



COLLEGE PREPARATORY
SCHOOL

Citizen, Scholar, Athlete

Athletic Handbook 2023-24

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Mission Statement

To physically prepare, and academically qualify our athletes for a scholarship to a college or university that fits them.

For our scholar-athletes who do not desire to play competitive sports at the next level, participation in our athletic program will give them valuable experience in personal fitness, team work, overcoming adversity, and the discipline needed to achieve their personal goals. We view athletics participation as an extension of the classroom. What is taught in our school about character, integrity, concentration, and hard work applies to sports participation.

Athletic Master Plan

Because of this mission a competitive athletic program is offered. Gateway Prep is one of the few public charter schools in Texas that offers a highly competitive athletic program. The sports we have the financial resources to support, and have chosen to offer this coming school year, are ***boys baseball, girls softball, boys basketball, girls soccer, boys lacrosse, girls volleyball, co-ed cross country, co-ed swimming, and co-ed track & field.*** We have plans to offer boys soccer and girls lacrosse in the near future.

We are a member of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas High School Lacrosse League (THSLL). Over 1,000 Texas public schools compete in the UIL making the UIL one of the world's largest extracurricular youth organizations. UIL member schools are general assigned to UIL conferences and districts based on total high school enrollment. Because the UIL does not sponsor lacrosse, we joined the THSLL. Most of our sports teams have made the UIL/THSLL playoffs, won district titles, and even regional titles. Many of our athletes have competed in the UIL State Championships, and/or gone on to play at the collegiate level.

Our basketball, baseball, cross country, soccer, softball, swim, track & field and volleyball teams compete in UIL Conference 4A (high school enrollment 515 – 1,229) against schools such as Burnet, Jarrell, Lago Vista, Lampasas, Marble Falls, Taylor, etc. Our lacrosse teams compete in the THSLL against large club programs such as Cedar Park, Cedar Ridge, Georgetown, Round Rock, Westlake, Vista Ridge, etc. All of our teams seek the best competition in order to challenge our athletes to be the best they can be.

Students who participate in our UIL/THSLL school sponsored sports may do so during the school day athletic period and receive credits toward graduation. Club team (non UIL/THSLL sports) participants, or those athletes receiving training in sports that we do not offer (gymnastics, hockey, etc.), may also receive PE credit on a case by case basis.

How We Measure Success

Athletic success at Gateway Prep is not measured by wins and losses. The goal of each athletic team is to develop each scholar-athlete to be the very best they are willing to be. The role of the athletic department and the coaching staff is to assure that they have provided the opportunity for each athlete to reach the ultimate level of their competency, both individually and as a productive member of a team. We subscribe to the "pyramid of success" of Coach John Wooden. Building on the cornerstones of industriousness and enthusiasm, Coach Wooden teaches that success is "peace of mind" which is a direct result of self-satisfaction from knowing you have done your very best while conducting yourself with poise, dignity, and grace, along with a spirit of generosity and unselfishness toward your teammates.

Successful coaches, athletes and teams are those who exemplify this philosophy. If we are always prepared, hardworking, respectful and patient, we will be successful. We will never allow others, including our competitors, or those who subscribe to the "win at all costs" philosophy, to define our athletic department using any other measure.

Team & Gator Athletic Community Standards

We do not have a bunch of rules. We prefer to operate with five core values that set the standard of what we expect from our coaches, scholar-athletes, parents and spectators. It is when these standards are not being "lived up to", that we know we need to intervene and address behaviors and attitudes that will hurt the team, athletic program, and/or the school community.

G = Grit

- We don't make excuses.
- We don't want or accept pity.
- We never give up.

A = Accountability

- We show up on time and all the time.
- We will do what is necessary to be the best we can be.

T = Team First

- We demonstrate genuine care for each other.
- We get as much joy from our teammate's success as our own.
- We will honor and defend each other and our school reputation.

O = Optimism

- We bring positive energy to practices and contests.
- We have positive body language and expressions.
- We have fun and enjoy the challenge of competition.

R = Respect

- We respect each other, the game, our school, our opponents, and the officials.
- We seek to earn the respect of our competitors by our positive attitude and our demonstrated grit.

University Interscholastic League (UIL) and Other League Guidelines

All scholar-athletes entering grades 7 - 12, whether playing on a UIL sanctioned sports team, Texas High School Lacrosse League (THSL), or other club team (non-UIL teams) must complete and have on file, all the UIL required forms, including a current physical exam (Physicals must be dated on or after May 1 to be accepted for the current school year).

New students to Gateway entering grades 9 – 12 must also **fill out the UIL Previous Athletic Participation Form (PAPF)** if they played sports for another school in grades 8 - 12. The Athletic Registration can be found online at www.gatorathletics.org **The Athletic Registration should be submitted online from May 1 to the day before the new school year begins, or completed at the August Back 2 School nights.** Do not give paperwork to the coach. No student may participate in team tryouts unless they have completed and turned in all the required athletic registration forms and paid all required fees.

Try Outs and Roster Selection

Tryouts normally occur at the very beginning of the school year and again/or at the official start of the specific sports season. Tryout days and times are normally posted on the school athletics website team page. No student is guaranteed a roster spot. Athletic participation on a school team is not an entitlement. It must be earned and the privilege, once granted, may be withdrawn. Players will be selected to a team based on athleticism, skills, experience, attitude, discipline, and effort. The final roster is determined approximately three days into the official start of the specific team sport season although this may vary by sport. The best athletes in our high school are placed on the varsity roster (if varsity eligible according to UIL). High school grade level is irrelevant. At the high school level players may move between team rosters as the season progresses. This will be decided by the team Head Coach.

Team Managers, Statisticians and Trainers

Each team will seek to have student volunteers, who fill one of several team administrative jobs that are needed to help make the team successful. These students become valuable members of the team and can earn graduation credits, just like the players, and a varsity letter/team patch for their participation. Please let a coach know if you, or someone you know, would like to be a Team Manager, Statistician, Trainer, or other helper as designated by your coach.

Eligibility Requirements

To represent Gateway College Prep in athletic contests, the student must satisfy all of the UIL eligibility requirements prior to participation, including the school district residency rule and all other rules. **You must be in attendance at school on game days to play.** To learn more go to www.uil texas.org. For further questions on eligibility, please call the athletics department.

“No Pass, No Play” Rule. The student-athlete must maintain eligibility, including academic, to participate. A player failing an Advanced Placement (AP) (and some Honors Courses) ***may ask for a waiver from the Head of School (HOS)*** allowing them to participate. Only the HOS can grant a waiver. Waivers are only granted to those students who have put forth the effort to pass. Waivers of the NPNP rule are not available for electives and non-honors courses.

Players who are ineligible are expected at all practices but may not suit up for any games until gaining eligibility. Ineligible players cannot travel with the team on away games. Ineligible players are expected to attend all home games and assist the team in some way, however, they cannot sit on the team bench.

Fees for Athletic Participation

As a public charter school Gateway Prep does not receive as much funding as traditional public schools because we have no taxing authority, and receive no local tax revenues. This is why so few charter schools in Texas offer a competitive UIL athletic program for their students. Gateway Prep is an exception. Gateway has allocated resources to a competitive athletic program. However, in order to help defray some of these expenses we must charge fees for participation. School sponsored teams competing in the UIL and THSLL have participation fees that are listed on the school website. These fees are waived or discounted for student families who are Gator Club donation members.

Multiple Sports Participation

We support and endorse multiple sports team participation by our scholar-athletes. Many college and professional athletes played multiple sports in high school. Recent public health studies are showing that a growing number of young athletes are over training and harming specific muscles and joints from single sport participation throughout the year. Cross training can benefit the athlete in their primary sport endeavors and help prevent overuse injuries.

All Gateway Prep coaches will seek to accommodate our multiple sport athletes by finding a way to work with the other team coaches. All multi-sport athletes will have an opportunity to try out for another team at any time. However, the multi-sport athlete must complete the current sport season and any post-season playoff games. When conflicts arise, such as a late season basketball game conflicting with an early season baseball game, district games and playoff games will determine priority. For all other conflicts, the team head coaches will decide the best course of action with UIL and THSLL contest rules in mind.

Athletes that quit a team after 20 percent of the season is completed may not play for another team until the current sports season is completed, and are required to stay with the current team in some supportive capacity (team manager, statisticians, etc.) This includes being dismissed from a team for any reason, unless mutually agreed upon by both head coaches. Athletes that quit a team after 20 percent of the season is completed and do not finish out the season with the team in a supportive role approved by the coach, may not play on another team for the remainder of the current school year.

Practice and Playing Time

Our practices are closed to parents and outsiders unless permission to attend is granted by the coach. In other words, ask the coach if you can watch. Do not just walk in and sit down unless you first approach the coach. Practice is the opportunity for each player to get better by focusing on what is being asked of them by the coaches without outside interruptions and influence.

Although we don't define our success by wins and losses, the purpose of competition is to determine a winner. That is why they keep score. The coach will put the players into the contests that he/she feels give the team the best chance to win at all times. The only time that ever changes is when the game result has been determined and allowing other players to play will not jeopardize the contest result.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance at announced practice and competition days/times is mandatory.* In the event you are unable to attend practice or competitions, please contact your coach prior to the event. ***Players with three unexcused absences will be dismissed from the team.***

Excused absences are:

- 1.) School event conflicts that are mandatory for credit or necessary for college admission and could not be avoided (make up tests, SAT, AP tests and preps, etc.)
- 2.) Illness accompanied by a note from your healthcare professional
- 3.) Family emergencies accompanied by a note from a parent (death, severe illness of loved one or significant family milestone celebrations, etc.)

Missing practice or competitions for academic tutoring or extra study to “catch up” is not an excused absence and may be a sign the student should not be participating in extracurricular activities.

*Attendance at school the day of a game, whether a home or away game, is required. If a student athlete must be absent on game day they must arrive before 11:45am to be eligible to participate. Best practice is to schedule appointments on a non-game day.

Each team coach may provide additional guidelines in addition to these.

Traveling, Attire & Game Day Food

For away games, your coach will announce the departure time. The team will be transported in a school vehicle leaving from the school parking lot and will return to the school after each away game. Players must ride in the school vehicle to the games unless other arrangements were approved by the coach prior to departure. Parents may transport the player home after the last game ***only*** after notifying and receiving approval from the coach. ***Please be at the school before the school vehicle arrives after the game to pick up your student. Do not make the coaches wait around for your arrival.***

On game days (home and away games), players must wear the team travel attire provided by the team (if such exists). If no team travel attire is provided the player must wear pants/dress (blue jean material w/ no holes is OK), and a white/gray/green/orange dress shirt/blouse or Gateway apparel shirts (or nice athletic warm-ups) and clean dress or sport shoes. No player wearing shorts, flip flops, pajamas, t-shirts or severely worn out shoes or clothing will be allowed to travel with the team or play in a game.

If team travel bags are provided by the school, the player must use this bag for all clothing or other supplies taken to the game. If a travel sports bag is not provided by the school team, players are to bring a sports bag for carrying athletic uniforms, basketball shoes, socks, etc.

When we travel, everyone is expected to act like a guest that wants to be invited back. We expect our scholar-athletes to uphold our Team & Gator Athletic Community Standards. We don't tolerate poor behavioral, foul language or leaving trash behind. ***Be respectful to the host school and students.*** We also expect each participant to assist with vehicle clean up after each trip.

Each team will have its own procedures for assuring the athletes eat well before competitions, whether a home or away game. Some coaches will have food catered in, others will stop for a meal a couple of hours before an away game. Players may need to have money for food purchases if the food is not donated by the All Sports Booster Club or by some other group or individual. The coach will let you know.

Communication and Website

Check the Gateway Prep School website “Athletics” section for team information and changes to the practice, game and tournament schedules and for other team information. The preferred method of communication is through official school email. For emergencies only you can reach the coach at the mobile phone number the coach may provide you. Please do not give this number out to others without coach permission.

Uniforms and Equipment

Gateway provides practice attire and game uniforms. Some teams also issue other school equipment or apparel (equipment bags, socks, team shirts, hats, warm-ups, etc.). Players provide their own athletic shoes (team discount shoes may be made available by your coach) practice socks, under garments, etc. ***Only colors allowed on athletic shoes, socks, visible under garments are white, gray, black, forest green and orange.*** Practice attire, game uniforms, warm-up clothing and equipment will be assigned by the coach.

Players are responsible for maintaining these items in good condition and returning at the end of the season to avoid a loss or destruction fee. ***Only wash practice uniforms with cold water and air dry hanging (do not use heat!).*** Team Managers will wash and store the game uniforms.

You must change in and out of your uniforms in the locker room or bathroom provided. ***No jewelry is allowed during practice or games.*** All players must return all school provided practice attire, uniforms and other equipment at the end of the season. Damaged and ruined uniforms and equipment are the responsibility of the player issued such.

Playbooks & Confidentiality

All team playbook information, player development resources and video recordings distributed to the players, or made available through the school's learning management site, are confidential information and to be protected at all times. ***Any copying, redistribution or sale of this material is strictly prohibited and may be prosecuted under law.***

Prevention of Injuries and Reporting

Depending on the sport, it may be required or recommended that each player wear or use preventative products (ankle braces, mouth guard, knee pads, etc.) to help prevent common sports injuries (severe ankle sprains, broken teeth, split tongues, etc.). Your coach will tell you what that sport requires and/or recommends.

Players should always get a "sweat going" before stretching and practicing. Only after "warming up" and stretching of the major muscle groups, should the player engage in strenuous exercise. Each coach will have their own warm-up routine for the team.

Report all injuries to the coach immediately. If you have a significant sports injury, we ***strongly advise you to seek a sports medicine practitioner rather than just a general medical professional.*** Healthcare workers with special training in sports medicine will know how best to get you back to playing the sport you love.

As a general rule we schedule to have a certified sports trainer present at our home high school and middle school contests. For serious injuries that may require ambulatory transport, we will call 911 for those professionals. The school has a First Aid Kit and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine on site. All coaches have CPR/AED certification.

Injured players are expected to attend all practices and games even if they cannot play, unless directed otherwise by the attending healthcare professional.

Assumption of Risk & Release of All Claims

All athletes will be coached, instructed and conditioned to compete at the peak of their abilities. Each coach receives training in the dangers and prevention of sports related injuries. However, with athletic participation comes the reality of possible injury. Many injuries are not preventable. Orenda Charter School District does not assume any responsibility in case an accident or injury occurs. Your signature on this Athletics Handbook signature page acknowledges receipt and acceptance of this release of Orenda Charter Schools or all claims, demands, actions, judgments, and executions.

Health Insurance

Orenda Charter School District does not provide, and is not responsible to cover the costs of medical treatment for any sports related injury or ongoing medical treatment. Student families should possess their own health insurance. The athletic fee we collect from all athletes does provide a supplemental catastrophic healthcare insurance benefit that is only available to the student family when they have reached \$25,000 in out of pocket expenses related to a serious sports injury sustained while playing in a school sponsored athletic event.

Team Captains

One or more captains will be determined by the coach. It is an honor to be a captain. It is also a privilege. Duties and responsibilities of the captain are as follows:

- Captains will lead the team in warm-ups.
- Captains are the only players allowed to address the officials during the game.
- Captains should serve as leaders and role models for the other players and make sure all team members stay positive and respectful attitude toward officials, opponents and teammates.

Lettering and Team Patch Criteria

Any high school scholar-athlete (or coach assistant/manager/trainer, etc.) that participates and competes in one or more sports in one school year, will be eligible for a letter and team patch with the following conditions below.

The athlete must have participated in, and finished the season for at least one sport in good standing. Any varsity roster player (or coach assistant/manager/trainer, etc.) listed on the Varsity Team Sport Eligibility Form who remains on the roster, has no more than two (2) unexcused absences, and finishes the season with a varsity team, earns a varsity letter and team patch. Any sub-varsity player moved up to varsity during the season, or a new student, must have entered the game in at least half of the varsity contests in order to earn a letter/patch for the season. All players must have turned in all uniforms and equipment to the coach in order to earn a letter/patch or any other award at the end of the season. Any player that quits the team at any point during the season will neither have earned a letter/patch nor any other awards at the end of the season. Student families pay for the letter jacket, letter and patches.

Each team coach may provide additional guidelines in addition to these.

Individual Awards Criteria

At the end of the season there may be one or more team specific individual awards given out to the players at the coach's discretion. Coaches will follow UIL guidelines for awards. Our philosophy is to only award those team participants whose contributions have been outstanding and above the norm in certain areas. We do not subscribe to the philosophy that all participants, or the majority, should get an award. Team participation is an award in itself. Individual awards are normally awarded at the end of season sports banquet.

District individual awards are voted on by district coaches at the end of the year. Varsity players may be selected for "District MVP", "All District First Team", "All District Second Team", "Honorable Mention", "Newcomer of the Year", "All Academic" and other district awards, as determined by the district executive committee. Depending on the sport, state honorees are nominated and voted on by various coach associations, or media groups. It is a special honor to receive these awards. Generally, Gateway Prep award winners are mentioned in the newspaper and in other sports publications.

Team Awards Banner and Trophy Criteria

Gateway Prep only formally honors and recognizes teams that win or share district titles and playoff titles (Area, Regional, State, etc.). Our policy is to list the team, sport and year on a banner or other visible display for teams that win or share a district title and playoff win titles. Priority for displaying trophies in the gym concourse, athletic department and/or Student Union display areas shall be: state championships, regional titles, district titles, area playoff title's, tournament titles, and then other awards.

Diet and Nutrition

It is vitally important that each player eat three or more healthy meals each day and avoid “junk food”, especially during the season. Carbonated drinks and greasy foods are prohibited before games and practices. Your coach will provide additional information to each player about the critical importance of maintaining a well-balanced diet for that sport.

Off Season Development

We strongly encourage all of our scholar-athletes to be involved in an affordable offseason development program such as strength, conditioning and agility training, attending specific sport or position camps and/or playing for club, select, or AAU teams during the off-season. Gateway Prep does offer some of these opportunities and those are listed on the school web site Athletics pages.

College – Get Recruited

It is not easy to be an athlete at the next level. A very small percentage of current high school athletes are talented enough to play on a college team and full scholarships are even more difficult to obtain. However, Gateway coaches will assist you in your athletic dreams. Please keep in mind that your academic scores and social/community activities are also important factors for college recruiters and coaches. Gateway Prep has had athletes receive college athletic scholarships, so we have proof that you don’t have to attend a large high school to have a chance at playing at the next level. Even many NCAA “Division 1” college athletes played at a small high school.

To learn more about how best to obtain a college scholarship for athletes you may want to visit www.collegesportsscholarships.com

Expectations of Scholar Athletes

- Stay academically eligible.
- Live and exemplify the Team & Gator Athletic Community Standards.

Expectations of Parents

- ***Volunteer to assist team in some way.*** [Volunteer needs are: ***Gate Receipts Clerk, Concessions, Official Timer, Official Score Keeper, Statistician and Video Recorder***]
- Join and participate in the All Sports Booster Club. The ASBC raises additional funds to support our athletic programs.
- Notify coach via email or text message when student must miss practice or game.
- Make sure your student-athlete has money for food when team is eating out before or after a game.
- Be on time to pick up your student-athlete after practice and competitions. The coaches have had a long day and should not have to work any longer than necessary.
- You won’t always understand or agree with a coach decision or action. Do ask for a private meeting with the coach when you have serious concerns or misunderstandings.
- ***Never confront a coach about your concerns during competitions, practices, or immediately after a practice or competition.*** Always allow at least 24 hours for a coach to “wind down” and “process” the experience.
- Cheer, encourage and root for the team but ***do not holler out instructions (i.e. “shoot the ball”, “swing”, etc.) to the players during the games or warm-ups.*** That is the task of the coach and ***your instructions may not be what the coach wants.***
- The athletic department will not tolerate parents who are overly critical of a coach, other players, officials, etc., to the level where the negativity of a parent hurts the team. In those situations, the Athletic Director and/or Head of School will meet with the parent(s). The AD or HOS may decide that these parents will not be allowed to attend practice or competitions and/or the student-athlete may be removed from the team roster.

Expectations of the Coach

- Will communicate their team philosophy and expectations.
- Practices will be well organized. Time is not wasted.
- The team will be well prepared for competitions.
- Will do all he/she can to develop the individual skills of the athletes within league rules for coaches.
- You will have ample notification of practices, competitions and other team events.
- Will exemplify our Team & Gator Athletic Community Standards.

Expectations of Spectators

There is no such thing as a “right” to attend interscholastic athletic events. It is a privilege that comes with certain expectations for behavior and decorum. Please keep in mind that officiating an athletic contest is a difficult task and mistakes and misjudgments are going to be made. We expect that our Gator fans will abide by our Team Standards as well. Excessive negativity toward a game official, player, coach or any other individual will result in removal from the athletic premises and denial of admission to future athletic contests.

Discipline

The athletic department follows the Gateway Prep Student – Parent Handbook in regards to discipline. Any discipline issues not addressed in the Student – Parent Handbook are addressed on a case by case basis by the team coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Head of School.

Contact Information

Coaches should be contacted via school email addresses that are listed on the school website athletics page. The coach may decide to provide his/her mobile phone number in case of emergencies. Please protect this private information and do not distribute this private number without the coach permission.

Gateway Prep School
Athlete Handbook
2023-24

Parent/Student – Acknowledgement Form

Please return this page only.

The Gateway Prep Athletic Handbook has been created to provide information about the philosophy, goals and policy of the athletic department. In order to participate in our athletic program, you must agree to comply with this handbook and its stated expectations. Your signatures acknowledge receipt, review and commitment to comply with this Athletic Handbook.

Student Name (Printed)

Grade Entering

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

GO GATORS!