



**STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK**  
**2021-2022**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardians and Student-Athlete:

This Handbook is for your personal use to assist you in understanding the purpose of our interscholastic athletic program.

The handbook provides what you should know about the conditions set forth by school and state regulations as well as your responsibility to yourself, your team, and your school.

The primary goal of the RBCS athletic program is to provide a competitive arena where talented student athletes can enhance their physical wellness and skills while gaining a greater technical and tactical understanding of their chosen sport. Within the athletic program, it is expected that a competitive spirit, sportsmanship, and character be upheld throughout the year, on and off the field of play. The athletic program should be a positive component of the student-athletes' education and future success.

Participation in the athletic program is considered a privilege extended by the school to students who choose to participate. Participation in this program requires a commitment by the student-athlete of his/her time, energy and loyalty, as well as acceptance of coaches' decisions, training techniques, and expectations. Student-athletes should willingly assume all responsibilities and obligations that are inherent and unique to the program. Student-athletes must understand and appreciate that they not only represent themselves during competition, but also their teammates, their school, and the RBCS community.

Please read this handbook carefully. It will assist you in preparing yourself to meet the responsibilities and challenges you will find in athletics. With your willing commitment to our athletic program you are to be commended; you bring pride to yourself, your family, and to the Russell Byers Charter School community.

Sincerely,

Brent Byerly

Athletic Director

Russell Byers Charter School

## **INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS: GENERAL PHILOSOPHY**

The interscholastic athletic program should:

1. Supplement rather than serve as substitutes for basic physical education, recreation and intramural programs.
2. Be so conducted that the physical welfare and safety of the participants are protected.
3. Be conducted in accordance with the letter and spirit of the rules and regulations of appropriate conference, state, and national associations to which the school belongs.
4. Give authority to the athletic director and coaching staff to decide team size, playing time and amount of players.

## **HEALTH/INJURIES**

All sports activities carry with them inherent risks. While it is the objective of Russell Byers Charter School Athletic Department to make athletics as safe as possible, injuries do occur. While it is not our intention to frighten parents, we feel it is important that both the parents and student-athletes understand that the level of injury may be severe, including paralysis.

The purpose of this statement is to assure parents and students are aware of the risks that have always been present in sports. If you are injured while participating in interscholastic athletics, notify your coach and parents. You should consult a physician if you feel it is necessary.

### **Medical Emergency Policy for Away Venues**

If a student-athlete is injured during a sporting event and the injury requires the student-athlete to be transported to a hospital the following procedure will be followed: i

- If the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the injured student-athlete is at the event, he or she may accompany the injured student- athlete to the hospital or the parent can take their child to the hospital.
- If the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the injured student-athlete are not present, the Athletic Trainer or medical person on duty needs to call 911 in order to have that student-athlete transported. One of the coaches will accompany the student- athlete to the hospital. The parent(s)/guardian(s) or emergency contact listed will be contacted to inform them about the situation and that their student-athlete is in route to the hospital.
- Another parent/guardian cannot take the student-athlete to the hospital, regardless if they are a nurse, doctor, or friend of the family. They may accompany the injured student-athlete in the ambulance. However, they may not take the injured athlete off the playing surface unless the student-athlete is in an ambulance. If another person takes the student-athlete to the hospital they are assuming responsibility.

### **INITIAL PHYSICAL EVALUATION:**

PRIOR to any student participating in Practices, Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages, and/or Contests, at any PIAA member school in any school year, the student is required to have a completed physical, authorized by an Authorized Medical Examiner (AME). The CIPPE form may not be authorized earlier than June 1st 2021.

The Physical shall be effective, regardless of when performed during a school year, until the next May 31st.

- A student-athlete sent home by the school nurse because of illness cannot compete or practice that afternoon or evening.
- A student-athlete must return within 90 minutes of a medical appointment to be eligible to participate in that day's practice or game.

### **CONSENT OF A PARENT**

A student-athlete shall be eligible for practice or participation in each sport only when there is on file with the Athletic Director a certificate of consent, which is signed by his/her parent or guardian.

### **STUDENT-ATHLETE BEHAVIORAL & ACADEMIC GUIDELINES**

The following outlines behavioral and academic guidelines for Russell Byers Charter School. It is important to remember that you are a student, first and foremost.

#### **Behavior**

- In-school suspension/out of school suspension- Ineligible indefinitely with possible removal from the team. Consequences will be issued on a case by case basis.
- Excessive Dean referrals- Consequence will be dealt with on case by case basis (sit for 1st half, suspended for 1 game, etc)
- Detention- Student is ineligible for practice/game on day of assigned detention.

#### **Academics**

Student athletes must:

- Maintain passing grades in all subject areas. If a student is failing more than 1 class, they will be ineligible to participate until grades improve to passing.
- Complete homework when assigned.
- Be proactive on making up missed assignments/classwork when dismissed early on game days.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Attendance Requirements**

Participation in a school-sponsored sport requires that the student-athlete must be in attendance at school on the day of the event. To be considered in attendance, the student-athlete cannot miss more than 90 minutes of the school day. The student-athlete must be signed in by the front desk no later than 10:00 AM to fulfill this attendance requirement. A doctor's note will not be accepted as an exception to the 90-minute rule. Student-athletes with appointments during the school day should plan accordingly and make every effort to miss no more than 90 minutes of the school day.

Exceptions to this procedure may be presented to the athletic director for review on a case-by-case basis. Whenever possible, pre-approval for an absence from school on a school sponsored sport day should be requested in writing and given to the athletic director.

Student-athletes are not permitted to remain in the building after school unless under the direct supervision of a teacher, coach, or "adult in charge" of an after-school activity/sport.

## **INITIATIONS/HAZING/HARASSMENT**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing.

Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times. For purposes of this policy, hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization recognized by the Board.

Endanger the physical health shall include but not be limited to any brutality of the physical nature, such as whipping; beating; branding; forced calisthenics; exposure to the elements; forced consumption of any food, beverage, alcohol, drug, or controlled substance; or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer or RBCS employee shall plan, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity. No administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or RBCS employee shall permit, condone, or tolerate any form of hazing.

Students who have been subjected to hazing are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the building principal.

## **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Any student-athlete removed from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct (this includes pre-or-post game unsportsmanlike conduct) will receive a mandatory, one game minimum suspension. The suspension is to be served the next game.

The second time a student-athlete is disqualified in the same sport or any other sport during the school year, the penalty shall double. The third time a student-athlete is disqualified in the same sport or any

other sport during the school year shall result in immediate dismissal from the athletic program for the remainder of the school year.

An ejection or disqualification prevents a player from attending the regularly scheduled contest. This includes riding the bus, the locker room, the sidelines, the bench, the stands, or anywhere on the contest site.

Student-athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff and the school.

### **GAME-DAY EARLY DISMISSAL**

Early dismissal for afternoon contests is based on travel time and proper warm-up time needed prior to the start of the contest.

1. Any away afternoon contest could mean that a student-athlete will miss part, or all, of some afternoon classes. Student-athletes are responsible to see the teacher involved for any assignments for the class missed prior to the early dismissal.
2. Student-athletes who leave class earlier than their team dismissal time will be regarded as cutting class and will be subject to the class attendance policies as described in the student handbook.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Student-athletes travel to and from contests, away from school, in transportation provided by the school unless one of the below applies.

1. Injury to a participant that would require alternate transportation.
2. Prior arrangements made in writing between the participant's parent/guardian and the athletic director.
3. Where school transportation is not provided and alternate means are approved. Septa will be used for practices/games @ Lloyd Hall Rec Center.

### **TEAM SELECTION**

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his/her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach. It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or Varsity team the following year.

Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student does not ensure that a student-athlete will make the team.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and be available to answer student athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many student-athletes and even for their parent(s)/guardian(s), we unfortunately cannot accommodate everyone. Anyone cut from the team is welcome to try out again next season or to try another sport. When parents and student-athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

### **THE PURPOSE OF A JUNIOR VARSITY TEAM**

JV teams exist to provide those student-athletes unable to participate on the Varsity level an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the student-athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor for not making the varsity team, participation on a JV team may enhance the student-athlete's potential to make the varsity team in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that a student-athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity team. The student-athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year. Striving to win is important in athletics; however, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV team.

The development of student-athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV squad while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team. Playing time and rules will be determined by the head coach.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Student-athletes are responsible for any and all equipment (including uniforms and practice clothing) and will be expected to pay for any items that are not returned or which are returned showing excessive wear and abuse. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the practices and competitions of the school sport for which the equipment was issued. Except for the day of a game, athletic equipment/clothing should not be worn at school (never in gym class), at home, or for participation outside of school. It is unfortunate that some people steal, but that does not void responsibility for returning or paying for all that was issued. If any equipment is not returned at the conclusion of the season, an obligation will be issued to the student-athlete for the fair cost of a replacement. The student-athlete will not be permitted further athletic or activity participation until the obligation is cleared. It is highly recommended that all personal belongings such as cell phones, i-pods, wallets, etc. be kept with you at all times.

### **PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES**

A student-athlete must consistently attend practice sessions. They may start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or our facilities. Check with the coach for specific times. Practice will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather or held when school is not in session due to inclement weather. Student-athletes must be picked up promptly from practice and games. Excessive late pickups may result in removal from the team.

## THE PARENT-COACH RELATIONSHIP

Should the parent(s)/guardian(s) have any questions or concerns, they are asked not to approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call or email and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous, and logical manner. One of the responsibilities that a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his student-athletes. Student-athletes should not pause to talk to parent(s)/guardian(s) or friends immediately after the games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

## EXPRESSING CONCERNS

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of the athletic program, the student-athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she should then go to athletic director, or principal. When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

- 1) Never approach your coach immediately after a contest. This is not a proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
- 2) Call or email the following day and make an appointment, which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
- 3) Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude, or using foul language is totally unacceptable.
- 4) Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation which is given.
- 5) If you feel your concern has not been adequately addressed, please contact the athletic director so a resolution can be reached.

## SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

**\*Spectators are not permitted to attend MPAA events until further notice due to COVID protocols.**

In the interest of continued good relationships in the field of athletics, all spectators are asked to:

1. Conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen at all times, showing respect for visiting players and injured athletes, by not booing participants on the playing area and by respecting property.
2. Show respect for the game officials and refrain from booing their decisions or interfering with the control of the contest.
3. Recognize that vulgarity and indecent gestures are unacceptable.
4. Cheer under the organized guidance of the cheerleaders. Cheers to interfere with the opponent's cheering are unacceptable.

5. Recognize that noisemakers and signs in any gymnasium or at any indoor contest are unacceptable.
6. Recognize that littering premises, throwing of confetti or paper, and tossing objects onto the playing area are unacceptable.

#### **POLICY ON STUDENT-ATHLETE SOCIAL NETWORKING AND MEDIA USE**

The RBCS Athletic Department recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of online social networks. In this context, however, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for Russell Byers Charter School is a privilege, not a right. As a student-athlete, you represent the school and you are expected to portray yourself, your team, and the school in a positive manner at all times

If you participate on a social networking site or use social media, you must keep the following guidance in mind:

- Everything you post is public information – any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online – even if you limit access to your site. Information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters) may be accessible even after you remove it.
- Similar to comments made in person, the Department of Athletics will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as:
  - Derogatory language or remarks that may harm teammates or coaches; other RBCS students, teachers, administrators or coaches; and student-athletes, coaches, or representatives of other schools, including comments that may disrespect my opponents.
  - Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; hazing; sexual harassment; inappropriate gestures; vandalism, stalking; underage drinking, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors.
  - Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
  - Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation—regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional.

Again, while we respect your freedom of speech and encourage you to use social media as a way to connect with your fellow students and help promote RBCS Athletics, understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. The information you post on a social networking site is considered public information. Any posting to an on-line social network site that is deemed to be in violation of the expectations set forth can result in removal from RBCS Athletics

***Please detach and return to Mr. Byerly***

I have read and understand the guidelines of the 2021-2022 Russell Byers Charter School Athletic Handbook. I agree to uphold the expectations of the handbook and to promote good sportsmanship by representing myself and my school with positive behavior both on and off the playing field.

Student Athlete Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_