

MENARD I.S.D.

2023-2024

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

The MENARD I.S.D. Athletic Handbook contains a general statement of the administrative regulations governing the overall athletic program. Provisions of this Athletic Handbook may be expanded, modified, or revoked only by action of the principal, superintendent, or the board of education. If any of the provisions of this athletic handbook conflict with federal or state laws and regulations, or board policy, those provisions are superseded by applicable law or board policy. The provisions of this athletic handbook are severable, and the invalidity, illegality or unenforceability of any provision will not affect the validity, legality, or enforceability of the other provisions.

ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

The Menard Independent School District believes that the district athletic program should be an integral part of the total educational process.

The mission of the Menard I.S.D. Office of Athletics is to insure and enhance the quality of life for youth by providing competitive activities. The pitting of one's skills, knowledge and talent against friendly opponents is a means of learning one's own strengths and weaknesses. Good contests, properly supervised, give youthful competitors the opportunity to gain self-confidence, improve skills, and exhibit good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity. Sports programs help the participant to develop physically, mentally, and morally. Athletic offerings within the district are competitive and diversified, thereby allowing students the opportunity to realize their full potential relative to growth and development. All programs are designed not only to teach athletic skills, but also to instill good character and teach sound values.

It is our final goal that sports activities will produce young men and women who will be able to enter the community and become constructive, contributing members of society: citizens that will leave their mark on this world by making it a better place for future generations.

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. Menard I.S.D. 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.

EXPLANATION OF ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

According to University Interscholastic League rules, being in athletics is a privilege and not a right. **Only those students who abide by school and athletic policies will be allowed to represent Menard I.S.D.** When young men and young women sign up for athletics and become a member of a team, they make a commitment. They are obligated to follow the rules and regulations of the program. They are not forced to participate. It is voluntary; therefore, they are expected to follow the rules of order.

Parents should strive to help their son or daughter to achieve success in athletics. Success is defined as participating 100% of the individual's ability. We can never expect athletes to do more than they are capable of, however, we do want them to obtain their fullest potential. Supportive parents can instill this desire in student athletes long after their playing days are over by seeing that the student is on time, attends practices and games, and follows the rules and regulations.

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 our coaches are also good teachers, and they will be more than happy to help you in any way that they can. But you have to ask! Your coach will check grades periodically, but it is still your responsibility to get help if you are having trouble. **As an athlete you will be required to attend study hall if you are having academic problems. Discipline yourself to do your work so others won't have to!**

ATHLETIC PERIOD

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 who intend to participate in football, cross country, basketball, baseball, softball, tennis, golf, or track must complete the athletic conditioning program.**

The athletic period will run according to schedule each day in accordance with the U.I.L. guidelines.

****NOTE** The high school athletics period will be 8th period throughout the school year!** This has been proven to be our best time to complete the strength and conditioning that our athletes require to compete at a high level. In the springtime, this allows our athletes to complete their track workout by 4:30 (unless working on field events or relay handoffs). This encourages participation in other spring activities by allowing them to practice in other sports by 4:30. This will also allow our athletes time at home to work on schoolwork or simply spend time with family.

Failure to attend the athletics period will be treated the same as if you miss a regular practice. This means that these workouts are very important.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline yourself, so others won't have to! Each situation may require a different type of discipline. Whatever type of discipline is required, the purpose is to help athletes improve themselves, and to become better people. Each head coach of a sport will have set disciplinary actions tailored to them and their program. **Failure to accept this on the part of the athlete or parent/guardian may result in dismissal from the team and/or athletic program.**

COACHES RULE

Coaches may establish additional rules and regulations for their respective sports. The coach must explain the rules pertaining to a particular sport at the start of the season. The coach shall administer penalties for violation of team rules.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES – No absence will be excused. Absences because of illness, a school function, a death in the family, will be considered legitimate absences and the athlete's punishment will become much less severe, usually just small conditioning to make up for lost practice time (consider it makeup homework for a missed class, we need makeup conditioning to stay in shape). 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 three such absences occur during a single season, that athlete may be suspended from the team for the remainder of the season and may not begin another sport until the season ends.**

PROMPTNESS – Always be on time! The athlete is responsible for his/her own time. 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 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/workout. If you fail to do so, you are subject to disciplinary action.**

DISCIPLINARY PLANS

Again, all disciplinary action is left to the head coach of each specific sport. For example, and for documentary purposes, here is Coach Oliver's punishment plan for attendance and discipline during the football season:

- Missed practice (Legitimate: Coach approval/illness/school event) - 1 untimed tire mile
- Missed practice (Unexcused: No coach approval/illegitimate reason) - 1 timed tire mile
 - If the problem continues or punishment stops being severe enough, other punishments will be created, playing time will be affected, or game suspensions will be considered
- Missed game (Non injury related) – 3 timed tire miles plus 1 untimed tire mile for every missed practice
- Discipline Issue in Practice (Language, fighting, throwing helmet, being a bad teammate) - The coaching staff will create a punishment that they deem fit for the crime
 - If the problem continues or punishment stops being severe enough, other punishments will be created, playing time will be affected, or game suspensions will be considered
- **Discipline Issue in Game (Personal foul of any kind, being a bad teammate, fighting, making a scene on sideline) - Any discipline issue during a football game will result in an immediate suspension for the remainder of the game. If our coaching staff deems fit, there may be additional game suspensions or punishments following the game.**

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. Learn to take 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

As your children become involved in the programs at Menard, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. Examples of these situations include the treatment of your child, way to help your child improve, concerns about your child's attitude, or academic support.

It is very difficult to accept your children not playing as much as you wish, or not in a desired position you have for them, or you feel is best suited for them. **It will be the coach's discretion to make all decisions about playing time or position for individual student-athletes, regardless of the score of the game or the personal feelings of the student-athlete's parents.** Coaches are professionals. They make judgements based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things should be

left to the discretion of the coach. Examples include team strategy, other student-athletes, playing time, etc.

The first course of action here at Menard ISD is a conference between **the athlete** and the coach. As a parent/guardian, encourage them to come and talk to their coach if they are not happy with their current situation. **It needs to be their choice first, not the parents.** We are teaching these athletes to become employable and teaching them to speak to their superior when an issue arises is part of that process. Once that discussion occurs, and only then, and the issue has not been resolved, can a parent/coach conference take place. These are not encouraged, but at times necessary. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. There will not be a conference regarding playing time without the student-athlete and the coach present. When these conferences are necessary, there is a proper chain of command to follow. The following procedures should be followed to help promote resolution:

1. Call the coach to set up an appointment. Be respectful, honest, and direct, and you will receive the same treatment in return.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Office. A meeting will be set up for you.
3. Please, **NEVER attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice.** These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Coaches at this school will not have this conversation, no exceptions.
4. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, the next step is to set up an appointment with the Athletic Director (Bryson Oliver).

This way seems like the long way to go, but almost any problem can be solved in this manner. By following the proper channels further conflicts and problems can be avoided.

COACHES/TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS

Each coach, teacher and administrator at Menard I.S.D. 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 is in violation of athletic policies, he or she will be disciplined. This discipline may be extra physical work or other corrective measures. If the behavior persists on the part of the student-athlete, he or she may be removed from the program.

EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Menard I.S.D. 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 suspended from athletics. 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 sport. **Everyone will wear his or her uniform in the same manner – no one will dress differently. You will not be allowed to take any equipment from the locker room.** Take care of your equipment. It is the best money can buy. UIL guidelines prohibit the wearing of any jewelry in practice or during the game.

INJURY OR ILLNESS

Unfortunately, we do not have a full-time athletic trainer; however, several of our coaches have been fully trained and have experience dealing with injuries. If you have an injury, see one of them. They will either treat the injury or refer you to a physician or our contracted trainers from Shannon Medical Center in San Angelo, TX. If you are ill, tell your coach before you leave school. If you do not come to school, call the Menard HS or JH office and leave a message. They will notify your coaches of the illness.

If you are 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. Injured athletes are expected to attend practice, they will be given a workout that does not affect the injury. If the injury is too severe, they will be given a job for practice or games. This is to limit the distraction. Injuries can spread like a virus within a team if other players visually see that the injured player is getting to relax and have a good time. If you get injured and stop attending practice, it will be treated as though you quit that sport.**

If your injury or illness requires a visit to a physician, bring us a note from the physician telling us how long you will be out and what we can do to treat your injury. 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.

LOCKER ROOMS

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 tape and trash 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's said in the locker room stays there. Do not be a stereotype in the locker room, which includes fowl language, causing physical harm (towel popping/pushing/punching), or talking down or bad about one of your teammates.

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/her locker neat and clean for hygienic and organizational reasons. Your coach will explain to you how your locker is to be kept.

QUITTING

Think hard before you decide to go out for a sport. Athletics takes a lot of hard work, time and dedication. **Any participant who quits a sport after they have begun will not be allowed to participate in any other sport until the season has ended in the sport which he/she quit and will be unable to participate in their next scheduled sport.** This may seem harsh, but quitting a sport and on your teammates once you start will never be something the staff at Menard I.S.D. will condone or support, so the punishment must fit the crime.

There is a right way and a wrong way to quit a sport. The right way is to speak to the coach and inform them of your decision to quit. Once you have done this, you will have a 24-hour period to reflect on your decision.

Examples of the **wrong way** to quit a sport are to walk out of a game or practice, or to simply stop showing up to team activities. If this is the method that you choose then you will be removed from the athletic program for a minimum of one calendar year. It will then be up to the head coach of the sport you walked out on and the athletic director whether to allow you back into the program.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understand the Menard I.S.D Athletic Handbook and will abide by all rules and regulations within it.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date