Fort Dale

Academy

Athletic Handbook

2026 - 2027



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Why do I want my kids to play sports?

- For those moments when my kids become so tired they want to quit but don't
- For those days when my kids come home from school "too tired" to go to practice but they go anyway
- For my kids to be disciplined, focused and dedicated
- For my kids to learn to work with others and to be good teammates, gracious in defeat and humble in success
- For my kids to learn to take care of their body and their equipment
- For my kids to learn to deal with disappointment, when they don't win that title or place they had hoped for, but they still go back week after week to give it their best shot
- For my kids to learn to make and accomplish goals
- For my kids to be proud of small achievements, and to work towards long term goals
- For my kids to learn that it takes hours and hours, years and years of hard work and practice to create a champion and that success does not happen overnight
- For my kids to respect, not only themselves, but other athletes, officials and coaches
- For the opportunity my kids have and will have to make lifelong friendships, create lifelong memories, to be as proud of their achievements as I am
- For my kids to be out on the field or in the gym instead of in front of a screen
- For the opportunities that sports provides my kids to develop attributes that will serve them well throughout their lives and give them the opportunity to bless the lives of others

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Athletic Handbook

Fort Dale Academy has a proud history in sports. The athletic program is considered an important part of the educational process. The success is due to the dedicated and talented athletes, the dedicated staff and coaches, and supportive parents. Competitive athletics emphasizes the importance of scholastic achievement and the development of sportsmanship, health and fair play in the participants and spectators.

Participation in athletic teams involves a considerable commitment for practices and games, physical effort, and commitment. Each sport is a learning experience involving numerous responsibilities. Students who try out for any sport should be aware of these responsibilities and willing to assume them.

Objectives of the Fort Dale Academy Athletic Program

- To provide a positive experience for the student athlete.
- To create a desire to succeed, striving to produce winning teams while maintaining good sportsmanship.
- To develop an environment for the student athlete that produces self-discipline, emotional maturity, and team work.
- To help student athletes develop a sense of responsibility and commitment.
- To promote school spirit.

Affiliations

Fort Dale Academy is a member of the AISA (Alabama Independent School Association) and abides by all of the rules and regulations of the Association.

Coaches Information

Code of conduct for coaches:

The Fort Dale Academy coaching staff recognizes their potential influence on the student athletes.

With this in mind the coach shall:

- Be positive and enthusiastic.
- Show respect for all student athletes
- Refrain from the use of profanity at any time.
- Refrain from smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of athletes.
- Promote all efforts of the total athletic program.
- Promote a sense of pride in Fort Dale Academy.

Duties and responsibilities of coaches:

- Encourage students' participation in athletics.
- Take proper care of all equipment and facilities.
- Create a program designed to enable each athlete to reach his/her potential.
- Condition athletes to allow them to be competitive.
- Keep up to date on current trends including attending clinics and interacting with other coaches.
- Demonstrate a high level of sportsmanship at all times and in all situations.
- Assist deserving athletes with college scholarship possibilities and information.

Safety and Welfare of the Student Athlete

The safety and welfare of the student athlete is the absolute priority.

- Fort Dale Academy Athletic Emergency Action Plan is on file in the Headmaster's and the Athletic Director's offices. This includes a plan for injuries in practice and game situations, also severe weather situations. This plan is available for review by interested parties.
- Team doctor and AISA mandated concussion protocol is followed explicitly. That protocol is on file in the headmaster's office and the Athletic Director's office and is available for review by interested parties.
- AEDS availability on campus

Athletics and physical education including dressing rooms create the greatest risk faced by our school for a serious or disabling injury.
With this in mind, the following is implemented:

- All physical education and athletic activity must be closely supervised by coaches. Coaches must be physically present for all activities.
- The school weight room must be locked unless a coach is physically present to supervise all

weight lifting activities.

- All PE dressing rooms will be locked unless a coach is physically present in the locker room area. The PE coach is to be in the locker room or close proximity at all times when the students are present. Supervision includes visible and/or audible supervision.
- A thorough training session is to be done each semester for students regarding the dangers associated with locker rooms and the increased danger of careless behavior and horseplay in the locker room area. The training should also include what procedures students should follow in the event an injury occurs. This training should include immediate notification of the coach if he/she is not already present and injury protocol of not allowing the injured student to move if there is a chance of neck or back injury.
- Students are not to use the gym without adult supervision.
- Any injury from PE or locker room activity is to be reported immediately to the administration.
- **Supervision of students is an absolute priority.**

NOTE: The coaching staff is certified in CPR, AED, and Sports Safety (National Federation of High School Coaches). In addition, the football coaching staff is certified in Heads Up Football (NFL sponsored).

Coaching Expectations

All coaches will be expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the AISA Athletic Handbook, FDA Athletic Handbook, as well as the FDA Faculty and Staff Handbook.

Any fine levied subject to the AISA Ejection Rule will be paid by the coach subject to review by the Athletic Director and Headmaster.

Note: If a player or a parent is ejected, and fined, from any AISA event, that person is responsible for reimbursing the school the fined amount within 30 days.

Coaching Expectations of the Varsity Head Coach

- Serves as coordinator for all teams in his/her program, from junior high to varsity.
- Oversees the program and assistant coaches to assure the compliance with FDA and AISA Athletic Policies.
- Monitors the academic progress of each student-athlete.

Duties and Responsibilities of Coaches

- Encourage students' participation in athletics.
- Take proper care of all equipment and facilities.
- Create a team program designed to enable each athlete to reach his/her potential.
- Condition athletes to allow them to be competitive.
- Keep up to date on current trends including attending clinics and interacting with other coaches.

- Demonstrate a high level of sportsmanship at all times and in all situations.
- Assist deserving athletes with college scholarship possibilities.

Expectations of the Assistant Coach or JV Coach

- Specific roles of the Assistant Coach and JV Coach will be determined by the Varsity Head Coach.
- Assistant Coaches/JV Coaches are expected to adhere to the same standards and responsibilities according to FDA and AISA Athletic Policy.

Evaluations

The Athletic Director will evaluate each coach at the end of his/her season. These evaluations are to be used as a tool for positive reinforcement and constructive criticism. The AD and the coach will meet to discuss the past season and strategies for future success of the program. The AD will report on this evaluation and discussion to the Headmaster.

Facilities

Maintenance: Each coaching staff is responsible for the basic maintenance and cleanliness of all facilities used by their program. The school cleaning service will assist in cleaning of facilities.

Security: The Head Coach will be responsible for the securing of all facilities in use by his/her program.

Usage: It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that no student is allowed to use any of the facilities at Fort Dale Academy without proper supervision during the normal school day, including practice time. Any other usage of Fort Dale Academy's athletic facilities requires prior approval by the Headmaster or Athletic Director.

Responsibility of the Student-Athlete

Fort Dale Academy Athletics play a significant part in the total educational development of students. An athlete must assume certain responsibilities to achieve the educational and athletic value of participation in sports.
These responsibilities include:

- Striving to achieve sound, desirable traits including: emotional control, honesty, cooperation, dependability, a sense of responsibility, and a respect for others.
- Maintain academic eligibility.
- Working to reach potential.
- Represent FDA in a positive way

Note: If a player or a parent is ejected, and fined, from any AISA event, that person is responsible

for reimbursing the school the fined amount within 30 days.

Academic Expectations:

- A student's academic work is an absolute priority. Students must not miss more than two class periods to participate in practices or games that school day, unless prior arrangements have been made with the administration.
- It may be necessary for athletes to leave school prior to normal dismissal times. The student-athlete is responsible for any missed work and should work with the teacher to make up work with-in the time limits set by the teacher.
- Student-athletes must plan their time so that they devote sufficient time to their academic workload and so that their involvement in an athletic activity does not interfere with their studies. Academic commitments must be met before athletic events take place. Coaches should discuss these requirements with the athletes and monitor their success.

Fort Dale Academy Student-Athlete Appearance Policy

I. Body Art

- Students may not participate in Fort Dale Academy athletic events and/or activities with exposed body art (permanent or temporary).

II. Body Decorations/Piercing

- Students may not participate in Fort Dale Academy athletic events with exposed body piercing or jewelry.

III. Facial Hair / Hair Styles etc.

Students may not participate in Fort Dale Academy athletic events with:

- Facial hair.
- Non-traditional hairstyles or coloring of the hair deemed inappropriate by the coach, Athletic Director, or the Headmaster.
- Unnatural and/or non-traditional coloration of the hair.

The Head of School or Athletic Director will be the final authority to determine acceptable dress and appearance at Fort Dale Academy events and/or activities. Failure to comply will result in disqualification from the scheduled event or activity.

Parent/Coach Communication

24-Hour Rule

Athletic contest and practices can be an emotionally charged time for athletics, parents and coaches. For this reason, FDA requires that there be a 24-hour cooling off period before coaches and parents meet concerning any issues that happen in a game or practice.

Both parenting and coaching can be difficult at times. It is important to establish an understanding of each position so that better communication can exist.

Communication parents should expect from the coach

- Philosophy and expectations the coach has for the student-athlete.
- Information regarding practice and game logistics.

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Appropriate concerns expressed directly to the coach.
- Specific concerns regarding a student-athlete's physical limitation.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance. Please note, this does not necessarily mean this conflict will be excused.
- Ways to help the student athlete improve.
- Concerns about the student athlete's behavior
- Student athletes will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives, but there will possibly be times of disappointment. Working through these times with discussions with the coach can be helpful.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time.
    - Coaches are professionals and judgement decisions are made based on what is believed to be best for all students involved.
- Team strategy and play calling.
- Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position.

Note: **To speak with a coach before or after a contest or practice is the least productive time for a conference and should be avoided**. The most effective time would be to set up an appointment with the coach.

Spectators

All students and their families are expected to show good sportsmanship at all sporting events on campus and at other schools or facilities. Individuals displaying poor sportsmanship face the possibility of being banned from Fort Dale Academy athletic events, both home and away.

Pre-season Meetings

The coach of each sport meets with all student athletes and parents prior to the start of the season to discuss safety requirements, team policies, schedules, uniforms and equipment, cost, workouts, contact information, etc.

Practices

- No practices will take place on a Sunday without permission from the Athletic Director and Headmaster.
- Coaches should clearly establish rules for student/athletes attending and missing practices. Violations of these rules may cost an athlete playing time and could get them dropped from a team.

Summer Workout Program

In an effort to condition student-athletes and to build team camaraderie for next year's sports seasons, rising 7th through 12th grade students who intend to participate in athletics must complete a summer workout program outlined and conducted by the coaching staff in order to be eligible. Both male and female athletes at the varsity as well as the JV level will be expected to complete the summer workout program. This program will require a specified number of workouts. Details for these workouts will be given out in May of each year.

Transportation

The athletic director and/or the head coach will arrange transportation for the school. If parents' cars are needed to transport athletes, it will be the coach's responsibility to make the needed arrangements.

Uniforms & Equipment

- Coaches are responsible for the inventory, care, and storage of uniforms and equipment.
- Coaches should establish a plan to ensure that all protective equipment meets certification standards and that inspection and needed maintenance or replacement of the equipment is carried out in a timely manner.

Parents

The behavior of spectators reflects upon the reputation of our school and community.

Being the parent of a student-athlete is a short-lived privilege. Parents' involvement with their child's athletics should be enjoyable and a great experience. Parental support of the athlete and coach enhances the chance of success of the entire program. If a player or a parent is ejected, and fined, from any AISA event, that person is responsible for reimbursing the school the fined amount within 30 days.

Program Success

Research indicates a student involved in extracurricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school.

An athlete alone does not dictate the success of our athletic program. A coach alone does not dictate the success of our athletic program. The parents alone do not dictate the success of our athletic program. *Working together as a team dictates the success of our athletic program.*