your appearance should, at all times, reflect class and pride in yourself and in our athletic program and must fall within school dress code guidelines.

## BOYS HAIR GUIDELINES

Hair must be a natural color and neatly groomed.

Facial hair must be neatly groomed.

These guidelines will help us be uniform in our appearance and promote a positive image when we participate and travel as a team.

## ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOOTBALL/VOLLEYBALL (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

- Any student that is going to play high school football/volleyball must go through our strength and condition program in the spring semester. This is so our kids are learning hard work and getting prepared for the upcoming season. We don't want to let any kids not work out in the spring while all their teammates are and then show up in August ready to go. They should have been getting ready with us. This is announced after each season ends. If a student not in athletics the prior year wants to play then he/she will be allowed to participate at the beginning of 2-a-days for football or volleyball.

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## LETTERING

The first time a student letters on a varsity team he/she shall receive a school athletic jacket. This is ordered at the end of the season and presented to the athlete. All additional patches or decorations for the jacket will be the responsibility of the individual student. Students participating in athletics at the sub varsity levels will be recognized for their efforts at assemblies in the fall or spring for each of the sports in which they took part.

To letter, an athlete must meet three requirements.

He/She must compete in a specified number of interscholastic contests at the varsity level.

He/She must be recommended for lettering by the Athletic Director or by the coach.

He/She must complete the season in good standing as a team member.

Letter requirements for each sport are as follows:

**Football** – To letter in varsity football, the athlete must be on the varsity team for at least half of the regular season.

**Basketball & Volleyball** – To letter in varsity basketball or volleyball, an athlete must be on the varsity for half of the regular season.

**Powerlifting** – To letter in power lifting, an athlete must participate in three powerlifting meets and complete all lifts in at least two meets.

**Track** – To letter in track, an athlete must represent the school in at least one-half of the regular varsity meets and score a minimum of 10 points or point at the district track meet.

**Golf** – To letter in golf, a student must compete in two regular season tournaments and the district tournament as a member of the varsity team.

**Tennis** – To earn a letter in tennis, a student must compete in at least one-half of the regular season tournaments and the district tournament as a member on the varsity team and win at least one set.

**Baseball & Softball** – To letter in varsity baseball or softball, an athlete must compete in a minimum of ten games at the varsity level. If no Junior Varsity team is fielded due to lack of numbers, student must compete in a minimum of 30 innings to letter.

All final decisions concerning athletic letters will fall under the discretion of the coach of the sport and the athletic director.

## INJURY OR ILLNESS

If you have an injury, it is your responsibility to report it to your head coach and the athletic trainer. He/she will either treat the injury or if the injury is too severe for him/her to handle, he/she will refer you to your family physician.

If you do not come to school, call one of these numbers **daily**. Boys: 235-3455 Girls: 235-4371 and let the coach know you will not be at school or workout.

If you are sick or injured we do not expect you to work out, **but if you are at school we do expect you to be at practice, in the required uniform following your group from station to station and learning as much as you can.** If your illness requires a visit to a physician, bring us a note from the physician telling us how long you will be out. If an athletic injury occurs then inform your coach and athletic trainer. Allow the athletic trainer to evaluate the extent of the injury and determine if a doctor's assistance is needed. **We will treat what a doctor says as law; you will not be allowed to return to practice until the doctor releases you.** We will keep a file of these doctor's notes, so please be sure and get one.

If you have any injury that needs rehab you will stay in the program and receive treatment and perform your rehab exercises. If you have a prolonged medical condition that prohibits you from participating and it is something that cannot be rehabbed or treated then you will have your schedule changed and be removed from the athletic period.

## LOCKER ROOM

During the course of the season you will spend a great deal of time in this room. **Take care of it like it is your own; it is.** Keep it clean by putting trash and tape in the trash can. Do not wear muddy shoes or steel cleats in this area. Make this room a more pleasant place for everyone.

The locker room is also a private place. It is a place where your team family meets. What is said in the locker room should stay there. Do not be a busy body, a rumor can grow until it disrupts a whole team.

Each locker room will have guidelines posted for teams to abide by. Each team member is expected to know these guidelines and follow them. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in disciplinary measures according to the sport.

The athlete will be responsible for keeping his or her locker neat and clean for hygienic and organizational reasons. Your coach will explain to you how your locker is to be kept.

If music is played there will be **NO profanity allowed.**

## QUITTING POLICY

We hope that all students that want to participate in athletics do so, but there are always going to be students that tried a sport and found out that it wasn't what they were thinking. We want to encourage students to try a sport and then not punish them if they realize that it wasn't what they wanted to dedicate their time to. Our policy is that our students have **3 weeks** to determine if they like how things are going and how things are being run in the program. If a student is still with us when the 3 weeks are over then they are with us until the end, so if a student quits after this time they have to be readmitted into the athletic program and cannot start the next sport until the season of the sport they started is over. (Under a coach's supervision) Students wanting to be readmitted into athletics will have to run 2 bowls for 5 consecutive school days. This is so students have to think about whether or not they really want back in. They made the decision to quit and we want them to show us some commitment over a period of a few days before we let them back in. This must be done with a coach present and on the students time (before or after school).

## SCHEDULING CONFLICTS

Conflicts will arise in which an athlete will be participating in some other extracurricular activity. These conflicts are handled using the following rule. **A district contest will always take precedence over a non-district contest and a district contest will always take precedence over a field trip.** Using this rule, all participants will be given an opportunity to compete in the major contests or events of any extracurricular activity. The Athletic Department will do everything possible to avoid conflicts of this type.

An athlete participating in multiple sports that do not begin at the same time will not be allowed to participate in the competitions of the latter sport until the season of the previous sport is complete.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**An Extracurricular Drug Testing Policy is in place. You may refer to it on the SISD Web site or the SHS Code of Conduct Handbook.**

Students who represent Sweetwater ISD by their participation in any University Interscholastic League activity are expected to exemplify the highest standards of conduct and safe, healthy behavior. Use of alcohol, tobacco, and /or drugs **will not be tolerated.** Specifically, students are expected not to sell, deliver, possess, give, use individually or be present at social gathering where alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are made available to minors. (Use or possession of other forms of drugs or controlled substances may be dealt with differently according to the law.) An athlete agrees to abide by this Substance Abuse Policy and its consequences for his/her entire tenure at Sweetwater High School.

Sweetwater ISD has set a standard for a trace and a positive test results.

**TRACE:** If the test indicates traces of an illegal substance, a conference with the student and parent or adult representative, the campus principal, and a coach shall be requested if the athlete plans to continue to participate in any athletic event. The student and parent or adult representative shall be advised of substance abuse counseling available to the student and family. A trace will fall under Level 2 offense which is explained on page 6 of the athletic handbook.

**POSITIVE TEST RESULT:** If the test is positive for an illegal substance, the campus principal shall schedule and conduct a due process conference within five school days. Consequences, which are listed below as strikes; shall begin immediately when the athletic director is notified by the laboratory of a positive test. The athletic director will also be asked to participate in the conference. The student athlete will also follow the guidelines that are listed in the Sweetwater ISD Drug Policy for a positive test results.

This is not based on a year-to-year format and is not contingent on school being in session. To ensure consistency among different groups, the following uniform penalties for failure to adhere to these guidelines will be implemented:

### *Alcohol / Drug Consequences for High School*

#### **1st Strike**

8 Bowls, 8,000 yards bear crawls, 500 word essay over alcoholism or drug abuse, team and parent apology, 1 hour counseling with Head Coach or Athletic Director  
—Must be completed before competition play—

#### **2nd Strike**

Mandatory 2 games, 2 scrimmages or 1 tournament suspension. 12 Bowls, 15,000 yard bear crawls, 1,000 word essay on Leadership, 5 hours of community service  
—Must be completed before competition play—

#### **3rd Strike**

6 week suspension, 15 Bowls, 20,000 yards bear crawls, 10 hours of community service, possibility of 2 Alcohol Anonymous meeting / DSM Grant Program.

#### **4th Strike**

Meeting with parents, athlete, athlete, athletic director, superintendent, Sweetwater ISD School Board about steps needing to help our athlete with recovery and/or removal from athletic programs.

## *Alcohol / Drug Consequences for Jr. High*

### **1st. Strike**

15 mile run, 500 word essay over alcoholism/drug abuse, team and parent apology. 1 hour counseling with Jr. High Coordinator or Head Coach.

—Must be completed before competition play—

### **2nd Strike**

Mandatory 2 games, 2 scrimmages or 1 tournament suspension. 30 mile run, 1,000 word essay on leadership, 5 hours of community service.

—Must be completed before competition play—

### **3rd Strike**

Meeting with parents, athlete, athletic director, superintendent, Sweetwater ISD School Board about steps needing to help our athlete with recovery and/or possible removal from athletic program.

***\*All punishment will be under coaches supervision and mandatory daily practice through each level of offense.***

\*If Strike 1 offense occurs and the athlete goes one full year without another occurrence with alcohol or drug abuse he/she will repeat Strike 1. If Strike 2 is reached in same year then the following levels will be carried out for the rest of the athlete's career at Sweetwater High School.

\*Strikes in middle school do not carry over to the high school.

\*Unfinished consequences must be completed before eligibility is gained in high school.

\*Strike will be carried out only if the athletic director is informed by the athlete, athlete's parents, Sweetwater ISD administration or local authorities.

The Figure 8 is a trip around the top of the bowl – running 3 full sets of steps on each side. Two trips across the floor of the bowl will be made using the ramp at the south end to go down and the stairs at the north end to go back up. As athletes cross the bowl floor they will pause at each yard line marker to do an up/down. (11 total for each pass) This will result in a total of 1300 steps and 44 up/downs being done during each disciplinary session.

2 Figure 8's in bowl per offense.

## **TRAVEL**

All team members are expected to travel to and from competition in school provided vehicles. Extenuating circumstances that necessitate an exception to this rule must be presented to the coach of the team **by the parents or legal guardian** of the student involved. This must be done in writing before the trip begins, and students will only be allowed to leave with their parents or legal guardian.

**SWEETWATER I.S.D**

**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, Sweetwater I.S.D. is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than it would for those students who choose not to participate in these activities. Therefore, this Athletic Handbook extends beyond the Sweetwater I.S.D. Code of Conduct not only in types of behavior prohibited, but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline. We have both read the Sweetwater I.S.D. Athletic Department Handbook and fully understand all of the policies of the Sweetwater I.S.D. Athletic Department Handbook. We both agree to abide by and support these policies.

**Athlete's Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Athlete's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's or Guardian's Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's or Guardian's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

(The Athletic Director will deal with any circumstance not covered in the Athletic Guidelines.)

**PLEASE RETURN SIGNED FORM TO THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**