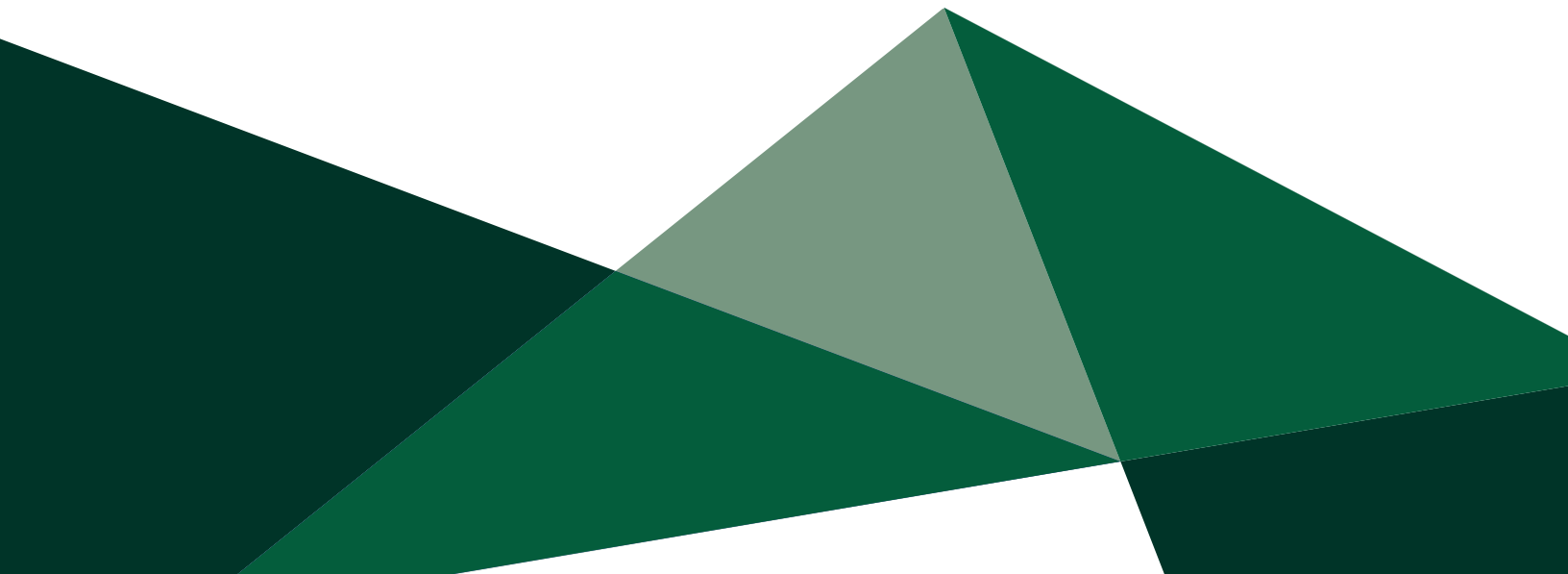




WILLIAMSBURG  
JAMES CITY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EST. 1955

# 2023-24 High School Student Athletic Handbook



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## WJCC Schools VHSL Sponsored Activities

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### Fall Sports

- Cheerleading – Varsity & JV
- Cross Country – Boys & Girls
- Field Hockey – Varsity & JV
- Football – Varsity & JV
- Golf – Boys & Girls
- Volleyball – Girls Varsity & JV
- One Act Play
- E-sports

### Winter Sports

- Cheerleading – Varsity Sideline
- Basketball – Boys & Girls Varsity & JV
- Swimming – Boys & Girls Varsity
- Indoor Track – Boys & Girls Varsity
- Wrestling – Varsity
- Forensics
- Debate
- Scholastic Bowl

### Spring Sports

- Baseball – Varsity & JV
- Outdoor Track – Boys & Girls
- Soccer – Boys & Girls Varsity & JV
- Softball – Varsity & JV
- Tennis – Boys & Girls
- E-Sports

## Code of Conduct for Spectators

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Participation in athletics is a privilege—not a right—that provides student-athletes with the opportunity to grow athletically, academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. All stakeholders must view athletic participation and competition as a lifelong learning experience. Good sportsmanship is required, not only of the division’s student-athletes and coaches, but also of all persons who support and attend athletic-related events. Spectators, including parents, are expected to exhibit courteous behavior at all times toward all participants, coaches, officials, staff, and fellow spectators. Persons who engage in inappropriate behavior are subject to immediate removal from the event, the event premises, and possible additional attendance restrictions. The School Board empowers principals, athletic directors, and coaches to always enforce the good sportsmanship code.

## The Athletics Mission

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The overall objective of athletics programs within Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for student participation in properly supervised and controlled activities under the guidelines established by the Virginia High School League (VHSL), The Bay Rivers District and the Williamsburg-James City County School Board. The school division’s athletics programs will encourage and support broad participation from as many students as possible, with teams competing on an equitable basis with other schools without sacrificing academics, sportsmanship, scholarship, general welfare, or the health of the school and student.

## Our Beliefs

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The Williamsburg-James City County School Division believes that:

- athletics is a partnership among students, parents, and school personnel;
- athletics help foster success in an honest and sportsmanlike manner;
- athletics provide experiences that mirror events students will face in the real world, and helps students prepare for adulthood;
- student athletes should represent the highest ideals of any school;
- student athletes should balance athletic participation and academic responsibility.

## Requirements and Responsibilities

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### Academic Requirements

1. VHSL Scholarship Rule – Students must pass five courses each year. The Williamsburg James City County School Division encourages student athletes to take a minimum of six classes each year. Credit for summer school is applied to the semester or year it follows. Audit or retake classes in which credit was earned are not counted towards eligibility.
2. All athletes must earn 1.25 GPA or higher for the previous semester (or cumulative).
3. Athletic eligibility is determined on the date each semester ends as determined by the school board.
4. A player must attend school for at least three (3) blocks of the day to be eligible to practice or participate in a VHSL event that day. Extenuating circumstances may be considered by the athletic department or principal.
5. A student has four years of eligibility. One-year of athletic eligibility shall be defined as participation in a sport in a given academic year. All students entering the ninth grade are automatically eligible for their fall semester. An athlete’s eligibility “clock” begins upon entry into the 9th grade and runs four consecutive years.
6. The building principal will decide on the specific eligibility of students with disabilities and those enrolled in special programs such as New Horizons and the Governor’s School.
7. Seniors must be enrolled in any combination of classes that equals three credits each semester to maintain eligibility.

## Athletic Fee

Athletes are required to pay the athletic fee prior to the first game.

## Behavior Requirements

Student athletes are required to follow the behavior requirements established for all students in Williamsburg-James City County Schools in accordance with School Board Policy JGC. Because of the leadership status afforded athletes by their peers, coaches will require higher behavior standards. Participation in practices and games, and continued membership on a team depends largely on the athlete's behavior. Principals, athletic directors and coaches will decide appropriate disciplinary actions for their athletes.

From the time a student becomes a WJCC athlete, they are an athlete 365 days per year. Any athlete who self-reports an inappropriate behavior that may include a legal charge or complaint, conviction, deferred disposition, or any other student handbook violation to the school athletic director before the school's notification of the offense will be granted favorable consideration in determining any imposed athletic consequence.

The WJCC Discipline Policy and consequences issued by principals may have additional impact on a student's participation in athletics or any other co-curricular activity.

## Consequences of Misbehavior

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Student athletes who violate the WJCC Student Code of Conduct in the student handbook, the Behavior and Responsibility Pledge, or violations of law may, at the discretion of the principal, incur penalties that impact athletic participation.

Any athlete identified through the legal system who has been arrested and/or charged of a crime either in or out of school shall not be eligible for the next competitive event, current sports team and/or the next sport season in which the athlete would participate for a period of time to be determined by the principal.

Whether in or out of school, athletes shall not smoke, chew, use, or have in their possession, tobacco, vaping or alcohol products. The penalty for such use or behavior may be suspension from athletic participation for a time to be determined by the principal. Any athlete suspended for violating the WJCC Schools' drug and alcohol policy (Policy and Procedure Code: JFCF), or who is suspended for any serious disciplinary violation, shall be suspended from the next competitive event, current sports team, and/or the next sports season in which the athlete would participate for a period of time to be determined by the principal.

Any suspension (in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS) means a student is also prohibited from participating in any athletic practice and/or contest during the suspension. If the suspension is in place on a Friday, the student-athlete is prohibited from participating in any practice and/or contests during the weekend. Students placed in an alternative setting due to disciplinary action are prohibited from participating in athletics. Any athlete who receives a second ISS suspension during his/her sports season may be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. Any athlete who receives a second OSS suspension during the season will be dismissed from the team. These consequences will be enforced in conjunction with the VHSL Handbook, which, depending on the specific case, may add additional consequences per VHSL rules and regulations.

Any athlete who is referred to the School Board for the purpose of a disciplinary hearing will immediately be prohibited from participating in any school sponsored athletic activity until after the hearing. Following the hearing additional disciplinary measures may be taken by the principal and/or athletic director.

Hazing occurs when an act is committed against a student or a student is coerced into committing an act that creates a substantial risk of harm to the student, or to any third party, in order for the student to be initiated into, or affiliated, with any group, club, athletics team, grade level, activity or organization. Participation in any hazing shall result in consequences.

Abuse of any portion of the Behavior and Responsibility Pledge herein and all student-eligibility requirements may result in one or more of the following actions by the coach and/or principal:

- Suspension of the athlete from the team for one or more games,
- Removal of the athlete from the team for the remainder of the sports season,
- Forfeiture of award(s) for the particular sport,
- Restriction or prohibition from any further interscholastic competition,
- Other appropriate disciplinary action deemed necessary and appropriate by the athletic director or school principal.

Administrators will notify the athletic director of any behavior concerns during an athlete's off-season. An administrator, athletic director, the coach/sponsor, and the counselor may require intervention for a student who demonstrates a need for increased supervision.

The WJCC Discipline Policy and consequences issued by administration may also affect a student's participation in athletics or any other extracurricular activity.

Any athlete who does not abide by established team rules communicated by the coaching staff may be suspended or dismissed from the team.

## **Parent/Coach Communication**

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Parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we can accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in a WJCC program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Coaches are granted broad discretion and autonomy over general team matters, including team rules, roster selection, participation, playing time, selection of starting athletes, recognition of athletes, and recommendations for award recipients.

It may be difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you expect. Coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for the team and for all student-athletes involved.

Examples of concerns to discuss with the coaching staff

- Treatment of your child
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

If there is a concern to discuss with the coach:

- The athlete should talk to the coach
- The parent should set up a meeting with the coach
- If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent communication form should be completed, and a telephone call should be made to set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss your concerns

## **Game and Practice Attendance**

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Athletes must be present for all school competitive events, regular season, postseason, and make-up games. Exceptions are not made for vacations, Saturdays, or other sports activities. Prior to the start of each season, the coach will determine the official schedule of out-of-district competitions for their respective team.

There are no consequences for athletes who miss a practice or game for absences due to school-sponsored trips or other academic activities required by the school. For optional school trips, the coach may determine if any consequence is required.

For all other missed games or practices, the consequence is at the discretion of the coach; in such cases, consequences may include dismissal from the team.

## **Sportsmanship**

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WJCC athletes are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship during practices and competitive events. Technical ejections are addressed by VHSL regulations.

### **Consequences of poor sportsmanship:**

1. When an athlete is removed by a coach, ejected by a referee, or the unsportsmanlike act is witnessed by the athletic director or principal, the athlete will be suspended for the next two competitive events.
2. Repeated offenses of unsportsmanlike behavior may result in suspension from the team at the discretion of the principal.
3. Gross unsportsmanlike conduct, such as fighting:
  1. First Offense – the student will be declared ineligible for the next three games (two games in sports with ten or fewer games).
  2. Second Offense – the student will be declared ineligible for the remainder of the sports season.

Profanity and other forms of inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Students who exhibit this type of behavior during a game will be removed immediately from the game and will not be allowed to re-enter. The coach and athletic director will discipline athletes who exhibit this type of behavior during practice. Any coach, team personnel, and/or contestant who confronts or addresses a coach, contestant or official using hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expressions will be disqualified for the contest and will be ineligible for the team's next scheduled contest and/or subsequent contests until penalties and educational/restorative interventions are completed (VHSL 27-16-1)

## Transfer Eligibility

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### WJCC Athletic Transfer Process

28A-7-1 VHSL TRANSFER RULE-The student shall not have enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parents, parent, or guardian. The original residence must be abandoned as a residence, that is sold, rented, or otherwise disposed of as a residence, and must not be used as a residence by the immediate family. The entire family must make the change and take with them the household goods and furniture appropriate to the circumstances. The change must be made with the intent that it is permanent. The sending and receiving VHSL school principals are required to complete and file the VHSL Transfer Form, acknowledging that to the best of their knowledge the student has met all aspects of the transfer rule or its exceptions. Home instruction does not constitute enrollment in a public school. Home schooling is a process through which Virginia Code compulsory education requirements may be met, as is private schooling. Home schooling is the equivalent of school enrollment for Transfer Rule purposes, and determining whether the student has met Scholarship Rule requirements of having passed five academic subjects recognized by the Virginia Department of Education in the most recent prior semester.

Williamsburg James City County Schools Student Transfer Practice

- When the athletic director fills out the MEL (Master Eligibility List) and sees there is a transfer student from one of the other division high schools they will request the student's transcript and check the family's address.
- The receiving school will then fill out the VHSL Principal's transfer form and send it to the exiting school.
- Things the receiving athletic director may ask for to verify the move:
  - a. New driver's license with new address
  - b. Voter ID registration
  - c. Possible Social Worker home visit

The school division is committed to ensure that all transfers are done in accordance with VHSL regulations.

### Eligibility Appeals Process

A student lacking the GPA required may appeal one time during their high school career to a committee of the division's Health/PE coordinator, and three middle school principals regarding extenuating circumstances.

- Students must be eligible at the time of tryouts.
- There are no semester appeals.
- No student may join a team during the season unless they are returning from an injury or the student moves into the district.

## Transportation

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All athletes must ride school division vehicles to and from athletic events that are held off school grounds when transportation is provided by the school division. In an emergency, which includes injury, illness, family problems, and an unusual academic situation, only a parent/guardian may secure permission from the coach to transport their athlete. Identification will be required by the coach. Under no circumstances will an athlete be allowed to leave with another student.

Head coaches may require all athletes to ride the bus with the team as part of team expectations. Failure to comply with this policy will result in immediate suspension of the athlete from the team pending a meeting with the athletic director. On special occasions parents/guardians may request in writing, to the principal at least 48 hours before the activity, permission to transport their own child to or from an athletic event. Parents/guardians may only transport their child to an event.

## Athletic Uniforms

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Sports uniforms are selected by the athletic director and coach with the approval of the principal. Any change of style must be approved by the Athletic Committee.

## Other Rules and Regulations

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For teams making roster cuts, athletes are required to attend tryouts. Exceptions to this rule include new students who were not enrolled during tryouts, specific medical conditions, and athletes who have not completed their school sports season that precedes the tryout period. (Medical documentation may be required by the athletic director.)

Athletes must pass a physical examination and submit a completed VHSL physician's certificate and parental consent form as required by the VHSL before trying out for an athletic team. Providing or offering false information regarding an athlete's physical condition shall

result in suspension from VHSL activities for that school year. Physicals must be dated after May 1st.

Students must have satisfactory medical insurance before participation will be allowed. WJCC Schools provides information about supplemental and/or student accident insurance. For more information, contact the athletic director or principal.

Parents must consent to allow the physician(s), athletic trainers, and other health care provider(s) selected by the school to perform a pre-participation examination and to provide treatment for any injury or condition resulting from participating in school athletics/activities during the school year. Parental permission is expected for the team physician(s) or health care provider(s) to share appropriate information concerning their child. Shared information is relevant to participation in athletics and activities with coaches and other school personnel as deemed necessary for the safety of the student.

All uniforms and equipment issued to athletes must be returned within a week after the conclusion of the season. Students assume financial responsibility for missing, lost, or damaged equipment or uniforms, and students may not participate in other sports and activities until equipment obligations are met. Students will not be permitted to participate in any other sport until all fees are paid.

Athletes may not participate in more than one sport during a sports season unless the athlete has approval of the two coaches, and the two coaches have met with and received approval from the athletic director. Athletes who are given permission will be monitored academically on a more frequent basis to assess their success maintaining dual participation status.

Any athlete who quits or is dismissed from a team after tryouts may not play for another team or participate in any preseason conditioning until the end of the current season.

A sports night event will be held at the conclusion of each sports season to honor the students who have participated in a VHSL activity. All athletes are encouraged to attend and celebrate the team with teammates.

Middle school students may not participate on high school athletic teams, due to an existing middle school athletic program of activities. Middle school student athletes may travel to their zone school for conditioning after the VHSL dead period in the Spring. These students are responsible for transportation to the high school but have the option to ride that respective school's activity bus home.

## Vacation Breaks

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Our athletes need time to take a short vacation with their families during the Winter or Spring Break. Athletes who have no travel plans during the break should attend practice.

1. Winter Break: Starting with the last day of school before the start of the Winter Break and extending until December 27th at 4:00 pm athletes will not be required to attend any practices or non-district games.
2. Spring Break: Starting with the last day of school before the Spring Break and extending until the Thursday of the break at 4:00 pm athletes will not be required to attend any practices or non-district games.
3. Summer Break: The last day of school until the day before the first day of the official start of fall practice is defined as summer break. Once practice starts in the fall, all athletes are required to attend all practices and games.

For more information on Virginia High School League Policies and Procedures, please visit [www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)

Williamsburg-James City County School Division is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination based upon race, color national origin, religion, sex, disability and age in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities, or with respect to employment. Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to Title IX/Section 504 Compliance Coordinator, Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, and P.O. Box 8783, Williamsburg, VA 23187. (Phone: (757) 253-6777) Persons with disabilities, who require accommodation in the application, testing and/or interview process should contact the Human Resources Department.

## Activity Buses

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### Schedule and Rules

1. Activity buses run 4:30 to 4:45 p.m. during the season, except on special days (i.e. half days and before holidays).
2. Coaches must not expect the buses to wait.
3. If a coach holds practice in the afternoon, he or she is responsible for his athletes until they board the bus.
4. If a student-athlete is going to ride the activity bus, the student-athlete must not leave school property and return. The responsible coach is required to report this to the administrator. The student-athlete will face disciplinary action by the principal or designee.

### Activity Bus Passes

1. In-season athletes will receive a pass that can/will be used for the Activity Bus. Additional passes will be available from the security office.
2. Any athlete capable of riding the 4:30 p.m. bus must do so. "Hanging out" until later, will not be allowed and will be reason for suspension from activities.

## Advanced Play

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### Tournament Expenses

1. Any team or athlete that advances to a state tournament will have their lodging and travel paid by the athletic department.
2. State Tournaments:
  - a. Travel and housing will be provided by the athletic department.
  - b. All teams regardless of advanced play status will be expected to participate in a fundraiser if they have monetary requests beyond what has been budgeted for them.
3. Expenses will be paid for only those athletes who have earned the right to advance to a tournament.
4. Expenses will only be paid for regular personnel associated with the team. Number of coaches and managers traveling will be determined by AD and head coach.

### Academic and Behavioral Assessments

1. Coaches will monitor the academic and behavioral assessment of athletes by their teachers. Coaches may use monitor sheets every two weeks.
2. Study halls will be held for teams practicing late. Study hall schedules will be provided to the athletic office at the beginning of each season.
3. Students' academic progress will be evaluated in the second week of each nine weeks.
4. Students not showing adequate progress or improvement will be referred for academic remediation.

### Attendance

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School attendance is critical to learning. Because athletes have great demands on their time, attendance will be monitored to facilitate success. The attendance office will notify the athletic director when an athlete has had excessive absences during the school year. The principal (or his/her designee), athletic director, coach/sponsor, and counselor may decide on a course of intervention to help improve an athlete's absenteeism.

Student athletes who are tardy the day after an athletic contest (excused or unexcused) more than two times will be suspended from the next game.

1. Students must be in school for at least three blocks in order to participate in a practice or event.
2. If a student has more than three unexcused absences during the season of participation, a review meeting will be held involving the student-athlete, the parent(s), the Athletic Director, the head coach, and school administration. Due to this meeting, eligibility for athletics may be temporarily removed. Further unexcused absences during or after the meeting or period of ineligibility may result in the student-athlete being removed from the team.
3. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the athletic director and/or principal. At no time is the coach to waive the mandatory attendance rule on his/her own.

### Concussion Procedures

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Concussions sometimes occur among athletes in competitive sports programs. At WJCC Schools, careful protocols are utilized, including the use of ImpACT software, to guide management of head injuries. The following will provide background information on concussions and describe the protocols followed at WJCC Schools.

PLEASE NOTE: If a student athlete is suffering from any signs and/or symptoms of concussion resulting from a blow to the head, the athlete MUST report to the school's athletics trainers or a physician as soon as possible. The sooner a proper diagnosis can be made, the sooner healing can begin.

#### Definition of a Concussion

A concussion is the disruption of normal brain function due to either a direct blow to the head, face and neck, or an indirect blow or jolt to another part of the body that transmits an "impulsive" force to the brain. Some concussions may result in a loss of consciousness. However, loss of consciousness is not the defining characteristic of a concussion.

It is imperative that the brain have enough time to heal in order to prevent any further trauma or permanent damage. Rest must always come in the form of ceasing all physical activity, but may also involve a break from challenging cognitive activity as well.

Signs (observable behaviors) that may be present with concussions

- Appears to be dazed or stunned
- Is confused about time, date, and/or location



- Is unable to remember what he/she did prior to or after the injury
- Has altered balance
- Is slow to answer questions
- Displays a personality change
- Has altered sleep patterns: is unable to fall asleep or feels like he/she always wants to sleep
- Is vomiting
- Experiences loss of consciousness (not present in all concussions)

Symptoms (experienced and reported by the athlete) that may be present with concussions

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision or any other visual alteration
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slow
- Feeling “foggy” or in a “funk”
- Difficulty in concentrating when reading, listening, or speaking
- Extreme fatigue

## Management of a Concussion

Proper management of a concussion is the best form of prevention of a serious injury. Most important is prevention of Second Impact Syndrome – a catastrophic increase in intracranial pressure leading to massive brain swelling, herniation and potentially death. This syndrome occurs in athletes up to 14 days post-concussion and when an athlete returns to competition prior to complete resolution of symptoms. Therefore, the following concussion protocols are utilized at WJCC Schools:

1. Any student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion is removed from competition.
2. No student with a concussion is allowed to return to play in the current game.
3. Consideration should be given to addressing the academic needs and gradual reintroduction to cognitive demands to students who have been diagnosed with a concussion. Modification to the academic workload may be needed during recovery.
4. All concussions are referred for medical evaluation following the injury by an appropriate licensed health care provider as designated by the State of Virginia.
5. Stepwise return to play:
  - a. No physical activity; rest until asymptomatic
  - b. Light aerobic exercise is supervised by the athletic trainer
  - c. Non-contact drills until one-week post-injury.
  - d. Return to contact sports after minimum of one-week post-injury and completely asymptomatic (neurocognitive testing will now be used to assess return-to-play).
  - e. Any recurrence of concussive symptoms should lead to the athlete dropping back to the previous level.
6. An athlete with two concussions per season will be removed from contact sports for the remainder of that season. Return to play will require neurocognitive testing and the approval by an appropriate licensed health care provider as designated by the State of Virginia.
7. An athlete with a history of three or more concussions is highly recommended to avoid contact sports. Participation will require neurocognitive testing and be at the discretion of the school medical inspector.

Parents are encouraged to report out of school concussions to the athletic director or athletic trainer for the safety of the student athlete.

## Use of ImPACT Software

In order to assess the severity of concussions and promote safe return to play, WJCC Schools uses the ImPACT Software Program.

## Some Additional Facts About Concussions

- Mild concussions (“bell ringers”) do not require loss of consciousness. Presenting symptoms may include headache, nausea, balance problems, photosensitivity, fatigue, foggy or sluggish feeling, and/or a change in sleep patterns and cognitive changes.
- Cutting edge research suggests that a concussion produces a metabolic, rather than anatomic, injury to the brain, making CT scanning and MRI insensitive to the physiological changes in the concussed brain.
- An athlete who sustains a concussion is 4-6 times more likely to sustain a second concussion.
- Effects of a concussion are cumulative in athletes who return to play prior to complete recovery.
- High school athletes with a history of three or more concussions are up to nine times more likely to have more severe symptoms following subsequent concussions.
- Post-concussion syndrome can involve decreased processing speed, short term memory impairment, concentration deficit,

depression/irritability, fatigue/sleep disturbance, and academic difficulties.

More information on concussions can be obtained from the following website: [www.sportsconcussion.bianj.org](http://www.sportsconcussion.bianj.org) or contact one of the WJCC School's athletic trainers.

## Sudden Cardiac Arrest

In order for students to participate in an extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on sudden cardiac arrest provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing sudden cardiac arrest, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information.

### What is sudden cardiac arrest?

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA does not just happen to adults; it can happen to anyone. The causes of sudden cardiac arrest in children and adults can be different. A child's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues.

Sudden cardiac arrest is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. Sudden cardiac arrest is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

### Removal from play/return to play

Any student-athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA before, during, or after activity must be removed from play/practice. Play includes all athletic activities. Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or cardiologist (heart doctor). Clearance for the student-athlete to return to play must be provided in writing.

### Causes of sudden cardiac arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest is caused by several structural and electrical diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Most conditions responsible for SCA in children are inherited. Other possible causes of SCA are a sudden blunt non-penetrating blow to the chest and the use/abuse of recreational or performance-enhancing drugs and/or energy drinks.

### How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States?

Sudden cardiac arrest is the number one cause of death for adults in this country. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside of hospitals each year. About 2,000 patients under the age of 25 die of SCA each year. It is the #1 cause of death for student-athletes.

Warning Signs of SCA	Emergency Response to SCA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fainting or seizures during exercise</li><li>Unexplained shortness of breath</li><li>Dizziness</li><li>Extreme fatigue</li><li>Chest pains</li><li>Racing heart</li><li>SCA should be suspected in any athlete who has collapsed and is unresponsive.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Act immediately; time is most critical to increase survival rates.</li><li>Recognize the warning signs of SCA</li><li>Call 911 immediately and activate EMS</li><li>Administer CPR</li><li>Use Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)</li></ul>

### Warning signs of potential heart issues:

The following need to be evaluated further by your primary care provider:

- Family history of heart disease/cardiac arrest
- Fainting, a seizure, or convulsions during physical activity
- Fainting or a seizure from emotional excitement, emotional distress, or being startled
- Dizziness or lightheadedness, especially during exertion
- Exercise-induced chest pain
- Palpitations: awareness of the heart beating, especially if associated with other symptoms such as dizziness

- Extreme tiredness or shortness of breath associated with exercise
- History of high blood pressure
- Risk of inaction

Ignoring such symptoms and continuing to play/practice could be catastrophic and can result in sudden cardiac death. Taking these warning symptoms seriously and seeking timely appropriate medical care can prevent serious and possibly fatal consequences. These symptoms can be unclear in athletes since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. Sudden cardiac arrest can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

## What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

## How can we minimize the risk of SCA and improve outcomes?

The risk of SCA in student-athletes can be minimized by providing appropriate prevention, recognition, and treatment strategies. One important strategy is the requirement for a yearly pre-participation screening evaluation, often called a sports physical, and performed by the student-athlete's medical provider.

It is very important that you carefully and accurately complete the personal history and heart health questions about your family section of the current "VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form" available at <https://www.vhsl.org/forms/>.

Since most of these conditions are inherited, be aware of your family history, especially if any close family member:

- Had sudden unexplained and unexpected death before the age of 50.
- Was diagnosed with any of the heart conditions listed above.
- Died suddenly/ unexpectedly during physical activity, during a seizure, from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or from drowning.

Information used in this document was obtained from the American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)), parent Heart Watch ([www.parentheartwatch.org](http://www.parentheartwatch.org)), and the Sudden cardiac Arrest Foundation ([www.sca-aware.org](http://www.sca-aware.org)). Visit these sites for additional information.

## Sudden Heat Illness

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### What is sudden heat illness?

Heat-related illness is a general term describing a number of medical conditions associated with dehydration, poor acclimatization, and exposure to or prolonged exercise in hot and humid environments, including four specific conditions:

- Heat stroke** - the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature, the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Heat stroke can cause permanent disability or death if the person does not receive emergency treatment.
  - Heat exhaustion** - the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating.
  - Heat syncope** - fainting (syncope) episodes experienced by individuals exercising in hot and humid environments and results from a temporary decrease in blood flow to the brain causing a brief loss of consciousness. Factors that contribute to heat syncope include dehydration and lack of acclimatization.
  - Heat cramps** - a type of exercise-related muscle cramp characterized by painful cramping usually occurring in the arms and legs. Heat cramps may be caused by exercising in hot or humid environments, dehydration, or excess sodium and electrolyte loss commonly associated with exercise in these environments. While not a medical emergency, heat cramps may be confused with a more serious condition, exertional sickling.
- While not a heat-related illness, exertional sickling is associated with intensive exercise in hot and/or humid conditions, particularly with individuals who may be poorly acclimatized or deconditioned and may be confused with heat cramps. It is a medical emergency in which the red blood cells of a person carrying the sickle cell trait change shape leading to decreased blood flow. This decrease in blood flow can lead to a breakdown of muscle tissue and cell death, a condition known as fulminant rhabdomyolysis.

## Recognition of heat-related illnesses

Heat Stroke	Heat Exhaustion	Heat Syncope	Heat Cramps	Heat Cramps vs. Exertional Sickling
Rectal temperature greater than 105F	Fatigue	Dizziness/ lightheadedness	Dehydration	<p>Pain associated with cramping usually occurs in a specific area, whereas pain associated with exertional sickling is more generalized.</p> <p>Cramping muscles appear tight and will “lock up.” With exertional sickling, muscles become weak, leading the individual to try to push through the experience.</p> <p>Cramping generally occurs during or after activity. Exertional sickling typically occurs within the first 30 minutes of an intense workout.</p>
Irrational behavior, irritability, or emotional instability	Nausea	Weakness	Fatigue	
Altered consciousness.	Fainting	Loss of consciousness	Painful, involuntary muscle spasms	
Disorientation	Weakness	Tunnel vision		
Dizziness	Vomiting			
Headache	Dizziness/ lightheadedness			
Confusion	Pale			
Nausea or vomiting	Chills			
Diarrhea	Diarrhea			
Collapse	Irritability			
Staggering or sluggish feeling	Headache			

## Risk factors for heat-related illnesses

- Heat Exhaustion
- Exercising in hot and humid environment (air temperature over 91F/33C)
- Inadequate fluid intake before or during exercise resulting in dehydration.
- Inappropriate work to rest ratios with too much work compared to rest breaks.
- Body mass index over 27 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Heat Stroke
- Intrinsic Factors
  - History of heat-related illness
  - Inadequate heat acclimatization
  - Low overall fitness level
  - Overweight or obese
  - Inadequate hydration
  - Lack of sleep
  - Fever
  - Stomach illness
  - Highly motivated/ultra-competitive personality
  - Pre-pubescent individuals
- Extrinsic Factors
  - Intense or prolonged exercise with minimal breaks
  - Repeated/prolonged exposure to high temperature/humidity/sun.
  - Elevated Wet Bulb Globe temperature (WBGT)
  - Inappropriate work/rest ratio based on intensity.
  - Wearing dark colored or heavy-weight clothing
  - Wearing protective equipment
  - Poor overall fitness
  - Peer or organizational pressure
  - Lack of education and awareness of heat illness risk factors among coaches, athletes, and medical staff
  - Absence of an emergency action plan (EAP) and/or policies and procedures to manage heat-related illness.
  - No or limited access to fluids or breaks during practice.
  - Delay in recognition of signs and symptoms associated with exertional heat stroke (EHS)

## Prevention

Heat Acclimatization – the process of gradually increasing the duration and intensity of physical activities and exercise in hot and humid environments in order to increase the body’s ability to cope with heat exposure.

Hydration – maintaining appropriate hydration levels during exercise promotes participant safety and increases performance. Hydration level is influenced by many factors, including exercise intensity, duration, environmental conditions, and intake of fluids before, during, and after exercising. As a person becomes more dehydrated, performance deficits become noticeable as body temperature and heart rate increase, which in turn increases the risk of developing a heat-related illness.

## Management

Individuals experiencing or suspected of experiencing a heat-related illness should be removed from activity immediately. Specific treatment and any return to activity requirements will depend on the condition.

Heat Stroke	Heat Exhaustion	Heat Syncope	Heat Cramps
<p>Immediately remove all clothing and protective equipment as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Cool the student-athlete using whole-body cold-water immersion.</p> <p>Monitor and maintain an open airway, breathing, and circulation.</p> <p>Once cooling has been initiated, activate EMS/call 911.</p> <p>Continue to monitor vital signs and for central nervous system changes.</p> <p>A student-athlete experiencing heat stroke needs enough time to rest, hydrate, and a formal medical evaluation before returning to activity.</p>	<p>Remove from activity to a cool or shaded area and remove excess clothing and/or protective equipment.</p> <p>Cool the student-athlete by dousing with cold water, by rotating ice towels over as much of the body as possible, and/or using fans.</p> <p>Monitor for changes in central nervous system function.</p> <p>Elevate the student-athlete’s legs.</p> <p>Provide water and/or a sports drink to replenish fluids.</p> <p>If the central nervous system changes develop or the student-athlete is slow to recover, suspect heat stroke and treat accordingly.</p> <p>The student-athlete should rest and hydrate for at least 24-48 hours before returning to play. The return to play process should include gradual increases in exercise intensity and duration. Medical clearance is strongly recommended.</p>	<p>Remove from activity to a cool or shaded area.</p> <p>Have the student-athlete sit or lie down at first indication of symptoms.</p> <p>Monitor the student-athlete for signs or symptoms of another medical condition.</p> <p>Elevate the student-athlete’s legs.</p> <p>Provide water and/or a sports drink to replenish fluids.</p> <p>The student-athlete can return to activity following a period of rest, fluid replacement, and once symptoms have resolved, and other medical conditions have been ruled out. Medical clearance is advised prior to returning to activity.</p>	<p>Remove from activity to a cool or shaded area.</p> <p>Stretch and/or massage the affected area.</p> <p>Provide water and/or sports drink to replenish fluids.</p> <p>The student-athlete can return to activity the same day once cramps have subsided and following a period of rest and fluid replacement.</p>

## Nondiscrimination State

Williamsburg-James City County School Division is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination based upon race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and age in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities, or with respect to employment. Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to Title IX/Section 504 Compliance Coordinator, Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, and P.O. Box 8783, Williamsburg, VA 23187.

(Phone: (757) 253-6777) Persons with disabilities, who require accommodation in the application, testing and/or interview process should contact the Human Resources Department.

## WJCC Schools Athletic Pledge

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By signing this Pledge, the WJCC student-athlete and parent or guardian affirm each has read and understands all the rules, regulations, and expectations listed in the Philosophy of WJCC Athletics. Further, it is agreed that all athletes must abide by the rules. It also is understood that all parents must attend a mandatory policy meeting to help assure a mutual understanding of the philosophy, conduct, and eligibility expectations.

By signing below, the student-athlete and parent are advised that participation in interscholastic practice and competition is dangerous! Furthermore, it is understood that no amount of protective equipment will eliminate potential injury. Even under the safest and most secure conditions, some athletic activity may result in serious and possible fatal injuries. If a student-athlete exhibits unusual symptoms, he or she should immediately stop playing and report the conditions to the coach, athletic trainer, and his or her parents. The student-athlete will not return to a game or practice until all symptoms are eliminated and the athlete has received medical clearance. Ignoring this warning may lead to more serious or fatal injury. Remember: anyone deciding to compete in the WJCC Schools Athletic Program does so with a clear understanding of this risk of injury. Additional questions about such risks should be directed to the coach or athletic director prior to participation in practice or competition.

Parents and supporters of WJCC athletics interfering with a game or participants of the game (athletes, coaches, and officials) may result in disciplinary action taken by the WJCC Schools, the Bay Rivers District League, and/or the Virginia High School League. Such actions may be taken against our athletes, our teams, and parent-spectators. Acceptable and appropriate sportsmanship is a fundamental component of our athletic program. Parents are advised to direct questions and concerns about their student-athlete to the following individuals: (1) Team Coach; (2) Athletic Director (A.D.); (3) Principal. Please start with the coach before speaking with the A.D. or principal.

Parents are not to approach coaches during or after any practice or team competition.

If there is a concern to discuss with the coach:

- The athlete should talk to the coach
- The parent should set up a meeting with the coach
- The parent communication form should be completed and a telephone call should be made to set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss your concerns.

Our signatures on the sign-off sheet indicate that we have read and agree to comply with the contents of WJCC conduct, philosophy, and eligibility expectations herein. We agree that the athlete will attend all practices and games in which his or her high school athletic team participates. This implies that the high school team's activities take precedent over any club, recreational or non-school events.

## High School Contact Information

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School Name	Main Office	Address	Athletic Director
Jamestown	(757) 229-8051	3751 John Tyler Hwy., Williamsburg, VA 23185	Matthew Moore
Lafayette	(757) 603-6565	4460 Longhill Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188	Kyle Neve
Warhill	(757) 565-9400	4615 Opportunity Way, Williamsburg, VA 23188	Dan Mullen

## Athletic Pledge Acknowledgement

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Your signature below indicates that you (student/athlete) and your parent/guardian have read the book, understand it, and agree to comply with all regulations as stated in the High School Athletic Handbook.

_____ Athlete Name (Print name)	_____ Athlete Signature
_____ Parent/Guardian (Print name)	_____ Parent/Guardian Signature
_____ Parent/Guardian Telephone	_____ Parent/Guardian Mobile Phone
_____ Athlete E-Mail Address (Please print)	
_____ Parent/Guardian E-Mail Address (Please print)	_____ Parent Guardian E-Mail Address (Please print)
_____ Date	

Please return this form signed before the first contest of the season. Failure to do so will result in the athlete's inability to participate.



WILLIAMSBURG  
JAMES CITY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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