RUSK EAGLES

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

2017-2018

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE & PARENTS
Participation in the athletic program and/or UIL contests is a PRIVILEGE, not a right. No student is required to take part in the contests or activities. Therefore, it is imperative that all students and parents of students taking part in the program understand and follow the rules and guidelines of Rusk ISD Athletics. The Athletic Director, along with the Coaches in each sport, maintains the standards for participation.

**Rusk Eagles Mission Statement**

To develop men and women of character through athletic and physical training. Our mission is to become bigger, faster, and stronger through relentless effort. This will start the process of sport specific development. This produces a work ethic that instills: pride, confidence, perseverance, mental/physical toughness, loyalty, and integrity/class.

**Rusk Eagles Vision**

Our athletic program is to be a source of community pride. We want excitement and electricity present during all athletic contests. We expect our athletes to be successful on and off the field of play.

**Rusk Eagles Athletic Goal**

As coaches we demand accountability in our players. We want them to play with passion and class. The ultimate goal is for athletics to aid in the shaping and molding of quality people.

**Rusk Eagles Pillars of Success**

- E = Effort
- A = Attitude
- G = Guts/Grind
- L = Love
- E = Excellence
- S = Success
The Eagle Way | Things That Do Not Require Talent
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• Out work people | • Be on time
• Be a great teammate/classmate | • Work ethic
• School pride / Program pride | • Energy
• Respect others | • Attitude
• Compete and be your best everyday | • Effort
• Service minded/ contribute | • Passion
• Be a leader | • Being coachable
• Be positive | • Doing extra
• Accountability- Own your performance and behavior | • Being prepared
• Never settle | • Body language

**Purpose of the Athletic/Champions Period**

1. Develops commitment and accountability as a person and to the TEAM. Must be a great teammate.
2. Develops discipline that will make athletes better in sports and in life.
3. Develops the importance of working towards goals and striving for greatness.
4. Develops weight and speed program that will maximize potential, which will benefit all sports.
5. Develops the five components of physical fitness.
   a. Muscular strength
   b. Muscular endurance
   c. Cardiovascular endurance
   d. Flexibility
   e. Body composition
6. Teaches athletes how to compete with mental toughness and perseverance.
7. Sets the tone for the upcoming competition and season. Always preparing for the next challenge.
8. Teaches relentless effort and development of sport specific athletic skills.
9. Promotes a team atmosphere.
10. Develops leadership.

**Rusk Eagles Athletic Rules and Requirements**
- Athletes must meet UIL eligibility requirements, including signed paperwork.
- Maintain current/up to date physical
- Provide signed acknowledgement of Rusk ISD Athletic Handbook
- Completion of athletic period, prior to the upcoming season
- Rusk ISD sports take precedence over youth or select team sports. No conflicts between school events
- In good standing with coaches, teachers, and teammates
- The expectation is to maintain a high academic standard for all student-athletes. Athletes must maintain passing grades in the classroom, in accordance with UIL “No Pass No Play” rule. Student athlete grades will be tracked and monitored by coaches.
- Practice Attendance – Practice is a coaches’ classroom and is required to compete in a contest. Missing a practice without permission or prior notification will lead to punishment or loss of playing time.
  - Unexcused absences - Continued unexcused absences may lead to forfeiture of playing time/removal from the team.
  - Excused absences – A make-up of training is expected upon return to maintain high levels of conditioning and eligibility to compete.
- School attendance is required to participate in any athletic contest, in accordance with RISD policy. Students must be in attendance for 1/2 or more of the student’s total number of classes on the day an event or activity is scheduled in order to participate. Students absent for more than 1/2 of their academic day may still participate in extra-curricular activities scheduled for that day if they receive approval from the principal and head coach.
- Serious offenses will be dealt with according to the nature of the event/offense. In the event of a serious issue: rule violation/ticket/arrest the matter will be investigated and addressed. Consequences may include: loss of playing time, suspension, or removal from the team.
  - In the event of a civil ticket there is a minimum of 1 week suspension from contest.
- Athletes are ineligible for contest if in ISS on the contest date.
- Athletes are ineligible for practice or contest if suspended or assigned to an alternative education placement.

**Failure to Fulfill Commitment**
A student should take his/her decision to join an athletic team seriously. Any participant who quits a sport after the season has begun (last scrimmage) will not be allowed to participate in any other sport or practice until the regular season has ended in the sport he or she quit. If a player quits and leaves the team, but decides to rejoin the team, it must be approved by the head coach, athletic director, and player’s council. If the student is allowed to rejoin, out of respect for their teammates, a running obligation will be required. The standard is 15 miles, no more than 3 miles per day, which is to be completed outside of the athletic period, and is to be supervised by a coach or member of the player’s council. The athlete must complete the running commitment to the team within a period of 10 school days. A player is encouraged to take 24 hours before any final decision to quit is made. If a student quits, the head coach will contact parents.

**Athletic Dress Code**

Specific standards of grooming are necessary in order to provide a safe and healthy athletic environment, to express uniformity among teammates, and to promote self-discipline of the student athlete. The student athlete should be in compliance with the student dress code as it appears in the RISD Student Code of Conduct and student handbook. The head coach of a sport may determine additional dress code requirements for his/her sport. The athlete should be neatly dressed for competition and should be dressed the same as his/her teammates while participating in the event.

**Team Travel**

Athletes will dress in an acceptable manner on trips and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects pride in self and community. At a minimum, the school dress code should be worn at all times when representing a Rusk ISD athletic program. Coaches may impose a stricter dress requirement on athletes. Violation may result in disciplinary consequences within the program.

Athletes are expected to be on time for all contests. Time of departure will be set by the coach. Tardiness may result in missing an athletic contest and may result in disciplinary consequences within the program.

Athletes are a representation of Rusk ISD. Athletes should show respect for opposing team players, officials, facilities, and spectators. Bottom line, athletes should conduct themselves with pride and class at all times. The abuse of facilities or disrespectful
behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary consequences within the program.

Athletes will be expected to make all trips to and from contests on district-provided transportation. Arrangements for alternative transportation after an athletic event must be made between the parents and the head coach, prior to the contest. After event transportation is up to the discretion of the head coach.

**Care and Use of Equipment**

Safety equipment is required and must be fitted. Athletes must not swap or trade equipment and are expected to notify a coach if there are any issues with their equipment. Athletes are responsible for issued gear. Any gear which is lost or misplaced must be replaced. The athlete is financially responsible for any missing gear. Keep all personal items and issued workout gear locked and secured.

**Hazing/Bullying**

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, where the behavior: a) results in harm to the student or the student’s property, b) Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student’s property, or c) is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment. Bullying is prohibited by the district and can be identified as hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called “cyberbullying.” Students found to be in violation of any activity will be subject to disciplinary action through the athletic program and the school district.

**Lettering**

By UIL rules, each athlete can be awarded only one letter jacket during their high school career. The athletic lettering policy is as follows: all student athletes on varsity, who finish the year in good standing with the coach and the program, will receive a letterman jacket. Athletes that do not fulfill their commitment to the team during a sport, who do
not retain or regain academic eligibility for competition, or who are removed from the program due to disciplinary reasons, will not be eligible to receive a letterman jacket. Final decision is at the coaches’ discretion based on eligibility, character, work ethic, attendance, and contribution to the team.

**Parent/Coach Communication**

Our coaching staff has an open door policy to discuss the needs of student athletes with parents/guardians and will be happy to visit with you about your concerns. Please call to make arrangements to meet with coaches during conference periods or other agreed upon times. Parent meetings will not be conducted after competition or practices, as this is time devoted to the team.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:

- Your child’s place or future on the team or in Rusk ISD athletics
- Attitude and behavior concerns of your child
- How athletics can strengthen your child’s growth and development for the future
- Clarification of team requirements, athletic period expectations, goals, standards, etc.
- Policy and procedures of injury protocol / return to play
- Questions concerning your child’s well-being and how we can help in their success

Issues NOT appropriate to discuss with a coach:

- Playing time
- Strategy/ Play calling
- Any situation dealing with other student athletes

**How to Help Our Athletic Program**

- Keep a unified approach to our athletic goals and vision. “Division Cripples the Mission”
- Support UIL, school, and athletic policy and standards
- Maintain clear and open communication when the need arises
- Model conflict resolution and accountability to your child
- Be a fan by showing support at contests and events
• Be supportive of our district, school, staff, and coaches.
• Model and support good sportsmanship
• Insist your child takes care of grades and academic requirements
• Insist on attendance at school and punctuality at all practices and games
• Reinforce the importance of a great work ethic, attitude, and character
• Insist that your child represents themselves and Rusk ISD in a positive manner

**Injury Protocol/Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT)**

Our district Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT) is to be notified in the event of an injury. It is very important that a coach and our trainer are informed of a student athlete’s injury/medical needs to insure that the proper safety guidelines are followed.

Role of the Rusk ISD Licensed Athletic Trainer:

• Oversee general care of student athletes
• Coordinating care with coaches and staff
• Directing preventative care for a wide range of injuries
• Providing referrals and expediting medical care for injured athletes
• Managing administrative responsibilities and paperwork
• Establishing rehab procedures and return to play protocols
• Facilitate UIL policies concerning athletic health/safety guidelines

**Safety Training**

**Heat Acclimatization**

The Rusk ISD coaching staff is thoroughly trained on the UIL guidelines of understanding the importance of a formal heat acclimatization plan. As Exertional Heatstroke (EHS) is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletes, our staff takes great care in monitoring students participating in high-intensity, long duration sports practices or training activities during hot weather days to minimize potential risks. The staff has been trained on how to recognize the signs and symptoms associated with developing heat illnesses, as well as having an established emergency action plan that can be promptly implemented in case of suspected EHS or other medical emergencies. Activities may be modified in relation to the environmental heat stress and contributing individual risk factors to keep the athletes safe and performing well.
Proper Hydration

As a way of combating heat related illnesses, our staff understands the importance of having and implementing a specific hydration plan, keeping athletes well hydrated, and encouraging/providing ample opportunities for regular fluid replacement. For most exercising athletes in most scenarios, water is appropriate and sufficient for pre-hydration and rehydration. Traditional sports drinks with an appropriate carbohydrate and sodium formulation may provide additional benefits to athletes who are in continued activity for greater than 60 minutes while exposed to hot or humid conditions. It is advised that athletes limit the intake of fruit juices with high carb content and sodas, which can result in feeling bloated or cause abdominal cramping. Athletes should be aware that many new “energy” drinks contain stimulants that are not entirely beneficial to performance. These drinks can increase the risk of heat illness and/or heart problems while exercising.

Staph and MRSA Infections

Staph infections commonly cause boils and soft tissue infections that can result in more serious conditions such as pneumonia or bloodstream illnesses. Staph infections usually occur in the armpit, groin, genital area, or inside of the nose. Most infections occur through direct physical contact of the bacteria with a break in the skin (cut or scrape) or during contact with items such as soiled clothing or linens. The MRSA infection is similar to the Staph infection, but cannot be treated with basic antibiotics, making it much more dangerous.

Strategies to prevent these infections:

- Hand washing
- Do not share soap, towels, or clothes
- Shower with soap and water after contact sports. Use a dry, clean towel.
- Wash practice and game clothes regularly
- Work closely with coaches and trainers to help monitor outbreaks
- Follow up with physician when encouraged by the trainer
THE MAN IN THE ARENA

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errrs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

- Theodore Roosevelt
Athletic Policy Acknowledgment Form
Rusk ISD
2017-2018

I, ________________________________ (student name PRINTED), have read the 2017-2018 Athletic Handbook and agree to abide by all rules, regulations and recommendations.

_____________________________________________________________
Signature of Student Athlete

_____________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature

________________________________________________________________
List of Sports in which Student-Athlete Participates

_____________________________________________________________
Date