

Biloxi Public Schools

Athletics Handbook

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

BILOXI PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Introduction

This Athletics Handbook has been prepared to present clear guidelines to cover specific aspects of the athletic programs of the Biloxi Public School District. The School Board and the administration believe that it will be helpful not only to staff members directly involved in athletics but also to students and parents who are affected by or interested in learning about the programs.

It is important to understand that this handbook is supplemental to - and is not intended to supersede or substitute for - the policies and procedures of the Biloxi Public School District adopted by the School Board governing operations of the school district. Every staff member and all students are subject to these policies, together with policies as stated in student handbooks and formally adopted by the School Board each year.

In addition, the athletic programs of the district must conform to all rules and regulations established by the Mississippi High School Activities Association and the Mississippi Department of Education – www.misshsaa.com; www.mde.k12.ms.us.

All staff members are responsible for seeing that programs under their supervision and/or with which they are associated as members of the athletic department are in compliance with Biloxi Public School District, Mississippi High School Activities Association, and Mississippi Department of Education policies. This handbook outlines in detail vital areas of the athletic programs with which staff members must be concerned.

I. Mission Statement

Athletics are an extension of the classroom and are considered extracurricular activities. Athletics should function as an integral part of the total curriculum at Biloxi High School and Biloxi Junior High School. The athletic programs should offer opportunities to promote self-realization and all-around growth as well as the development of fellowship and good sportsmanship.

The major objective of the athletic programs is to provide wholesome opportunities for students to develop positive and responsible habits and attitudes toward group and social living. Athletics help the student athlete develop a healthy self-concept, as well as a healthy body, by teaching those skills necessary for team participation.

The interscholastic athletic program should be conducted in accordance with the Biloxi Public School District, Mississippi High School Activities Association, and Mississippi Department of Education policies and regulations. It should at all times be conducted in a manner that will justify it as an educational activity.

II. Code of Ethics

When one becomes a member of the coaching profession, he/she assumes certain obligations and responsibilities to the sport, to players and to fellow coaches. It is essential that every member of the profession be constantly aware of these obligations and responsibilities, to the end that coaching remains an honorable calling, and that each member conduct himself/herself in such a manner as to maintain the dignity and decency of the profession.

In relationships with players under his/her care, the coach should always be aware of the influence he/she wields for good or bad. Parents entrust their children to the coach and through his/her example, these young people should emerge as fine and decent people. The coach should never place the value of winning above that of instilling the highest ideals and character traits in his/her players. The safety and welfare of the players should be uppermost in the mind of the coach.

In teaching a sport, the coach must realize that there are certain rules designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and a loser. Any attempts to beat these rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct have no place in athletics. The coach should set the example for winning without boasting and for losing without bitterness.

Coaches who conduct themselves using these principles as guidelines will be successful in terms of the respect they have gained from their players as well as from their opponents.

The essential qualities desired in coaches are honesty and integrity. Coaches whose conduct reflects these characteristics will bring credit to the coaching profession and to themselves. It is through such conduct that the profession will earn and maintain its rightful place in the educational program and make its full contribution to the American way of life.

III. OUTLINE OF SPORTS OFFERED

High School			Junior High School		
Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
Cross Country	Basketball	Baseball	Cross Country	Basketball	Baseball
Football	Soccer	FP Softball	Football	Soccer	Track
Swimming	Power Lifting	Golf	Volleyball		FP Softball
Volleyball		Tennis			
		Track			
High School Sports Offered – 12 Teams Fielded – 34			Junior High School Sports Offered – (8) Teams Fielded – 15		
Cheerleaders	Dance		Cheerleaders	Dance	

ATHLETIC POLICES

It is the responsibility of the athletic director and the head coach of each sport to see that the participants meet the requirements of the MHSAA. Failure to abide by MHSAA rules may result in a coach being sanctioned, fined, and possibly terminated from his/her position.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy: The athletic department will adhere and strictly enforce policy (GAX) regarding the use or abuse of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco by coaches and student athletes.

Athletic Drug Screening Policy: All athletes will be randomly screened for drugs in accordance with the Biloxi Public School's drug testing policy for all extracurricular activities.

Athletic Equipment: Biloxi Public Schools strives to provide high quality athletic equipment. The athletic director and head coach of each sport shall keep abreast of the latest trends in athletic equipment. Safety is the number one priority when selecting and purchasing athletic equipment. When purchasing athletic equipment, the coach and athletic director must follow the guidelines of the purchasing department. If a coach checks out any athletic equipment, he/she must see that it is returned promptly. A fine will be assessed to any student for the misuse or loss of athletic equipment, and the fine must be paid before the grading period ends. **In addition, at the end of the season, each head coach must provide an inventory to the athletic director.**

Awards/Banquets: The booster club and support groups are responsible for athletic awards and banquets for each sport. If there is not a booster club for a particular sport, then it is the discretion of the athletic director to establish the award program and banquet for that sport. At the end of the season, the booster club of a sport may choose to have a banquet with the approval of the head coach, at which awards may be presented.

Booster Clubs: Booster clubs are essential components of successful athletic teams and provide necessary financial support to our athletic teams. However, booster clubs should limit their roles to lending financial support and not help coach, schedule, or administer the team. Any money raised by a booster club is solely for the benefit of the team. The booster club shall have a constitution with by-laws and procedures established. The monies that are raised by the support groups shall be spent at the direction of the athletic director and the head coaches of that sport. Quarterly financial statements must be submitted to the athletic director and business manager. These statements would be due on August 31st, November 30th, February 28th (29th) & May 31st of each year.

Coaching Clinics for High School Coaches: Biloxi Public School's coaching staff shall stay abreast of the latest techniques and mechanics being used to teach their respective sports. Biloxi Public Schools will reimburse each coach for the cost of attending one coaching clinic per year with the prior approval of the athletic director. Each coach may request approval to attend the clinic that he/she would like to attend, with preference

being given to local and state clinics. It is expected that the coaches attending clinics will share the information with their colleagues after returning.

Coaching Clinics for Junior High Coaches: Coaches for grades 7 & 8 will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in attending one local clinic with no overnight stay. It is expected that the coaches attending clinics will share the information with their colleagues after returning.

Commercial Driver's License: All Biloxi Public School coaches will obtain a commercial driver's license and be responsible for transporting your teams to away games. If you have a medical excuse, you need to have a copy of it on file from your doctor.

Discipline Procedures: All athletes are expected to deport themselves as responsible young men and women. This applies to the classroom as well as the athletic fields and social events. If an athlete shows a lack of self-discipline, has a poor attitude, or is not fulfilling his/her commitment to the athletic program, he/she may be suspended from that sport. If any athlete boycotts the team or coach for any reason, that athlete could be suspended from participation in that sport and any other sport for the remainder of the school year. An athlete must comply with all written and oral directions given by the coaches of his/her sport.

1. Disciplinary action for **minor offenses** such as inappropriate classroom behavior, tardiness to class, missed practices and/or meetings without proper excuses, disrespect, inappropriate dress, etc.
2. Disciplinary action for **major offenses** such as defacing or destroying school property, fighting, stealing, committing forgery, defying a coach or school authority, causing a disruption in school or on a school bus, leaving school grounds without permission, abusive language, threatening another student or coach, using alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs, exhibiting a poor attitude, lack of self-discipline, boycotting the team for any reason, etc.

Disciplinary action can consist of: a parent conference, sitting out a game or games, dismissal from the program for a specific time, permanent dismissal from the program, and any other action deemed appropriate by the coaches and the Athletic Director.

Ejections of Athletes/Coaches and/or penalties: The Biloxi Public School System follows all MHSAA rules relative to the ejection of an athlete or a coach. If an athlete or coach is penalized, he/she must comply with the penalty. The Biloxi Public School System encourages all coaches to conduct themselves in such a manner that neither a fine, penalty, nor ejection from a game will be warranted. However, should a financial penalty be imposed on a coach, it is his/her responsibility to pay the penalty. The Biloxi Public School System will not be responsible for payment of a coach's fine.

Eligibility: All coaches must be knowledgeable of and comply with the MHSAA rules governing eligibility of student athletes, which require that a contestant must:

- (a) Have enrolled no later than the 15th day of any semester of participation, carry the required number of subjects for graduation by their local district, and deport himself/herself satisfactorily;
- (b) Not have become 19 years of age prior to August 1 (\$1,000 fine to the coach for this infraction);
- (c) Not be a graduate of a four-year high school;
- (d) Not have enrolled in college or junior college or participated in athletics beyond the high school level;
- (e) Be a student whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are (1) bona fide residents of the district or (2) are instructional personnel or licensed employees of the district;
- (f) Have a certified copy of his/her birth certificate on file with the school;
- (g) See MHSAA handbook for the recognized exceptions.

Eligibility for student athletes is now checked twice a year – at the end of the school year for fall eligibility and at the end of the fall semester for spring eligibility. In order to be eligible, a student athlete must have a 2.0 (70) GPA and be on track to graduate.

It is the coach's responsibility to check all of your student/athletes for eligibility. If you have any questions, you need to consult the athletic director before allowing the student/athlete to compete.

New students to the District must complete a Transfer Student form that must be signed off by their previous school and the MHSAA before they are able to compete.

Evaluations: All coaches must answer to their building principal for their teaching evaluations. All High School and Junior High School head coaches will be evaluated at the end of their season by the athletic director. He/She will sit down with each to discuss their season and complete an evaluation form on the head coach. The head coach will be responsible for completing an evaluation form on his/her assistant coaches. The head coach should bring these evaluations to his/her end-of-the-year meeting with the athletic director. The head coach should also bring his/her inventory list to the meeting. And the head coach should bring a list of letter winners, indicating how many years they have lettered.

Game and Practice Supervision: All coaches must ensure that proper security and fan supervision is in place prior to an athletic contest/event. Further, no game or practice may be held without a coach present.

Lettering Policy: In order to earn a letter in a sport, an athlete must meet certain requirements, specific to each sport. Each varsity head coach must have specific criteria spelled out prior to their season beginning. A copy of those requirements should be turned in to the director of athletics.

Multiple Sports Participation: Biloxi Public School District acknowledges that there are sports whose seasons overlap, and some athletes may have conflicts in scheduling. Sports, in-season, take precedent over tryouts in other sports. In the case of an athlete who wishes to participate in multiple sports and scheduling conflicts arise, it is hoped that the two coaches can arrive at a solution. If no agreement can be reached, then a “playoff game” would take first priority, followed by a “district game” next and a “non-district game” last. Athletes are encouraged to participate in as many sports as they wish, and they should be able to do so without pressure from any coach to limit participation to one sport. **Biloxi Public School System may discipline any coach who discourages an athlete from participating in more than one sport.**

A student/athlete who quits one sport to participate in a second sport will not be allowed to play in the second sport until the season of sport that he/she quits is over. (Example: Jon Doe quits basketball late in the season to play baseball. John Doe will not be allowed to play baseball, practice or compete, until basketball season is over.)

Paraprofessional Coaches: In some cases, depending on teaching assignments available, Biloxi Public Schools may have to hire paraprofessional coaches. These paraprofessional coaches must meet the recommendations of the MHSAA in order to coach at the High School or Junior High School level. They will be paid a stipend based on previous years’ experience.

Physical Examination/Waiver: All athletes are required to complete an “Athletic Clearance form” that includes insurance information and Random Drug Testing consent/release. A physical examination must be conducted **prior** to participating in tryouts, a practice, or game. **Biloxi Public School System may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student/athlete to participate without these forms on file.**

Purchases: Each head coach will be allowed to give a “Wish List” to the athletic director each year. In most cases, the athletic department will not be able to purchase everything on the wish list, so the head coach and athletic director will have to prioritize the list. The head coach will need to get two or three quotes on the items to be purchased. Once the quotes have been made, the head coach and athletic director will agree on the purchases to be made by the athletic department. The athletic department will work with the business office to get a purchase order for the items. The vendors should not place an order until they have received a purchase order from Biloxi Public Schools. The vendor should make sure that all items ordered are delivered to the warehouse and not to the individual schools or coaches. **No coach will accept merchandise delivered to the school – Biloxi Public Schools may discipline any coach who does not follow the proper procedure for ordering equipment, etc.** Head Coaches can use their Booster Club to purchase other items that the athletic department could not cover.

Religious Neutrality: Biloxi Public School District recognizes the right of every person to make personal decisions about religion free from school or governmental involvement.

Biloxi Public School District encourages all students and staff to appreciate, respect, and be tolerant of each other's religious decisions and views. Coaches and/or district employees may not lead, plan, or encourage, discourage, or prohibit prayers or religious activities at school and/or school events.

Safety Procedures for Athletes: The safety of athletes in practice and games is a top priority in the Biloxi Public Schools. The athletic director and supervising coaches must take all necessary precautions to insure the safety of the athletes.

Scholar-Athlete Team Award: Each head coach should complete a Scholar-Athlete Team Award Application. These are due to the MHSAA by April 1st and are based on first semester grades. Therefore, all head coaches should complete the form and submit it to the athletic office shortly after the first semester ends. It is based only on varsity athletic teams, and everyone who played/lettered on a varsity fall sport or winter sport should be listed. Coaches who will begin their practice in February for spring sports will need to estimate their varsity teams based on past participation or tryouts and use this list to complete the application.

School Attendance on Game Day (Practice): In order to be counted present, a student must be in attendance for at least half of the class periods (4). In order to participate in any extracurricular activity (including daily practices), a student must attend school a minimum of four periods on the day of the activity. A student absent with permission for a school-related activity will be considered to have attended school the required minimum of four periods on the day of the activity. **These same guidelines apply to coaches. Coaches must be present in order to participate in activities associated with an extracurricular activity - practices, games, banquets, etc. It is the coach's responsibility to check school attendance for his/her players on athletic and/or extracurricular days.**

Squad Selection: Each head coach will have a policy on how athletes are selected for a team ("selection policy"). This policy shall be approved by the athletic director and should be posted in a visible place prior to the team selection. Each selection policy will be on file in the athletic director's office.

STAR Sportsmanship: According to the MHSAA, all coaches, sponsors, student-athletes, cheerleaders, and dance participants in middle school, junior high, and high school sports must have completed the online *STAR Sportsmanship* training program at some point in time. Junior High and Middle School coaches, sponsors, and students must complete STAR Sportsmanship training before their season ends. High School coaches, sponsors, and students must complete STAR Sportsmanship before post-season play begins in their sport. It is the responsibility of the **head coach or sponsor** of each sport to make sure that his or her team's student athletes and assistant coaches complete STAR Sportsmanship training. **Completion Reports** for each team will be reviewed by the MHSAA to check eligibility.

Teaching Assignments: Most coaches will have a teaching assignment at one of the Biloxi Public Schools. You will be evaluated by your building principal during the year based on your teaching assignment. It is your responsibility to maintain up your teacher license and to keep it current. In some cases, Biloxi Public Schools will hire a paraprofessional coach who will not have a teaching assignment in the District.

Teacher Certification: Each coach is responsible for keeping his/her teaching certification current through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). The personnel office will remind you during your last year of certification, but you should have already done some previous work to keep current. In order to keep up your certification, there are many opportunities for you to get CEU's during the school year.

Travel: The athletic director and head coach are responsible for transporting the athletes to and from games/contests in an approved state vehicle. Alternative travel may be arranged in accordance with Biloxi Public School District Policy. Any alternative travel should be approved by the athletic director prior to the event. It will be up to the head coaches if they want to allow student/athletes to ride home with parents. If the head coach decides to allow them to ride home with a parent, it can only be their legal guardian and cannot be a relative. The legal guardian must sign the child out and take responsibility for the student/athlete getting home. If the legal guardian will not be traveling to the away contest, the student/athlete will ride the bus back home. He/She cannot ride back with another parent, relative, etc.

Tryouts: The MHSAA issued new tryout guidelines in the spring of 2011. A sport that begins in the fall must have its tryouts in the spring semester. A sport that begins in the spring must have its tryouts in the fall semester. **The date(s) of your tryout must be approved by the MHSAA.** Coaches need to submit your tryout date(s) to the athletic director well in advance and should not conduct tryouts until your date(s) have been approved by the MHSAA.

Weight Room: A well-organized weight program is essential to a competitive athletic program. Biloxi Public School District currently employs a full-time strength and conditioning coach. All head coaches should work with him/her to stay current with the latest weight training techniques specific to your sport. The weight room should be a safe and wholesome environment.

Athletes are prohibited from working out in the weight room without the supervision of the strength and conditioning coach and/or another coach.

Working Athletic Events: All Biloxi Public School coaches will be responsible for working other home athletic events. This is a part of your supplement and assignments will be made by the athletic director.

ATHLETIC FORMS

Physical Form: A generic physical form is in the athletic office, or it can be downloaded from the Internet at www.biloxischools.net. From here, you can link on to the athletic page. All athletes must have a physical **prior** to tryouts. Doctors can use their own physical forms as long as they designate the athlete can participate in the sport or all sports he/she is trying out for. **Biloxi Public Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student/athlete to participate without a physical form on file.**

Athletic/Extracurricular/Co-Curricular Activity Participation Clearance: This form covers three (3) things and is available online:

- (1) The Parent/Guardian waiver allowing the student/athlete to participate
- (2) The Random Drug Testing permission
- (3) The insurance information for the athlete

This form must be turned in **prior** to tryouts. **Biloxi Public Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student/athlete to participate without this form on file.**

Concussion Form: This is a new form from the MHSAA this fall (2013) and must be signed by each athlete each year. This form must be turned in **prior** to tryouts. **Biloxi Public Schools may discipline any coach who knowingly allows a student/athlete to participate without a concussion form on file.**

Emergency Medical Authorization: This form must be filled out for all athletes and must be **kept with the coach at all times.** If an athlete has a medical emergency, this form gives all the necessary information for medical personnel treating the athlete.

Insurance: All student/athletes must provide a proof of insurance before being allowed to tryout, practice, or play. Anyone who does not have insurance can purchase a plan through the **Student Insurance Plan**. According to the MHSAA, the District does not have to provide insurance, but we do provide a secondary insurance policy. **This policy does not pay until you have filed on your insurance and your insurance has already paid.**

Student Insurance Plans: This form is available in the athletic office for any parent/guardian/student who desires to purchase insurance coverage for athletic activities. For questions concerning insurance coverage related to athletic activities, contact the athletic department.

ATHLETES/COACHES

Out-of-State and/or Overnight Field Trip Permission Form: This form must be filled out completely on every athlete who is going on an **out-of-state or an overnight trip.**

These forms must be submitted to the athletic office with a **roster** of all the athletes going on the trip.

Student Participation Waiver Form: This form must be filled out completely for all athletes going on an **out-of-state or an overnight trip**. This form goes along with the out-of-state and or overnight field trip permission form. This must be submitted with a **roster** of all the athletes going on the trip.

These two forms, along with a roster of all the athletes going on the trip, must be submitted to the athletic director at least one week prior to the trip.

Private Transportation: This form is for athletes who will not travel with the team to an away game. This is used only for extenuating circumstances and must be approved by the athletic director and head coach in advance.

COACHES

School Business form (Short): This form is for use when you will be out for school/athletic business and there is no reimbursement by the school district for the school/athletic business. This form must be filled out **10 days** prior to the trip and signed by the athletic director, your building principal, and the personnel director. This form will make sure you have a substitute to cover your class while you are out.

School Business Form (Long): This form is for use when you will be out for school/athletic business and there will be reimbursement by the school district. This form must be filled out **10 days** prior to the trip and signed by the athletic director, your building principal, and the personnel director. Once the school/athletic business is complete, all receipts will be sent with the school business form for reimbursement. The bottom of the form must be signed by the coach making the request after the trip is complete to get reimbursement.

Field Trip (Bus) Request: This form is commonly referred to as the “trip ticket” and must be filled out for any coach wanting to get a bus for any athletic trip. Once your schedule is completed, you can come by the athletic office and pick up the field trip request forms, fill them out, and submit them to be signed by the athletic director and your building principal. The athletic director will forward these forms to the central office for approval. **If you are going on an out-of-state or overnight trip with your athletic team, it must be approved by the School Board. Therefore, these types of requests must be submitted at least 30 days in advance in order to be on the School Board Agenda. This also applies to summer workouts.**

MEALS/SACK LUNCHES

Any coach requesting sack lunches from the cafeteria must submit in **writing/e-mail** the dates to the athletic office at least **2 weeks** prior to the request. The cafeteria must have sufficient time to order the necessary supplies to make these meals. Arrangements must

be made with the cafeteria to pick up the lunches on time. Most of the time the cafeteria workers are gone by the end of the day, so please keep this in mind when needing to pick meals up. The cafeteria workers have always gone “above and beyond” to help the teams out with making the sack lunches, so please take care of picking them up. Once you start picking them up, please make sure that your athletes do not waste the food. If they are not eating the meals, cancel the orders. These sack lunches will be for teams that will be traveling or unable to go home after school.

If you are requesting money for meals, this request also needs to be done at least **2 weeks** in advance in order to get a check processed. You will have to sign for the check, and you will be responsible for returning any receipts and any change to the athletic office.

HEAD COACH JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description for all head coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic director’s office and in the personnel office. Whenever a job becomes available, the job description will be posted on the website and made available to all applicants.

ASSISTANT COACH JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description for all assistant coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic director’s office and in the personnel office. Whenever a job becomes available, the job description will be posted on the website and made available to all applicants.

EVALUATION FORMS FOR HEAD COACHES

The evaluation forms for all head coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic director’s office. The athletic director will inform all head coaches of these expectations and review the head coach’s progress at an end-of-the year meeting at the conclusion of their sport. Both the athletic director and head coach will sign the forms and file them in the head coach’s file. The head coach will be given a copy of the forms for his/her file.

EVALUATION FORMS FOR ASSISTANT COACHES

The evaluation forms for all assistant coaches, High School and Junior High School, will be on file in the athletic director’s office. All head coaches, High School and Junior High School, should complete an evaluation form on all of your assistant coaches at the conclusion of your season. Both the head coach and the assistant coach will sign the forms and the head coach should bring them with him/her to his end-of-the year meeting with the athletic director. The assistant coach(es) will be given a copy of the forms for his/her file.