



STUDENT-ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK

KEY SCHOOL MISSION

The Key School is founded upon the conviction that children are innately curious about themselves and the world; they want to learn, they want to discover, and they want to create.

The School's role is to nourish and guide this natural exuberance, energy, and delight in the search for meaning, so that each student may develop into an informed, thoughtful and constructive member of society, with a lifelong commitment to learning.

With these beliefs and objectives in mind, The Key School strives to:

- Sustain a strong academic curriculum that encourages intellectual rigor, independence of thought, curiosity, creativity, and openness to differing ideas and perspectives.
- Inspire and challenge students by teaching them experientially, as active participants in the learning process, and by encouraging them to discover the interrelationships among different fields of study.
- Support and guide students in their efforts to mature intellectually, socially and emotionally, with teachers who respect and care about them, recognize individual learning needs, and affirm each student's strengths, abilities and interests.
- Provide students with academic and co-curricular opportunities that encourage them to broaden and deepen their diverse talents and interests, to make appropriate decisions for themselves, to take responsibility for those decisions, and to learn the value of collaborative and competitive effort.
- Prepare students for the challenges they will face and the responsibilities they will assume within an interconnected, complex, pluralistic world community.
- Support a faculty whose teaching is an extension of its own commitment to learning, and that shows this commitment through private study, communal engagement in professional development programs, and rigorous examination of the curriculum.
- Sustain an ethical school culture that engenders an inherent respect for the dignity of every human being, recognizes that personal liberty must be balanced by personal responsibility and individual action by the needs of others, and stresses to all members of a diverse school community the importance of trust, mutual respect, compassion, and service to others.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees

March 17, 2004

KEY SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

The Athletic program at Key is integral to the School's commitment to provide students with opportunities that broaden and deepen their diverse talents and that instill in them the value of cooperative and competitive effort.

Supporting students in their quest to explore a wide range of learning experiences, the program challenges students to develop physical prowess, sound judgment, responsibility, and a sense of fair play. Equally important, Key students gain self-confidence and enjoy the camaraderie and the school spirit that team sports engender.



The athletic program evolves from intramurals and “game days” for fifth graders to interscholastic competition for students in grades six through twelve at the Middle School, junior varsity, and varsity levels. In the Middle School, the program's highest priorities are to develop skills, commitment and teamwork, and to ensure meaningful participation in both practices and games. The junior varsity level continues to focus on skill development and inclusiveness, but places greater emphasis on preparing students for varsity level competition. At the varsity level, the primary goal is the presentation of competitive teams.

In the Athletic program, students find the balance between individual achievement and the needs of the team, and between broad participation and deep commitment to one sport. Key students value intense competition and, at the same time, honor good sportsmanship. Inclusive and competitive, the program seeks a level of competition that allows inclusivity while promoting the students' commitment to mastering skills, understanding tactics, fostering teamwork, and developing character.

REPRESENTING KEY THROUGH ATHLETICS

Participation in the athletic programs at Key School is a privilege. The Key School Athletic Department views interscholastic athletics as an opportunity for student participation in an organized, competitive environment. While the ultimate goal of athletic competition is to know victory, the achievement of objectives such as fair play, sportsmanship, skill acquisition, and work ethic are equally important. Winning traditions are founded upon the concepts of pride, respect, dedication, character, and loyalty. Coaches, athletes and parents alike must strive to ensure that the athletic teams at Key represent themselves in a manner that is conducive to both competitive spirit and good sportsmanship.

Participation in athletics also allows our student-athletes, spectators and coaches the opportunity to represent our entire school community. As such, all student-athletes, spectators and coaches must conduct themselves in compliance with the stated rules of the community. Student-athletes, spectators and coaches may be denied the privilege of participating in athletic events if they fail to act in accordance with Key community standards.

COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Every Key student is responsible for his or her own academic success. Student-athletes need to properly plan and prepare their academic workload given the time and schedule demands made on athletes. Athletic participation is secondary to the academic requirements of every Key student-athlete.



LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION AND PLAYING TIME

Middle School: At this level, students become accustomed to interscholastic practice and play. For many, it is their first introduction to competitive sports, different from recreation in its demands and philosophy.

Gaining experience through training and play should be paramount, not the win/loss record. In the Middle School, the focus is on learning athletic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social-emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition.

All players receive playing time, as safety and positive participation in practice allow. Coaches attempt to play every player at least a quarter of each game whenever possible.

Freshman & JV: This level of competition has an increased emphasis upon team play, physical conditioning and refinement of basic skills. Although being successful on the freshman or JV level is important, winning is not the sole objective. This is the level at which the athlete displays his or her readiness for the execution of skills at game speed. Athletic abilities, commitment and positive attitude will be rewarded and tested in competitive game situations.

An attempt will be made to allow as many participants as possible to play but not all will play equally. At the freshman and JV level, playing time is based on the degree of effort, skill improvement, ability to compete, and execution of skills at game speed demonstrated by the student-athlete both in practice and during games.

Varsity: Varsity competition is the culmination of each sport program. Squad size at the varsity level is limited. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the competitive contests. It is vital that each team member have a role and be informed of its importance. The number of roster positions is relative to the students' acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team's goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed. It is the coach's responsibility to make clear to the student-athlete what his or her role is on the team. However, students may ask for clarification of this role should any confusion arise.

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on a varsity team at Key, as is the realization that a varsity sport requires a five-day-a-week commitment (sometimes six). This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons. While contests and practices are rarely held on holidays or Sundays, the dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity program should be taken seriously.

PREREQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATION

Physical Form: Each student-athlete must have a physical exam completed by a board-certified doctor prior to participating in a school sanctioned practice or game. Student-athletes who participate in more than one season are not obligated to have a physical exam prior to each season.

Concussion Baseline Testing: All student athletes in grades 9-12 are required to have concussion baseline testing, completed at the school, in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. This testing must be updated every other year.

Academic and Disciplinary Good Standing: Student-athletes at Key School are here for their education first and foremost. Athletic participation is a privilege granted only to those who are deserving of this opportunity. Problems with grades or behavior are justifiable reasons for Academic or Disciplinary Ineligibility. This will be determined by the Athletic Director and the Division Head with input from teachers and/or parents.



SPORTSMANSHIP

The School's Role: It is the expectation of The Key School Athletic Department that everyone in the school community, student-athletes, parents, staff, and spectators, will demonstrate good sportsmanship and fair play during all athletic contests. The paramount importance placed by Key School on acting honorably is explained to staff and to athletes throughout the school year.

The Athlete's Role: Student-athletes must uphold the values of Key School both on and off the field. Demonstrating respect for teammates, coaches, game officials, opponents, and Key School is the responsibility of each student-athlete. Every member of a Key athletic team has a specific role to fill. Key expects its athletes to compete at their highest level every time they go to practice or a game, but to never lose sight of the ultimate goals of the program. We are not a win at all costs School—Key athletes are expected to remain focused on helping their team realize victory and to do so with honor. Be thankful for worthy opponents and competent officials, as without them, athletes would never be able to compete.

The Parent's Role: Key's athletic program relies upon the support of its parents. The parents of the student-athletes are vital to the success of Key's programs. In order for sportsmanship to be taught effectively, everyone involved with Key Athletics needs to be a good role model for the student-athletes. Every official, coach and player are trying to do the best job they possibly can at all times and showing respect for opponents, teammates, officials, and coaches is an essential part of modeling good sportsmanship.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Effective communication is the key to success for any athletic department. The Key Athletic Department strives to keep open and professional lines of communication between our coaching staff, student-athletes and parents. Our coaching staff will make every effort to communicate all important information to their student-athletes and parents on a regular basis.

24 Hour Rule: Game days can be an emotional time for coaches, athletes and parents. The Key Athletic Department asks parents, athletes and coaches to wait 24 hours before addressing conflicts that occur during games (or practices). This "cooling off" period allows for emotions to be taken out of the conflict and a more constructive resolution to be reached. The only exception to this rule is if a child's safety is at risk, then immediate action should be taken.

Conflict Resolution: A very important life lesson learned through athletics is self-advocacy. Key School encourages its students to practice this skill by having them speak directly to their coach if there is a conflict or misunderstanding. If no resolution can be reached, the student-athlete is requested to speak directly with the Athletic Director. If the problem is still unresolved, then the parent should contact the coach. Only after following these steps should the parent contact

the Athletic Director or the Division Head. The steps are summarized below:

1. Athlete speaks to Coach
2. Athlete speaks to Athletic Director
3. Parent speaks to coach
4. Parent speaks to Athletic Director
5. Parent speaks to Division Head

Key strives to hire the most professional and knowledgeable coaches for each sport program. With this in mind, please respect that every coach and student-athlete works hard to ensure that his or her program or team reaches its highest potential. Coaches will not discuss their coaching strategy, playing time decisions, or other members of the team with parents at any time. If a meeting between a parent and a coach needs to take place, a private place at a mutually agreed upon time for the meeting should be arranged.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Injuries: During games or practice sessions where the Athletic Trainer is present, the Athletic Trainer will assume all responsibility for assessment, treatment and follow up care of student-athletes. If a student-athlete needs to be taken to a medical facility, the Athletic Trainer or a Coach will accompany the student if a parent or guardian is not available. Parents will be notified of the situation immediately.

Returning from an Injury: Any student-athlete held out of a practice or game by a parent or guardian, a doctor, or the Athletic Trainer due to injury or illness must be cleared by the Athletic Trainer prior to being allowed to return to play. The Athletic Trainer has the authority, relevant to physical condition, to manage the participation of all student-athletes in athletic events.

Concussions—Return To Play (RTP): RTP may begin once the athlete has had no symptoms at rest for at least one to two days. Below are the steps that the athlete must complete once cleared for RTP. If any symptoms return at any time during the program, activity must be stopped.

1. Light General Conditioning Exercises:
 - a. No Contact
 - b. Begin with sports-specific warm up
 - c. Perform a 15-20 minute workout: this may include stationary bike, fast-paced walking, or light jog.
2. General Conditioning and Sport-Specific Skill Work (Individually):
 - a. No Contact
 - b. Sport-specific warm up
 - c. Slowly increase intensity and duration of workout (20-30 minutes)

- d. Begin skill work during workout
- e. Begin footwork and running drills
- 3. General Conditioning and Skill Work (Individually and with Teammate):
 - a. No Contact
 - b. General Conditioning (up to 60 minutes) – Increase intensity and duration. Begin interval training
 - c. Begin drills with partner but no contact. Continue individual skill work.
 - d. Begin walk through on offense and defense—practice plays with no contact
- 4. General Conditioning, Skill Work and Team Drills:
 - a. No Contact
 - b. Resume regular conditioning and duration of practice
 - c. Practice team passing and shooting drills, practice offensive, defensive, and counter attack schemes with no contact
 - d. Begin fast-break drills
 - e. Continue with walk-throughs of plays with no contact
 - f. Practice defensive coverage with no contact
- 5. Full Team Practice with Body Contact
 - a. Join team in a full practice with controlled body contact

Heat Acclimation Policy: Key School follows the MIAA policy for heat acclimation for all Fall Sports. The policy states: Day 1-5—players may practice/play for no more than one 2.5 hour session. Day 6 and beyond—players may participate in multiple practice sessions, with a minimum of three hours between sessions. All players must have a day off after six consecutive practice/game days. On single practice days, a half hour of weight training is permitted in addition to the 2.5 hour session.



Role of the Athletic Trainer: Key is extremely fortunate to have an athletic trainer on staff for all athletic practices and games. However, students are encouraged to utilize the athletic trainer properly. Any and all injuries, large or small, whether they are suffered at school or elsewhere, should be reported to the athletic trainer so that he or she may have a clear understanding of the health of all of our student-athletes.

In the event an athlete is injured and is referred to a physician, he or she is required to have a medical release identifying any limitations or restrictions before returning to participation.

Students often have the misperception that athletic trainers are people who keep them from playing. Key strives to educate our athletes so that they understand that athletic trainers are actually there to help them play as quickly as possible in a healthy manner.

Release from Class for Athletics: Athletes who are released from class early to travel to away games or matches will be responsible for any schoolwork missed during their absence. Arrangements must be made ahead of time with all teachers involved.

Conflicts in Extra-Curricular Activities: An individual student who participates in multiple extra-curricular activities may find themselves with a conflict of obligations. The Athletic Department believes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences and will attempt to schedule events in a manner so as to minimize conflicts. When conflicts do arise moderators/coaches will work together with the student to find a solution that is in the student's best interest.

Uniforms and Equipment: Students have an obligation and responsibility for all equipment issued to them. Each student is responsible for the proper care and retention of their equipment from the date of issue to the date of return. Equipment should be stored in a safe place at all times when not in use. Key School cannot be responsible for personal belongings, or issued equipment, of student athletes. If a student loses or fails to return school equipment by the due date, established and advertised by the department, they are responsible for paying the current replacement cost of the equipment. Payment is required at the time of the loss, prior to the next season of athletic involvement or graduation, whichever comes first. No student will be allowed to try out for another sport until all outstanding equipment has been returned and/or paid for.

If an athlete leaves the team during the season for any reason (e.g., injury, academics, discipline), it is his or her responsibility to return all school equipment immediately to the Athletic Department.





Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco: Medical research substantiates the fact that the use of steroids, tobacco, alcohol, and any type of mood-modifying substance produces harmful effects on the body. In addition to being illegal, the use of such substances alters the individual's ability to make reasonable choices and to live up to the commitments that have been made.

Key students may not use tobacco in any form nor possess, use, transmit, be in the presence of, or be in the possession of paraphernalia for the use of, or be under the influence of alcohol, unlawful drug or any narcotic at any time, on or off school premises.

Any athlete who violates this policy will be suspended from sports participation for a period as determined by the Athletic Director in consultation with other Administrators. During the period of suspension the student may not have any contact (other than a meeting with the coach) with the team at meetings, practices, scrimmages, games, or activities. The suspension from one activity may mean suspension from succeeding activity seasons depending on the severity of the incident(s), and/or the time in the season that the offense occurs. Any second violation of this policy will result in the student being removed for any sport in season and may result in suspension of the student from all sports and extra-curricular activities for a period of one year from the date of the offense.

The student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of the suspension and the time that the student is allowed to return to participation. An arrest or court conviction is not necessary before a student may be suspended for violation of this policy. Consequences under this policy may be in addition to other consequences imposed by the school, the organization, and/or the community.

Hazing: Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing activities are generally considered to be physically or mentally abusive, hazardous and/or sexually violating. Anything that causes mental anguish or physical discomfort is considered to be classified as hazing. Hazing is not part of Key School athletic traditions and will not be tolerated by the School. Any harassment of students will be reported to the appropriate administrators and disciplinary action will be determined by the appropriate Division Heads in consultation with the Athletic Director and coaches.

STUDENT COMMITMENT POLICY

Joining an athletic team is a serious commitment, one that should not be entered into without first understanding the responsibility one takes on when becoming a part of a team. Key School teams practice or play virtually every day and student-athletes must balance their schedules to fit in school work, sports, other extra-curricular activities, and time to simply relax and be a kid. When a student does not fulfill their commitment to a team, the team suffers, the School suffers, and the student suffers. Therefore, students are asked to be certain that they can fulfill their responsibilities to a team before they join it.

In order to minimize the impact of a student-athlete who cannot fulfill his or her commitment to their team, Key has created a policy to govern the Athletic Department's position on maintaining an appropriate level of commitment from all student-athletes.

1. Student-Athletes are expected to be at **every** practice and **every** game for their team
 - a. Injured players are still expected to attend practice and games unless otherwise instructed by their coach and/or the Athletic Trainer
 - b. Weekend practices and practices over school breaks are **always** optional practices—but students who can attend are strongly encouraged to do so
 - c. Coaches are willing to work with student-athletes to meet academic commitments as a first priority

2. If a Student-Athlete knows of circumstances that will force him or her to miss a practice and/or game, he or she **must** discuss this with the coach as soon as they are aware of the conflict, with the understanding that:

- a. **Any** absence for **any reason** may result in a decrease or loss of playing time in upcoming games or events at the discretion of the coach
- b. Repeated absences may result in a meeting with player, coach, parent(s), and Athletic Director to determine if player can remain a member of the team
- c. Failure to give a coach appropriate warning of an absence may result in a further decrease in playing time and/or a meeting with player, coach, parent(s), and Athletic Director to determine if player can remain a member of the team

AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

The *Key School Student-Athlete/Parent Handbook* is a detailed reference of organizational guidelines and activities. It is essential that student-athletes and parents follow these guidelines and also make a personal commitment of time and effort in both academics and athletics.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the policies of the *Key School Student-Athlete/Parent Handbook*, paying particular attention to the Student Commitment Policy.

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return signed Agreement of Understanding to Alexis Martin in the Athletics Office *before* beginning practices or game competitions.