

# STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK



2024-2025

**Daniel Morgan Middle School  
Department of Athletics  
Student-Athlete Handbook**

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## Introduction

We are pleased that your child has chosen to participate in the interscholastic athletic program at Daniel Morgan. Participating in athletics is beneficial to both the student and to the school. However, if maximum benefits are to be attained through athletic participation, it is essential for an athlete to meet certain standards.

We encourage you, as the parent of a student athlete, to read and support the rules and regulations as set forth in this handbook for student Athletes. Please review this material, sign the form at the back of the book, and return it to your athlete's head coach prior to the first practice session. Please retain the handbook for future reference.

On behalf of the administration and coaching staff, we want to thank you for your support of your student athlete and the coaches who work on their behalf. We welcome the opportunity to serve your student athlete.

The Department of Athletics of Daniel Morgan Middle School has as its primary goal the task of establishing and maintaining an outstanding program of interscholastic athletics for the students it serves. The major objective of the program is to provide wholesome opportunities for students to develop positive attitudes, favorable habits, and rewarding experiences through individual and group living in a democratic setting.

It is the responsibility of our coaches to be good teachers, both in the classroom and on the field of play. **Coaching is teaching.** It is our desire to convey the basic principles of good techniques and fair play to each student-athlete.

With these ideas in mind, the Daniel Morgan Athletic Handbook has been compiled to assist you, the student-athlete, with the basic policies and procedures of the Department of Athletics. It will be to you and your parents' advantage to become completely familiar with the contents of this handbook. Should you have questions, please contact the Athletic Director for her advice and counsel.

We wish you an exciting and rewarding year in athletics.

Mrs. Beth O'Donnell, Principal

Mr. Jacob Houser, Athletic Director

**DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS**Athletic Activities OfferedAUGUST – SEPTEMBER - OCTOBERFootball 7<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>Boys Cross-Country 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>Girls Cross-Country 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>Cheerleading 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>Girls Basketball 7<sup>th</sup>Girls Basketball 8<sup>th</sup>NOVEMBER – DECEMBER – JANUARYWrestling 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>Girls Volleyball 7<sup>th</sup>Girls Volleyball 8<sup>th</sup>JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCHBoys Basketball 7<sup>th</sup>Boys Basketball 8<sup>th</sup>Cheerleading 7<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>MARCH – APRIL – MAYTrack and Field – Boys/Girls 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>JV Baseball 8<sup>th</sup>JV Softball 8<sup>th</sup>JV Boys Soccer 8<sup>th</sup>JV Girls Soccer 8<sup>th</sup>

## STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

### Student Responsibilities and Procedures

#### I. Pre-Season

##### A. Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form

No student athlete will be allowed to begin tryouts or practice until this form has been completed and participation approved.

1. Athletic Participation – This section must be filled in and signed by the candidate.
2. Parental Consent – This section must be filled in and signed by the parent or guardian.
3. Student's Medical History – Must be filled in by the student or parent and signed by a physician.
4. Physician's Certificate (VHSL Physical Form) – It is imperative that this section be completed and signed by a physician NO EARLIER THAN MAY 1.

##### B. Insurance

1. All candidates for an athletic team **MUST** have health insurance.
2. Each student also has the option of having his parents sign a waiver form indicating that the parent or guardian has adequate insurance to cover any accident sustained during a related athletic activity.
3. All athletic activities will be covered under the regular school insurance policy.
4. In case of an injury that requires medical attention, IT SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETE to report that injury to the Athletic Director within two days of the injury. If it is not reported within 30 days after the injury date, the claim will not be honored. THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!
5. No student-athlete may practice until insurance responsibility has been arranged (payment or waiver form).

##### C. Equipment Issue

1. Each candidate will be issued certain pieces of school equipment.
2. Each candidate is responsible for the equipment checked out in his name.
3. All lost equipment must be paid for at the rate of replacement cost.
4. Delinquents will be prohibited from participating in the next sport season if past season equipment or obligations are not met.
5. Players that are still delinquent at the end of the school year will be turned over to the administration.
6. No student-athlete is to wear school athletic equipment other than for practice or games, unless authorized by the coach.
7. Team members possessing unauthorized equipment will be disciplined accordingly.

8. All equipment must be handled with the utmost care.
9. After athletic contests each player is responsible to return his equipment to the coach or appointed assistant to be checked in and laundered.
10. At the end of the season each athlete must personally meet with the coach to return equipment and verify the condition of the equipment.

#### D. Eligibility Requirements

All rules and regulations as set forth by the Virginia High School League, Northern Valley Junior League, and the School Board will be followed.

##### 1. Age:

- a) An 8<sup>th</sup> grade student-athlete is eligible to participate if he/she has not reached the age of 15 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.
- b) A 7<sup>th</sup> grade student-athlete is eligible to participate if he/she has not reached the age of 14 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.
- c) Sixth graders may participate in Cheerleading, Cross Country, Wrestling and Track as long as they do not take the place of eligible 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on the team. (abide by each school's district policy).

2. Scholarship: A student athlete must remain academically eligible throughout the season. If grades drop below more than one "F", the athlete will be removed from the team until the grades are satisfactory.

3. Independent Teams: A student-athlete may, while a member of a school team in any sport, become a member of or participate during the sports season with an organized team in the same sport independent of the school's control. However, this independent participation should not interfere with the scheduled activities of the school.

4. Sunday Rule: No member school may schedule or play an athletic contest on Sunday. Neither can they conduct an organized practice on Sunday.

5. All student/athletes must participate in Physical Education class as required.

6. A student-athlete may face disciplinary measures or be dismissed from any athletic participation if it is determined that their conduct in the classroom, within the community or with their schoolmates is deemed inappropriate.

## II. During Season

### A. Eligibility

A student athlete must remain academically eligible throughout the season. If grades drop below more than one "F", the athlete will be removed from the team until the grades are satisfactory.

### B. Practice

1. Each team member is required to attend **ALL** practices.
2. Student-athletes who find it necessary to miss practice must make necessary arrangements personally with their respective coaches. This should always be done before, **NOT AFTER**, missing practice.  
If this occurs 2 times (**UNEXCUSED**), the athlete will be removed from the team
3. In case of illness, team members should notify their coach prior to practice time.
4. If an athlete misses practice (for whatever reason) the day before a game/meet/match, it is up to the discretion of the coach as to whether the athlete will start or play in that game.
5. Athletes are to be picked up immediately following practice and at the end of games/matches.

Failure to do this will result in the following consequences:

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> time – Warning from coach
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> time- Can not participate in next game
- c) 3<sup>rd</sup> time – Dismissal from the team.

C. Winchester Public Schools Athletics Drug Regulation (See Appendix A) All athletes and parents are required to sign an acknowledgement of this policy prior to the first team practice.

### D. Disciplinary Rules

Any student-athlete who is assigned an After School Restriction (ASR), In School Restriction (ISR), or Out of School Suspension (OSS), or Off Site Restriction (OSR) from school will be subject to the following:

1. The student-athlete will receive a verbal reprimand by the coach and not participate in practice or a game until the next day after all disciplinary time has been served.
2. If a student-athlete faces the above disciplinary action for a second time during a sports season he/she will be suspended from the team for five school days. They must practice three days after serving the disciplinary action before they can play in a game. Such student-athletes must have a conference with the Director of Athletics before resuming practice.
3. If a student-athlete receives a third in school suspension, out of school suspension, or off site restriction during a sports season, he/she will be dismissed from the squad.

### E. Social Media Guidelines:

1. The student-athletes are forewarned of the abuse of social media and how it represents the student-athlete, teammates and/or coaches. Social media post that are deemed inappropriate will result in immediate dismissal from the team:
  - a. Considered unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning, or threatening in nature to an opponent, an opposing team, coach and/or teammate
  - b. Encourages violence towards a opponent, an opposing team, coach and/or teammate
  - c. Violates the WPS student code of conduct

#### F. Individual Coach's Rules

A Coach may establish additional rules and regulations with the approval of the Athletic Director and school principal for his or her respective sport. At the start of the season, the coach will explain such rules pertaining to a particular sport.

#### G. Sportsmanship Rule

Any student-athlete who is assessed an unsportsmanlike foul in a contest, must be removed from the contest immediately. The Head Coach and Athletic Director have the discretion as to when the player may return to the contest.

#### H. Attendance and Conduct

1. Regular attendance to school is mandatory in order to participate in athletics.
2. A student/athlete must be present for the **ENTIRE** day of school on practice days and game days. (A pre-arranged Doctor's excuse or pre-arranged absence will be the only exception.)
3. Improper conduct in the classroom will not be tolerated. Frequent offenses will subject the offender to possible suspension or dismissal from the team.
4. A student may be declared ineligible for participation in any athletic activity if he conducts himself in a manner that, in the opinion of the school authorities, would reflect unfavorably upon the school.
5. Student-athletes are expected to maintain self-control and realize that they are representatives of Daniel Morgan Middle School, their parents, and themselves at all times, both on and off the playing field or court.
6. Unexcused absences and or tardiness to school will not be tolerated.

#### I. Grooming / Attire

1. Athletes are required to wear proper attire at practice, games and other events involving team activities. At all times, during practice and games, a player must wear a shirt. Undergarments are not to be worn as outer garments. In accordance with NVJL rules, the athletes must leave the playing area and report to a locker room or other appropriate area if they must change their shirt. Attire worn to a game or other team events must meet the standards for school dress outlined in the student conduct code or as specified by the coaching staff.

#### J. Athletic Trips

1. Players are requested to wear proper attire as specified by the coach.
2. Dress should be neat and representative of the school.
3. Players are reminded of the proper conduct to and from the contest while on the bus.
4. Players and managers must return from an athletic contest on the school-provided means of transportation. Exceptions:
  - a. A player or manager may return with their parents, provided their parents inform the coach. If this is not done, the student-athlete is then expected to travel home with the team.
  - b. At no time will athletes be transported to or from away athletic events in private cars. Athletes may ride home from events with their parents/guardians if they inform their coach.
  - c. Under extenuating circumstances, a coach may give permission for the athlete to leave (injury, illness, emergency or school related approved function).
5. If a player or manager fails to ride the school-provided means of transportation to an athletic



contest, the player or manager will not be permitted to participate or be a part of the team for the contest. He will not be allowed to return with the team.

6. If food or drinks are allowed to be eaten on the bus approval must be given by the coach after conferring with the bus driver. Team members and coaches are responsible for clean up and trash removal.
7. Any individual who commits an act of vandalism on the team bus or at the event may be dismissed from all athletics for one calendar year and be required to make full restitution for the damages.

### III. After the Season

- A. Return all school equipment to the head coach.
- B. Participate in some form of off-season activity or another sport to maintain a degree of fitness.
- C. Conduct yourself in a manner befitting your sport, your school, and yourself.

## DRUGS AND TOBACCO IN ATHLETIC PROGRAM

### Generally

This policy applies to all student athletes participating in interscholastic athletic programs sponsored by Winchester Public Schools.

The unlawful purchase, possession, use, or distribution of controlled substances as defined in Policy JFCF and tobacco, or the misuse of any such substance which would endanger the safety of a student athlete, will not be permitted.

The goal of this policy is to maintain both the physical and mental well-being of student athletes by banning the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances, alcohol, tobacco, or any substance which, if improperly used, would affect in a negative way the wellbeing of the athlete. At the beginning of each sports season, all participating student athletes shall acknowledge receipt of the policy that they will not use, purchase, possess or distribute alcohol, tobacco, or other illegal drugs or misuse any substance which could endanger their safety during that particular sports season. Parents must also sign the acknowledgment to indicate their support of the program.

School officials will be proactive in preventing violations of this policy and will discuss with the individual student any suspicions they have of violations. Suspected violators of this policy may be required to undergo drug screening, as directed by the principal or designee. The screening procedure will be provided at no cost to the athlete, but must be administered at a facility chosen by the school. Refusal by the student or the parent for screening will preclude further participation in athletics for that student.

If it is determined by a positive drug test, confession of the athlete, or other proof that the athlete violated this policy, the following consequences will be initiated:

### Consequences

#### 1. First Violation:

A. Suspension from the team and required participation in a drug intervention program as follows:

1. Tobacco: Ten (10) school day\* suspension from the team\*\* and mandatory participation in a tobacco use cessation program;
2. Alcohol and Other Drugs or Abused Substances: Fifteen (15) school day\* suspension from the team\*\* and mandatory participation in an alcohol/drug use cessation program;

B. The building principal or designee will schedule a meeting with the athlete, parent(s), and coach as soon as possible following the confirmation of tobacco or drug use. At this meeting, the student and parents will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. Following this meeting, if the principal or designee is satisfied that the policy has been violated, a suspension from the team, as prescribed, will begin immediately. Written notification will be provided to the parents that will detail the conditions and the endpoint of the team suspension;

C. The Coordinator for Safe and Drug Free Schools will have a screening interview with the athlete and parent(s) as soon as possible from the start of the suspension. Based on the interview, the coordinator will design an intervention program suitable for the athlete. If the Coordinator confirms that satisfactory progress is being made in the intervention program, the athlete may participate in practice while serving the team suspension days;

D. Refusal by the athlete or the parent to participate in the intervention program will preclude the athlete's further participation in athletics at the school; and

E. The athlete remains subject to random drug testing for the remainder of that sports season at the discretion of school officials.

F. In addition to the above, VHSL rules require that a student who is a member of a school athletic team be ineligible for two (2) school years to compete in interscholastic athletic competition, if it has been determined by the school principal and Division Superintendent that the student used anabolic steroids during the training period immediately preceding or during the sport season of the athletic team, unless such steroid was prescribed by a licensed physician for a medical condition.

## 2. Second Violation:

A. Suspension from the team and required participation in a drug intervention program as follows:

1. Tobacco: Fifteen (15) school day\* suspension from the team\*\* and mandatory participation in a tobacco use cessation program;
2. Alcohol and Other Drugs or Abused Substances: Twenty (20) school day\* suspension from the team\*\* and mandatory participation in an alcohol/drug use cessation program;

B. Upon confirmation of a second violation of the policy by an athlete, the building principal or designee will schedule a conference with the athlete, parent(s), and coach as soon as possible following the confirmation of tobacco/drug use. At this meeting, the student and parent(s) will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. Following this meeting, if the principal or designee is satisfied that the policy has been violated, a suspension from the team, as prescribed, will begin immediately. Written notification will be provided to the parent(s) that will detail the conditions and the endpoint of the team suspension;

C. The Coordinator for Safe and Drug Free Schools will have a screening interview with the athlete and parent(s) as soon as possible from the beginning date of the team suspension. Based on this interview the coordinator will design an intervention program suitable for the athlete;

D. Refusal of the athlete or his/her parent(s) to participate in the intervention program will preclude further participation in school athletics;

E. Upon satisfactorily attending all the prescribed intervention sessions and a negative drug screen test at the end of the team suspension, the athlete will be permitted to return to full participation;

F. The athlete remains subject to random drug testing for the remainder of that school year at the discretion of school officials.

## 3. Third Violation:

A. A third incident of violating the policy by any athlete will result in the permanent team suspension of the individual's participation on any athletic team sponsored by Winchester Public Schools;

B. Upon confirmation of a third violation of the policy by an athlete, the building principal or designee will schedule a conference with the athlete, parent(s), and coach as soon as possible following the confirmation of drug use. At this meeting, the student and parents will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. Following this meeting, if the principal or designee is satisfied that the policy has been violated, the athlete shall be prohibited from any further athletic participation while enrolled at that school. Written notification will be provided to the parent(s) of prohibition from any further school athletic competition.

This policy applies to all athletes participating in athletic programs sponsored by Winchester Public Schools. Students moving from middle to high school with one or no violation will begin the count anew. However, if a student violated the policy at the middle school two or more times, his or her count at the high school will start with the second consequence (violation), and he or she will be subject to random drug screening while participating in high school athletic programs.

\* School days: Should a suspension from a team occur at a time when the suspension would continue to the next school year, the Virginia High School League calendar season practice days prior to the start of the school year will be counted toward completing team suspension days. Should a suspension from a team occur at a time that would incorporate a school break or vacation and a team is previously scheduled to practice or play during that time, such days would count toward the team suspension.

\*\* Team suspension: No athlete may participate in any contest until all assigned team suspension days are complete. If it is determined that an athlete is making suitable progress in his/her cessation program, such athlete may return to practice five practice days prior to the end of the team suspension.

Approved:

**This document is due to the Athletic Director ASAP**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact Numbers: Father (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ Mother

(Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

(Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ *In an emergency, if parents cannot be*

*contacted:*

Notify (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co./Med. Coverage \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

CONSENT FORM: In case of severe emergency, we give our consent for coaches and team physicians to use their own judgment in securing medical aid and ambulance service in case the parents cannot be reached.

Known Allergies:

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Instructions:

\_\_\_\_\_

**WINCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS DRUG PLEDGE**

I pledge that I will not use, purchase, possess or distribute alcohol, tobacco, or other illegal drugs or misuse any substance which could endanger my safety during the season. If I break this pledge, I understand that I will be suspended or dismissed from the team. Furthermore, I understand that, upon reasonable suspicion, I will be subject to testing for the use of illegal drugs by a licensed testing facility.

I have read and understand the Daniel Morgan Middle School's ***Handbook for Student Athletes*** and the penalties as stated therein. Furthermore, I pledge to abide by **ALL** of these rules

Student Athlete's name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Athlete's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_