

**LIFE SCHOOL**  
**Athletic Department**  
**Parent-Student-Athlete Handbook**  
**2018-2019**



Preparing student-athletes for success  
through the four core principles of

*Leadership*

*Integrity*

*Family*

*Excellence*

...in everything we do

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son or daughter has expressed a desire to participate in the Life School Athletic Program. It is the belief of the coaching staff that athletics can do more for your child than teach him/her to play the sport he/she has chosen.

We believe athletics instills the desire to win, attain personal goals ensuring maximum team effort, builds strength of body, and strength of character. The latter of these qualities determines the success of the first three.

It is our belief that strength of character is the foundation upon which to build the well-developed, well-polished individual. Athletes, as people in any specialized field, have a unique role to play. Athletes are constantly being monitored by their peers, teachers, and the community. By constantly being under this scrutiny, athletes must have strength of character and be constantly aware of the role they have assumed. They must be certain they present to their peers, teachers, and community respect, sincerity, and honesty expected of a young lady or gentleman.

We believe very strongly that our athletes should possess these qualities. Because of this belief, we have established the following set of guidelines to be followed by all Life School athletes.

**ALL ATHLETES, REGARDLESS OF SPORT, MUST:**

1. Abide by all University Interscholastic League (UIL) rule specifications, and abide by local athletic policy.
2. Attend every practice session and athletic contest unless ill or emergency situations. (Parents or athlete must call in if the athlete is not attending a practice session.)
3. At all times, respond to every situation as young lady or gentleman.
4. Abide by all Life School, Athletic Department, and campus guidelines and policies.
5. Maintain academic intensity to achieve success in the classroom.

Violation of these policies will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken against the student and could result in his/her removal from the Life School athletic program. Therefore, we ask your cooperation in motivating your son or daughter to observe these rules so that he or she will receive the maximum benefit from the program.

Enclosed is an information handbook for Life School Athletics, which includes guidelines and policies for the student-athletes. Please read and discuss them with your son or daughter.

Sincerely,



Andy Chester, Director of Athletics, Life Schools

## Mission of Life School Athletics

The mission of the Life School Athletic Department is to prepare student-athletes for success through the four core principles of *Leadership*, *Integrity*, *Family* and *Excellence*—in everything we do.

## Philosophy of Life School Athletics

Life School believes that a dynamic program of student activities is vital to the educational development of the student.

The Life School Athletic Department provides a variety of experiences to enhance the Life School mission of training leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Athletics should function as an integral part of the total curriculum. It should offer opportunities to serve the school and community, to assist in the development of positive relationships and good will, to promote self-realization, all-around growth, and good citizenship qualities.

**The Life School athletic program is based on the premise that athletes are students first and that athletic participation is a privilege rather than a right.** Students learn teamwork and group responsibility. They also learn to deal with success and to overcome adversity. The athletic program in Life School is structured very intentionally, with specific goals in mind for athletes at each level. All athletes are required to properly represent Life School on and off the field, or they will not be afforded the privilege of representing Life School in interscholastic competition.

**At the middle school level** our primary goal is to make the athletic experience for the students enjoyable. It is a time to focus on participation and camaraderie among team members. This allows the students to have fun while learning the fundamentals of the sport. All athletes who try out and make a middle school team, are in attendance daily at practice, and are eligible academically will participate in every single game. Winning is a secondary issue for our program at this level. We believe that if middle school student has a great experience with their friends, and learns the fundamentals of their respective sport, we have accomplished the most important foundational goals in building the total athletic program.

As the students move up through our program into **high school**, we begin shaping them toward the day they will begin competing at the varsity level. Similar to middle school, our freshmen and junior varsity teams are centered on player development. While the playing time percentage may vary, we attempt to ensure each

student has an opportunity to participate in all games. Again, the final score is less important than facilitating player growth.

At the **varsity level we play to win championships, without sacrificing our character and integrity.**

Playing time is at the varsity head coach's discretion, driven by the intent to win. Varsity players are mature both athletically and mentally and their dedication and commitment to their team must supersede their personal desires. One of life's greatest lessons and gifts is the privilege of living for a purpose bigger than self. We firmly believe a team can, and should compete at the highest level, giving maximum effort, in a way that honors Life School and the teams in which they compete.

## **UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE (UIL) SPORTS OFFERED BY LIFE SCHOOL**

### **HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)**

Baseball (LS Waxahachie only)  
Basketball  
Cheerleading  
Cross Country  
Football  
Golf  
Soccer  
Softball  
Sports Medicine  
Track and Field  
Volleyball

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL (7-8)**

Basketball  
Cross Country  
Cheerleading  
Football  
Track and Field  
Volleyball  
Soccer

Please note that in the middle schools all sports practice before or after school when in-season. Due to coaching staff and facility scheduling constraints, some middle school sports may only practice after school when in-season (cross country and track).

## POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE

Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) is a national non-profit organization with the mission to transform the culture of youth sports so that youth athletes can have a positive, character-building experience. PCA achieves its goals primarily by providing training workshops to coaches, parents, and administrators of schools and youth sports organizations in the United States. PCA Founder and Chief Executive Officer Jim Thompson launched PCA in 1998 within the Stanford University Athletic Department after seeing a "win-at-all-cost" mentality in youth sports while coaching his son's baseball team. Positive Coaching Alliance's mission statement is simply "Better Athletes, Better People."

Life School's coaches strive for Double-Goal Coaching—winning championships, but, more importantly, building character and integrity in our student-athletes.

Life School athletes are trained to be Triple-Impact Competitors—honoring the game by making themselves better, their team better and the game better.

Life School parents are encouraged to be Double-Goal Parents—focusing less on the outcome of the contest and more on the lessons that sports teaches our students.

Each year, we ask our athletes and their parents to pledge to support the ideals of the Positive Coaching Alliance by *Honoring the Game*.

## ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES

- Promote improvement through self-evaluation
- Retain, attract, and hire exemplary coaches
- Promote consistency and unity throughout the athletic department
- Increase parent and community partnerships with the Athletic Department
- Increase faculty/staff awareness and involvement with the Athletic Department
- Maintain a high level of expectation for success
- Use athletics as a tool to change lives to prepare our student-athletes for life after Life
- Increase scholarship opportunities for student-athletes
- Promote athletic programs and activities with aggressive communication
- Win championships with class and character

## The Parent's Role

Being the parent of an interscholastic athlete can be a great experience. Life School has many different sports. Parents' participation with their son or daughter can be and should be an enjoyable activity. Their support is very important to their athletes, the high school and community. To make this experience the most rewarding for all concerned, the following are some suggestions on being a supportive athletic parent:

1. **Be positive.** Being on a school team is quite an accomplishment. Do not let playing time dictate the athlete's happiness. Celebrate the fact he/she was good enough to make a team. When things are not going well for your son/daughter or for the team is when parents need to be most positive and supportive.
2. **Be supportive of coaching staff in front of your son/daughter.** Nothing can injure teamwork faster than athletes doubting the capabilities of their coaches. The coaches are trying to do their best at every moment. If you have concerns, follow the Life School Athletic Department communication process. Our staff will listen, appreciate your confidentiality and give you a timely response.
3. **Be part of a parent network.** Very special relationships can be fostered over the careers of athletes by socializing with other parents. This socialization can take place at games, after games, at team dinners, etc. Parents need support too! Be positive with each other and do not hesitate to remind each other about remaining positive at all times. If you hear a "rumor" that concerns you about any athletic issue, call a Life School coach to verify or clarify what you've heard. Don't perpetuate a rumor by passing it on or by remaining silent about an issue that could affect a program.
4. **Winning and losing.** It shall be our staff's goal to pursue excellence in the school's athletic program, through motivating students to achieve to the best of their ability, while honoring themselves with their talents. Winning, under a positive goal-oriented environment, can be a natural and enjoyable outgrowth of this attitude. Everyone enjoys a well-played victory, but a "*Winning is Everything*" philosophy cannot become the controlling force. Too much is sacrificed when that philosophy is dominant. The philosophy should be to be honorable in our attitudes and skills and whether we win the physical victory or not, we have still won the game of life.
5. **College Scholarships.** Having lofty expectations for our children is a normal and healthy goal. In striving for these expectations, we must also be realistic. Not everyone can receive a college scholarship, nor should your child's athletic success be measured by the number of offers he or she receives. We have received our share of scholarships based on all the hard work parents, the athletes, the coaches and the school counselors have put in. Our coaches will help individuals and parents in whatever way they can to find an opportunity for those who wish to pursue collegiate careers. Coaches will not, however, recommend a school at which the athlete cannot potentially be successful.

## WHAT WE VALUE

- We are about academic achievement in middle school and high school more than athletic scholarships to college.
- While we value championships, we value developing championship people more.
- We value graduation rates more than winning percentages.
- We are about the education of students more than entertainment of the public.
- We focus on the team not the individual.
- We focus on developing character, leadership and integrity. Winning will be the by-product.
- We are about the process.
- We are an education-based program.
- We value our outstanding reputation with those against whom we compete by fielding competitive teams that play with good character and sportsmanship.

## PARENT-ATHLETE-COACH EXPECTATIONS

### *Parent's Expectations of Coach:*

1. Treat my athlete fairly.
2. Let me know if my athlete is experiencing any problems (physical, social, emotional).
3. Communicate clearly your expectations of me and my athlete.
4. Keep in mind that as parents we identify with our athlete's achievements.
5. Be a good role model.
6. Protect my athlete from bullying or social ostracism by cliques.

### *Coach's Expectations of Parents:*

1. Recognize my commitment to the success and development of your child.
2. Support my decisions and know that I have the best interest of the team in mind.
3. Keep me informed of any home issues that might affect your athlete.
4. Follow established grievance guidelines when there is a problem.
5. Be an enthusiastic and respectful fan at games.
6. Support your athlete's efforts and commitment to the program.
7. Monitor your athlete's schedule to help avoid over involvement in diverse activities.
8. Screen your athlete from conflicting input from outside coaches and experts.
9. Do not gossip or complain about me at home, in the community and in social media.
10. Do not substitute your agenda for your athlete.

***Coach's Expectations of Athlete:***

1. Set realistic personal goals for yourself and follow them.
2. Be honest about your ability level.
3. Let me know if you have an injury or you are ill.
4. Understand that my feedback on your performance is constructive.
5. Take pride in your team.
6. Support your fellow athletes.
7. Let me know if you are having academic problems or issues with peers.
8. Let me know if something is an issue or concerns exist in your home or personal life that might affect your participation.
9. Discuss with me if you are receiving conflicting advice about your performance from other coaches or your parents.
10. Show respect for my position as a coach and the need to make decisions that are in the best interest of the team.
11. Refrain from any use of illegal substances including alcohol.
12. Always display good sportsmanship to opponents and referees/judges.
13. Let me know if you are having conflicts with the scheduling demands of a job or other school-related activities.

***Athlete's Expectations of Coach:***

1. Treat me fairly.
2. Do not play favorites.
3. Do not embarrass me in front of my teammates.
4. Understand that the sport/team might not be as important to me as to you.
5. Understand the pressure I am under from my parents.
6. Understand the conflicts with school work and other activities.
7. Understand that my outside job is necessary for me and my family.
8. Praise me when I am doing something good.
9. Make sure that I am not bullied or harassed by cliques on the team.
10. Help me set realistic goals for myself.
11. Be there for me if I need advice about something personal in my life.

***Athlete's Expectations of Parents:***

1. Allow me to follow my dreams and goals in athletics.
2. Don't live your unfilled dreams through me.
3. Find a way to support me without undue pressure.
4. Show the coach respect.
5. Have positive communication with my coach and if issues arise, follow the adopted process.
6. Understand the conflicts I have with school work and other activities.
7. Be a good listener, especially when you don't agree with everything I say.

## Life School Athletics Complaints/Concerns Process and Guidelines

Our goals are to facilitate communication between player and coach, then coach and parent/student and to address concerns in a collaborative, effective manner. If you are a student or parent who has a concern or complaint about a sport, coach or coaching style, please follow process listed below and follow the recommended UIL guidelines.

Coaches cannot address a problem unless they know that a problem exists. Most of the time, problems stem between coaches and parents from a miscommunication or misinterpretation of an issue. Therefore, we ask that your child talk first with the coach and address the problem directly. If the outcome of that meeting is not satisfactory, we ask that the parent and student meet together with the coach.

The Life School Athletic Department is here to work alongside parents to encourage an enjoyable experience for the student-athlete in Life School Athletics. We will do whatever it takes in working with parents to achieve that goal. When an issue or conflict arises, please give due diligence and follow the department communication protocol.

Remember the **“24-Hour” Rule**: Please wait 24 hours before approaching a coach either in person, by phone or through email. This allows all involved a **“cooling down”** period and also provides for a time for reflection.

Again, we are committed to effective communication and problem solving and look forward to meeting with students and parents to build and maintain top-caliber athletic programs in Life School. We ask and encourage you to follow the procedures outlined below.

### ***PARENT / COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES ~***

***(PORTIONS REPRINTED FROM THE U.I.L. PARENT INFORMATION MANUAL)***

Both parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding between coaches and parents, both are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a more positive experience for everyone. Parents, you have the right to know, and understand the expectations placed on them and their children. Coaches have the right to know that if parents have a concern; they will discuss it with the coach at the appropriate time and place.

Communication, you as a parent should expect from his/her child’s coach:

1. Coach’s philosophy
2. Expectations the coach has for your son or daughter, as well as other players on the team
3. Locations and times of practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment needed, school & team rules, off-season expectations
5. Procedures that will be followed if your child becomes injured during participation

Communication coaches can expect from you as parents:

1. Concerns regarding your son or daughter expressed directly to the coach at the appropriate time and place
2. Specific concerns in regard to the coach's philosophy and/or expectations
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance

As your child becomes involved in interscholastic athletics, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. As we all experience in life, there are times when outcomes are not as we had hoped. This will happen in athletic competitions and create lifelong learning opportunities for your child and the coach. Discussion and honest communication are needed at these times.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach:

1. The mental and physical treatment of your child
2. What your child needs to do to improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child is not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches make decisions based on what they believe and know is in the best interests of all students participating. Based on careful review of the items above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach.

Other items, such as those listed next, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate for discussion with your child's coach:

1. How much playing time each athlete is receiving
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Any situation that deals with other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and parent. These are not discouraged, as it is important for each party to have a clear understanding of the others' position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure is suggested to help promote resolution to the issue.

## **COMPLAINT/CONCERN COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

If you have a concern to discuss with the coach, the following procedure should be followed:

### ***Informal***

Telephone the coach or send him/her an email about your concerns and allow the coach up to two (2) school days to discuss the matter with you and offer a solution. Please do not approach a coach during a game or practice. If both parties agree that it is necessary, a face to face meeting will be held.

**Step 1**

If the informal interaction does not resolve the issue, put your concerns in writing (email or letter) to the coach with an explanation of why the informal process did not solve the problem. You will receive a written reply from the coach offering a solution within two (2) school days.

**Step 2**

1. If the Step 1 response does not resolve the issue, within three (3) school days of receipt of the response from the coach put your reasons for disagreement with the offered solution in detail and in writing to the Campus Athletic Coordinator.

2. Attach the Step 1 response from the coach.

3. The Life School Campus Athletic Coordinator will conduct an independent investigation of the complaint and contact you to schedule a meeting, if needed, to seek resolution of the issue.

4. Within three (3) school days from receipt of your request the Life School Campus Athletic Coordinator will send a written reply to the complaint/concern.

- *Complaint/Concern Defined: A complaint (or concern) is an oral or written communication questioning the conduct or failure to act by a coach or other athletic department staff in which the athlete's parent (legal guardian) feels aggrieved or dissatisfied.*
- *If the complaint/concern is in regards to a potential criminal act or immoral behavior by the coach, initiate your complaint in writing at Step 2.*
- *Life School Athletics Complaint/Concern Communication process does not replace the district's formal grievance process. For more information about the formal grievance process, please consult with the athletic director.*

**UIL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF SPECTATORS**

- Remember that you are at the contest to support and cheer for your team and to enjoy the skill and competition--not to intimidate or ridicule the other team or its fans.
- Remember that school athletics are a learning experience for students and that mistakes are sometimes made.
- Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people, just as you would praise a student working in the classroom.
- A ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or be generally obnoxious. Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups.

- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team and use only cheers that support and uplift the teams involved
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before, during, and after the game.
- Be a positive role model at events through your own actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming.
- Parents and spectators should be aware that the school can (and should) remove them from the premises and can prohibit them from attending future contests due to undesirable behaviors.
- Game officials can ask that school administrators have unruly fans removed from a contest facility.
- There is no such thing as a “right” to attend interscholastic athletics. Interscholastic athletics are considered a “privilege” and spectators who avail themselves of it are expected to conduct themselves accordingly.
- Keep in mind that you are a guest of the school, and that while winning is certainly an admirable goal, it is hollow if it comes at the expense of morals, ethics, and just plain common sense.
- The school is responsible for the behavior of their spectators. The school district can be and will be punished for actions of patrons in violation of UIL standards and rules.

### **STUDENT-ATHLETE DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

1. Life School athletes will abide by the school rules and will be assigned a disciplinary form of exercise for minor infractions.
2. Life School athletes are expected to follow the student code of conduct as found in the Student and Parent Handbook. Any infractions will be reviewed by the administration and athletic coordinator.
3. Detentions / Suspensions / Unsportsmanlike Conduct Infractions
  - a. Each time athletes are assigned a detention, they will also be assigned a disciplinary form of exercise
  - b. If an athlete misses his/her assigned practice session or contest for disciplinary reasons, he/she will be subject to additional disciplinary action, which may include suspension or removal from the team and athletic program. The head coach, athletic coordinator and athletic director will review this decision.
  - c. An athlete who earns his/her fifth detention during any semester will be placed on probation and may be removed from the team and athletic program. If the athlete is removed from the team and athletic program in the first semester, he/she may petition the discipline committee (comprised of the head coach, athletic coordinator and campus assistant principal) for re-admittance in the second semester. If the fifth detention occurs during the second semester and removal from the team and athletic

program is warranted, the student must meet with discipline committee prior to the start of the next school year to enroll in athletics.

- d. An athlete who is suspended from school or placed in In-School Suspension will be subject to more severe disciplinary actions which may include suspension from contests, from the team, and from the athletic program. During a suspension from school, students will not be allowed to participate in practices or games. During an all-day ISS assignment, students can practice but will not be allowed to participate in games nor travel with the team contest.
  - e. An athlete who receives an unsportsmanlike infraction during a contest will be subject to suspension for the remainder of that contest. At the coach's discretion, an additional contest suspension may be given. An athlete who receives more than one unsportsmanlike infraction during a season or is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct can be suspended from a minimum of one contest if not more at the coach's discretion. Suspensions for more severe unsportsmanlike behavior will be made by the head coach and athletic coordinator.
4. Coaches may have athletes perform disciplinary forms of exercises for any of the following minor infractions. This may include but is not limited to:
- a. Not wearing the correct uniform.
  - b. Being tardy to practice or athletic period.
  - c. Committing an infraction of one of the coaches' rules.
  - d. Breaking school rules.
  - e. Demonstrating a lack of effort or hustle.
  - f. Displaying a negative attitude.
  - g. Any other conduct the coach deems inappropriate in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Life School Student/Parent Handbook.
5. Life School reserves the right to enforce temporary or permanent removal from the athletic program. This includes but is not limited to a designated number of game suspensions. The coach must consult with the athletic coordinator and the campus administration about dismissal of a student from the team or athletic program. Documentation and parental contact must take place before removal from the program takes place. The final decision to move a student out of the athletic period rests with the athletic director and campus administration.

Causes for removal from a team may include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. Use of alcohol, tobacco (including electronic devices), illegal use or possession of drugs not prescribed for the individual by a physician.
- b. Continued violations of the athletic policy.
- c. Repeated violations of team policies.
- d. Personal misconduct that involves police or court action either during or outside school hours and sessions of the sport season.
- e. Verbal or physical attack upon an opponent, contest official, teacher, fan, coach or any other person.
- f. Continued acts of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- g. Unacceptable social media behavior.
- h. Theft of goods or services.
- i. Acts of hazing, bullying and sexual harassment.
- j. Any other conduct deemed inappropriate in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Life School Student/Parent Handbook.

## 6. Appeal Process

According to the policy in the athletic handbook, a student may be removed from the athletic program. The Life School Athletic Department desires to fairly administer this discipline by providing an opportunity for appeal. The appeal process is:

- a. The student must fill out an appeal application obtained from the athletic director and return it within 10 days of the removal from athletics. Any student who receives a sixth detention is not eligible for an appeal.
- b. Upon receipt of the appeal application, the discipline committee and athletic director will review the student's file and determine if he/she may return to the team.

## BASIC ATHLETIC POLICIES

### 1. General Information:

- a. The Life School Athletic Department training rules apply to interscholastic sports for boys, and girls, interscholastic cheerleaders, and all interscholastic personnel including managers, trainers, and statisticians.
- b. The Life School Athletic Department desires to have parents of our athletes not only know the regulations governing their son or daughter's participation, but also approve of the regulations. To make this phase of education more meaningful, each parent will be asked to acknowledge receipt of athletic handbook, along with the son or daughter, and indicate an understanding and willingness of the student athlete to abide by the rules and regulations of the school athletic handbook.
- c. No boy or girl will be allowed to participate in any athletic contest until acknowledgement of the athletic handbook and other athletic forms is signed and returned to the athletic office. Signature of the student and one or both of the parents must be included.
- d. Students who participate in the athletic program must be enrolled in their respective athletic class period. Any exception to this rule due to an academic course conflict can only be made upon the recommendation of the athletic coordinator, campus principal and counselor.

2. **Missing Practice:** An athlete should always consult with his/her coach before missing practice. An unexcused absence may result in suspension of a student from the next game. Athletes are expected to be at all games and practices. If a student is sick or has a family emergency, the athlete must, upon returning to school, bring a doctor's note or parental note explaining the circumstances. The student will be expected to make up practice. This is not a punishment. If a student misses practice twice in a game week, then he/she may sit out that game. **Homework is not an excuse. Student athletes are expected to manage their time so as to complete their schoolwork and attend practice.**

3. **Dropping or transferring sports or non-participation:** Students enrolled in the athletic period, who do not try out for any sport, will lose the privilege of participating in athletics. If an athlete quits a sport after the season has started, he/she will not be allowed to begin practicing/playing the next sport until the current sport's season is complete. On occasion, however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a valid reason. If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:

- a. Consult with the immediate coach and then the head coach.

- b. Report situation to the athletic coordinator. The athletic coordinator will make the final decision.
  - c. The athlete may be required to serve the team in another capacity other than as a player in order to retain athletic participation privileges.
  - d. Check in all equipment.
4. **Uniforms and Equipment:** School equipment checked out by the student-athlete is his/her responsibility. He/she is expected to keep it in good condition. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation.
- a. Do not switch equipment or uniforms. If something does not fit or needs repair, see your coach immediately.
  - b. Turn in game jerseys to coach or manager after a game. Do not wash game jerseys yourself unless permission is given from your coach.
  - c. Students are responsible for school issued equipment and uniforms. Lost, stolen, or damaged (other than normal use) articles must be replaced by the student.
  - d. Athletes must abide by dress code established by coaches when traveling to and from athletic competition.
  - e. Warm-ups or team shirts are allowed to be worn to school on game day only or on Friday if the game is on Saturday with prior principal and athletic coordinator approval. School-issued uniforms may only be worn for athletic-related purposes.
5. **Attendance:** Students who miss part of the school day must be in attendance two periods of the school day, or the equivalent, day in order to participate in a contest or practice on that date. Students missing school for reasons other than illness must have an excused absence in order to participate. Final authority for infractions of this rule will rest with the athletic coordinator. Students absent from school on Friday with a contest the following day (Saturday) will be eligible to participate. Athletes who are in out-of-school suspension or all-day in-school-suspension on the day of the event may not participate in the athletic event or practice.
6. **Pick Up:** Students not picked up from practice or games on time may be subject to removal from the team.
7. **Traveling:** All athletes must travel to and from out-of-town athletic contests in transportation provided by the Life School Athletic Department unless the parents make previous arrangements with the coach. Students may only ride with their own parents and parents must sign a travel waiver.
- a. Only the team, trainer, administrators, cheerleaders and coaches may travel on the bus.
  - b. Suspended or ineligible athletes may not travel with the team.
  - c. Athletes will remain with their team and under the supervision of the coach when attending away contests.
  - d. All regular school bus rules will be followed.
  - e. Athletes who miss the bus will not be allowed to participate in the contest unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the coach with the athletic coordinator making the final decision.
8. **Conflicts in extracurricular activities:** An individual student who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities may create conflicts of obligations and interests. The Life School Athletic Department recognizes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities, and to this end will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts.

Students have a responsibility to do everything possible to avoid continuing conflicts. Positive efforts include exercising caution about joining too many activities where conflicts are unavoidable. Faculty sponsors/coaches should be notified immediately when a conflict arises.

When a conflict arises, the sponsors/coaches will attempt to work out a solution. If a solution cannot be found, the principal and athletic coordinator will make the decision based on the following:

- a. The relative importance of each event to the student.
- b. The importance of each event to the school.
- c. The relative contribution the student can make.
- d. How long each event has been scheduled.
- e. Talk with parents.

Once a decision has been made and the student has committed to that decision, he/she will not be penalized in any way by either faculty sponsor/coach. If it becomes obvious that a student cannot fulfill the obligation of a school activity, he/she should withdraw from that activity.

All school activities will take priority over outside activities including but not limited to club, Select, AAU, 7-on-7. If a student chooses an outside activity over a school activity, the student may be suspended or removed from the school team.

9. **Facilities:** Athletes are expected to take care of their facilities. Athletes are financially responsible for any damage or vandalism to property.
  - a. Keep trash, uniforms, equipment, etc., picked up in the locker rooms.
  - b. Properly hang up all uniforms in your locker.
  - c. Do not remove locks or switch your assigned lockers.
  - d. Keep showers clean. Remove personal items and store them in your locker.
  - e. Wash your athletic clothes regularly.
  - g. Pick up trash when traveling.
  - h. Athletes are responsible for clearing out lockers at the end of the season. Items left in the locker may be discarded at the athlete's loss.
  - i. Life School is not responsible for a student's lost or stolen personal items.
10. **Vacation Policy:** Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are discouraged. Parents/athletes wishing to do so may wish to reassess their commitment to the athletic program. In the event of an unavoidable absence due to a vacation, an athlete must:
  - a. Be accompanied by his/her parents while on vacation.
  - b. Contact the head coach prior to the vacation.
  - c. Make up for each practice or contest day missed prior to resuming competition. (Contest day will count as a practice day.)
  - d. Be willing to assume the consequences related to their status on that team as a starter. (reserve status, etc.)
  - e. The head coach will make the final decision regarding consequences for missing practices or contests.
11. **Team Selection:** In order to encourage participation from as many students as possible, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without compromising the integrity of their team. Time,

space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on effective team size for any particular sport.

12. **Team Reduction Policies:** Selection of the members of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. When a team cut becomes a necessity, each candidate shall have an opportunity to attend try-outs at the scheduled time(s).
13. **Equal Educational Opportunities and Nondiscrimination Policy:** In the conduct of team selection, team reduction or in any team related activity, the School does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities on the basis of their disability in its programs, services, or activities, and mandates full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and all other applicable laws.
14. **Locker Room Regulations:**
  - a. Rough-housing and throwing towels or other objects are not allowed in the locker room. Hazing or bullying of other players is not allowed.
  - b. All showers must be turned off. The last person to leave the shower room is expected to check all showers.
  - c. No one except coaches and assigned players is allowed in the locker room.
  - d. No glass containers are permitted in locker rooms.
  - e. All spiked or cleated shoes must be put on and taken off outside of the gym or locker area. No metal or hard-plastic spikes or cleats are ever allowed in any other part of the school building.
  - f. At no time may pictures or videos be taken in a locker room.
15. **Weight Room Regulations:**
  - a. Strength training is not only a supplement to other athletic programs, but also a highly skilled activity itself.
  - b. No abuse of equipment is tolerated. Any equipment that is broken must be reported immediately.
  - c. No food is allowed in the weight room.
  - d. Warm up with proper stretching exercises.
  - e. Do the lifts correctly. It is better to use lighter weights for correct lifting than heavier weights and run the risk of injury.
  - f. Know your limits. Work with a coach to determine your limits.
  - g. Replace all weights on racks immediately following use.
  - h. Shirts and shoes are required at all times.
  - j. No one is to be in the weight room alone.
  - k. All students must be under the supervision of a coach.
16. **Insurance:** Life School carries a supplemental accident insurance for all extracurricular activities. This policy is a supplemental policy. It is expected that all student-athletes maintain primary insurance coverage at all times. Students/Parents must contact the athletic trainer for supplemental insurance information.
17. **Release from Class:** It is the responsibility of athletes to see their teacher the day before they will miss classes because of an athletic contest. All work shall be made up within the timeline defined in the Life School Student Parent Handbook.

18. **Grooming and Dress Policy:** A member of an athletic team is expected to be well groomed. Appearance, expression and actions always influence people's opinions of athletes, the team and the school. Members of a team have made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of athletes in this community.
- Hairstyles are to be maintained in a neat and clean manner so as to present a positive image for both the team and the school.
  - Non-medical jewelry is not to be worn during practice or games. An athlete shall dress presentably at all times, including but not limited to trips, games, assemblies or banquets. This includes when the athlete is at any school event (home or away) or on campus regardless of whether the student is a spectator or participant. Life School students are expected to dress in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Life School Student/Parent Handbook.
  - Only uniforms approved by the Life School Athletic Department will be worn for practices and contests.
  - At no time will athletes be permitted to practice shirtless.
  - Athletes will not be permitted to participate until deviations of the above rules are satisfactorily corrected.
  - Tattoos of any kind must be appropriate. At the discretion of the head coach and athletic coordinator, an athlete may be required to cover the tattoo during practices and/or contests.
19. **Eligibility:** No Pass, No Play; as regulated by law. A grade report will be sent to coaches every week. If a student receives a grade lower than a 70 at the end of the first six weeks and at the end of subsequent 9-week grading periods, he/she becomes ineligible to play in any games for the next three weeks. If, at the next three-week period, a student is passing all subjects with a grade of 70 or above, then he/she can participate in games. See course guide for special class exemption. Students who are ineligible are expected to attend all practices. Ineligible students are not allowed to travel with nor sit with teams during contests.

Students who fail to maintain their athletic eligibility for consecutive nine weeks may be subject to removal from the athletic program.

20. **Policy on Fighting in Interscholastic Sports:** Life School Athletic Policy on Harassment, Fighting, and Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct in Interscholastic Sports:
- Fighting in any sport shall consist of: an invitation to fight; following an opposing player during a disturbance and making any menacing or taunting gesture or sound; punching or slugging, whether or not contact is made; wrestling or tackling an opponent as part of an altercation. In addition, leaving the player box or player bench area to approach an altercation shall be construed as participation in the altercation. Furthermore, any athlete, coach, or team personnel ejected by a contest official from any contest for harassment, fighting, or flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct may be subject to the penalties listed hereafter.
  - Violation of this rule shall bring an automatic suspension for the remainder of that contest plus suspension from the next scheduled contest.
  - Should the original violation of this rule occur during the final contest of the season, there will be suspension from the next contest that the athlete or team personnel member is eligible for during a season in which he/she participates and successfully completes.
  - A more severe penalty may be assessed against an individual for a violation if, in the judgment of the school, such action will be in the best interest of the team.

- e. A second violation by the same individual during the same season brings automatic expulsion from that sport for the remainder of the season plus suspension from any and all tournament contests of that same season.
21. **Individual Coaches Rules:** Coaches may establish additional rules and regulations with the approval of the athletic director for their respective sports. These additional rules for a particular sport must be stipulated in writing to all team members and parents and explained fully at the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will also be in writing and shall be administered by the coach. Copies of all additional team rules by coaches are on file in the athletic office.
22. **Service Requirement:** All student-athletes are required to participate in at least one service project per year sponsored by the athletic department to be eligible for a letter jacket or end of season awards. Students may substitute 10 hours of documented community service as approved by the athletic coordinator.
23. **Awards:** Any athlete who is removed from the team or who quits during a season will not receive a varsity letter or be able to participate in his/her team's awards recognition event.

## ATHLETIC TRAINER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### 1. Reporting of Injuries:

Students should immediately report injuries to the coach and athletic trainer. If an injury is left untreated, minor injuries can become major ones that keep students from playing. If a student is injured and unable to practice, he/she will still be required to attend practice in a non-participatory manner. If the athlete is treated by a physician, the athlete must obtain the doctor's permission to return to the activity and be cleared by the athletic training staff. Parents are liable for any medical costs associated with injuries.

### 2. Athletic Training Room Location

The athletic training room at Life High School Waxahachie is located in the North-West corner of the school next to the weight room. The athletic training room at Life School Oak Cliff is located in south campus room S5B. This facility is to be utilized for all student-athlete evaluations, treatments, and rehabilitations.

The Athletic Training Facilities will be open before school every day at 7:15AM. After school Athletic Trainers will be located at high school football practices/games. After football season the training room will be open till 5pm each school day. Please note that all student-athletes should have their rehabilitation and treatment completed during the treatment/rehabilitation time before or after school not the athletic period. If they have a scheduling conflict and cannot make it in during this time it is the students/parents responsibility to make arrangements with the athletic training staff.

All injured athletes are expected to report to before school treatment. The athlete will be expected to dress out and be with their assigned team during the athletic period, unless needed for any evaluation or treatment determined by the Athletic Trainer. All injury reports will be sent out daily through RankOne.

### 3. School Day Hours

7:15 am – 7:55 am (Morning Treatment/Evaluations)  
 3:45pm- 5:00pm (Will be at practice during Football season)  
 (All other treatment/rehab times are by appointment only)

*Summer Hours:* TBD by school Athletic Trainer

\*Hours may vary during holidays and school closings.

### 4. General Rules for the Athletic Training Room

- Treatments are **EACH school day at 7:15AM.**
- No Treatment during Academic or Athletic Periods (unless approved by an Athletic Trainer.)
- No Self-administered treatments
- Students **MUST** take a shower before receiving treatment (when possible)
- No food or drink.
- Shoes must be removed prior to receiving treatment/rehabilitation.
- Athletic attire should be worn at all times.
  - Modest athletic clothing. Students should be in their Life School athletic uniform.
- Bags and other personal items should be stored in the athlete's locker room.
- Profanity, loud disruptions, racial, ethnic, religious, and/or sexual comments, and horse play will not be tolerated.
- Cell phones should be put in locker before reporting to the athletic training room
- Be respectful & courteous to the Sports Medicine Staff

Violation of any of the rules listed above will result in a dismissal from the athletic training room until the issue is resolved. Coaches shall be notified when student-athletes are non-compliant with treatments/rehabs or athletic training facility rules.

### 5. Physician Referrals/Consultations:

Life School Athletic Trainers will work under the supervision of the team physician. Students/Parents have the right to see the physician of their choice when needed. We ask that all athletes who are injured report to the Athletic Trainer before seeing a doctor if possible. If an athlete is given restrictions by a physician the Athletic Trainers and coaches will follow those instructions as written until that physician clears the athlete to return to participation. If insurance becomes an issue, we will utilize other contacts to assist the athlete in getting the best care possible.

#### **Team Physician**

Jeffrey McDaniel, MD  
 2230 Bryan Place, Suite 200  
 Midlothian, TX 76065  
 972-775-4132

#### **Concussion Oversight Physician**

Sarah Kennedy, DO  
 Sideline Orthopedics and Sports  
 4401 Park Springs Blvd., #130  
 Arlington, TX 76017  
 817-801-1503

## 6. Pre-Participation Physical Exam

All Life School Athletes must have an annual pre-participation physical exam before being cleared to participate in any athletic event (athletic period practice, before/after school practice, competition, or out of season conditioning activities). Life School will use the current UIL physical form. A copy of this form along with a note from the Athletic Training Staff will be sent home every year. It must be on paper and signed by a physician, preferably their primary care physician or the team physician. No electronic physicals will be accepted. Parents may find the physical form on the school's athletic website or through the UIL website. This form must be turned in to the Athletic Trainer for review and final clearance before participation

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

1. **Liability Waiver & Emergency Information Form:** Each athlete's parents shall complete this form that authorizes Life School to find treatment for an athlete in case of emergencies. The parent also agrees not to hold Life School or any of its employees liable.
2. **Physical Examination:** A yearly physical examination is required. The physical form must be completed by the physician and submitted to the coach prior to participation. The form will be kept on file in the athletic trainer's office.
3. **Pre-participation of Physical Examination:** This is to be completed by a parent or guardian and filed in student's athletic file. This information will help the doctor who gives the physical.
4. **Drug Testing Consent Form:** This gives Life School consent to give random drug tests to any Life School athlete.
5. **UIL Eligibility Questionnaire Form & Previous Athletic Participation Form (if necessary)**
6. **UIL Acknowledgement of Rules Form**
7. **UIL Cardiac Awareness Form**
8. **Eligibility:** In order to participate on an athletic team, each athlete must have satisfied all of the UIL and state eligibility requirements prior to participation.
9. **Parental Acknowledgement of Athletic Policies:** Each parent or guardian and athlete shall read all of the enclosed material and certify that they understand the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the school. This can be electronically signed with the other athletic forms.
10. **Athletic Fee:** A non-refundable athletic fee of \$75 is required of everyone planning to participate in any sport. The sibling's fee is \$25. Exceptions may be made for those who qualify. Please see the athletic coordinator.

## ATHLETIC AWARDS POLICY

### Varsity Letter Requirements

The varsity award shall be presented to an athlete who satisfies the participation requirements as listed below, completes all team obligations and receives the recommendation of the coach. Athletes must complete the season in good standing with the school and coach. Athletes will be awarded letter jackets at the end of the school year. However, students must complete all re-enrollment forms with fees paid for the next school year (except seniors). (The coach may recommend a waiver of these requirements under an unusual circumstance.)

- a. Baseball/Softball:
  - 1) play in at least one-fourth of all innings
  - 2) pinch-hit or pinch-run in three-fourths of the games
  - 3) pitch in four starts or six game appearances
- b. Basketball: participate in fifty percent of regular season games
- c. Cheerleaders: meet ninety percent of contest and practice requirements
- d. Cross Country: participate in at least seventy-five percent of meets, which shall include the district meet
- e. Golf: participate on the varsity team in at least fifty percent of the matches/tournaments
- f. Football: participate in fifty percent of all quarters or play a specialist position, e.g., punter, kick-off squad, return man, extra-punt kicker, in fifty percent of regular season contests
- g. Soccer: participate in fifty percent of the regular season games
- h. Track: be a regional alternate or score points in varsity meets
- i. Volleyball: participate in fifty percent of the regular season matches
- j. Power lifting: qualify for regionals or participate in seventy-five percent of meets
- k. Seniors: will qualify for lettering if they make any team at the varsity level
- l. Managers: Managers may letter in a sport in which they have served a varsity team for the whole season.

## TRAINING RULES AND REGULATIONS

**The penalty for violation of the school's training rules may result in removal from the Athletic Department or game suspensions.**

Medical research clearly substantiates the fact that use of tobacco, alcohol and any type of mood altering substances produce harmful effects on the human organism.

The community of Life School is concerned with the health habits of student-athletes and is convinced that athletics and the use of these substances are not compatible. It is also a fact that when students have a strong interest to participate in athletics, their desire to use these substances is greatly reduced. Students have to decide if they want to be athletes. If you do wish to be an athlete, you must make the commitment in order to be a competitor. This commitment necessitates following a simple set of training rules, which the athletic department believes to be fair.

**Use of Tobacco** -Research emphasizes that use of tobacco is physically harmful to young adults. The harm done by this is not only a health problem. The community follows the progress of young athletes, and any deviation from accepted training rules marks one as unwilling to pay the price. If one team member breaks the rules, the whole team is branded as non-trainers. This rule means no use of tobacco all year, in or out of season.

**No Alcoholic Beverages** -There is no way to justify athletes using alcoholic beverages, even though social pressure may be hard to resist. The people who would like to draw the athlete into their drinking sessions will be the first to criticize the athlete if he/she does not come through in a game. Again, this rule means no drinking all year, not just during the season.

**Drugs** -Simply stated, drug abuse is the consumption of any chemical substance or the smoking of some plant derivatives for the purpose of mood modification. The use or misuse of drugs is a social problem. Students with a strong sense of purpose have no need for mood modifiers. The rule against substance abuse is in effect all year.

### **RANDOM DRUG TESTING OF STUDENT ATHLETES**

As an introductory note to the parents and legal guardians receiving this consent, please do not misconstrue our request for your permission to randomly test our student athletes for the presence of drugs. Our policy is not meant in any way to accuse or imply that any athlete is or has been using drugs. On the contrary, our policy is forward-looking in that we seek to discourage and prevent the future use of controlled substances. In the interest of safety, fairness to all participants, and the discouragement of drug use, we have resolved to condition participation in all school athletics programs on the agreement that each athlete will submit to and cooperate with random urinalysis drug testing.

1. Participation in all athletic programs is contingent on student and parental consent to and cooperation with the school's random urinalysis drug testing policy. The school emphasizes that, though the student may not participate in athletics, no other penalty or adverse consequence will accrue for non-consent.
2. The school will exert no influence or pressure on any party to consent to this agreement or make any disclosures regarding refusal of this consent form by any student or parent/guardian.
3. The school's drug testing policy is to screen only for standard controlled substances, not medical conditions.
4. The school has the right, but not the obligation, to randomly employ drug testing.
5. By exercising the right to invoke drug testing, the school does not assume the responsibility, though all reasonable efforts will be made, to promptly notify the athlete, parents, and appropriate Athletic Department employees of "positive" test results.
6. The school will obtain the services of a qualified, independent agency to administer the random drug testing urinalysis.
7. The school will make every effort to protect the privacy of all involved by keeping results of drug testing confidential, available only to school administration, Athletic Department, and parties to this agreement.

Parties to this agreement waive any cause of action arising from the failure of the school to keep the results confidential.

8. Failure to pass a drug test will result in suspension from all athletics until a follow-up test confirms the results of the first test. Failure of the second drug test constitutes grounds for dismissal from athletics for a period to be determined by the school. Passing the second drug test negates the results of the first test.
9. Refusal to submit to drug testing without proven medical cause will result in immediate suspension from all athletics pending a review by the administration.
10. Falsifying a drug test will result in immediate suspension from all athletics pending a review by the administration.

## **ATHLETIC SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Life School recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, however, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for Life School is a privilege. As a student-athlete, you represent Life School and your community, and you are expected to portray yourself, your team, and Life School in a positive manner at all times.

This document was developed to provide a helpful set of guidelines for the use of social media by Life School student-athletes. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Foursquare and blogs of all types.

The rapid growth of social media technologies combined with their ease of use and pervasiveness make them attractive channels of communication. However, these tools also hold the possibility of a host of unintended consequences. Applications that allow you to interact with others online require careful consideration to assess the implications of "friending," "linking," "following," "geolocating" or accepting such a request from another person.

These guidelines are designed to help you understand your unique responsibilities as a Life School student-athlete, identify and avoid potential issues, and protect your reputation and privacy as you utilize social media technologies.

### **II. STUDENT-ATHLETE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Activities that would violate the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct off-line are also considered violations online. Please refer to the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct for additional guidance.

➤ **Maintain Privacy & Confidentiality**

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. Do not publish the personal information of others without their explicit permission, including, but not limited to, names, phone numbers and email addresses.

Student-athletes are not permitted to comment on team matters that could reasonably be expected to be confidential to other team members, including, but not limited to, injuries, officiating, team schedules, travel plans or student eligibility statuses.

➤ **Be Authentic & Transparent**

Do not impersonate a friend, teacher, or anyone else on a social networking site. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Life School student and student-athlete. However, always be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a representative of your team, Life School Athletics or Life School. If you identify yourself as a Life School student athlete, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct.

➤ **Watch Your Language**

Student-athletes are not permitted to publish language on social networking sites that includes vulgar, lewd, or plainly offensive speech. This includes sexually explicit language, inappropriate curse words and speech that encourages or promotes illicit drug or alcohol use, or any other illegal activities. Do not use social media to make defamatory statements.

Do not use social networking sites to cyberbully or harass other students. Do not make threats of violence, or statements that may be construed as threats of violence, directed at anyone, including teachers and opposing team members.

➤ **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words**

Do not post photos or videos depicting personal use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco. Student-athletes are also not permitted to post photos or videos promoting or condoning drug-related or otherwise illegal activity. Do not post photos or videos that are sexually explicit or pornographic in nature.

➤ **Understand Your Personal Responsibility**

You are personally responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individuals have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous or obscene. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

➤ **Don't Use Life School Logos**

Do not use Life School or Life School Athletics wordmarks, servicemarks, logos or images without permission. Complete Life School logo and trademark guidelines can be found by contacting the Life School Central Office.

### III. REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Violations of the Student-Athlete Social Media Policy, or the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct through the use of social media, are subject to remedial actions, up to and including the loss of playing privileges and dismissal from the team.

Individual teams and head coaches may implement additional guidelines regarding the use of social media by their student-athletes. For example, a head coach may prohibit the use of social media technologies immediately prior to, during and following competition. Student-athletes are responsible for knowing and abiding by any such additional guidelines implemented by their respective teams. Violations of team guidelines regarding social media may subject student-athletes to additional, progressive remedial actions as determined by their respective head coach.

### IV. BEST PRACTICES & REMINDERS

#### ➤ **Represent Life School with Honor**

As a Life School student-athlete, you are responsible for your social media activities and are expected to follow the same behavioral standards on-line as you are in your everyday life. The same laws, rules and guidelines for interacting with family, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty, staff, and fans apply online as in the real world. Never compromise your personal reputation and integrity – or that of your team and school – through your use of social media technologies.

#### ➤ **Be Respectful**

Remember that with rights, come responsibilities. While you may have the right to freely express certain ideas or beliefs, you should weigh the values of civility and mutual respect when deciding to engage in certain forms of expression online. Stop, before you post, to consider the hurt that may result from the use of slurs or epithets intended to discredit, for example, another's age, ethnicity, gender, handicap, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion or sexual orientation. Your online expressions also reflect on your team and your school.

#### ➤ **Do No Harm**

Let your Internet social networking do no harm to yourself, family, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty, staff, Life School Athletics or Life School.

#### ➤ **Think Before You Post**

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clearheaded.

Post only thoughts and pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public. Use good ethical judgment and always err on the side of caution.

➤ **Does It Pass the Publicity Test?**

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this message or image as the result of a Google search tomorrow or ten years from now? Would I want my mother or my grandmother to see it?

Remember, too, that comments made via social media can be and have been used by members of the media as attributed quotes.

➤ **Protect Your Identity**

While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that could be used by scam artists, identity thieves, stalkers or others who may wish to do you harm. The same is true for the information of your family, friends, teammates and coaches. Don't list your home or campus address or phone number. Don't list your date of birth. It is a good idea to create a separate email address that is used only with social media sites. Use caution when adding someone or inviting someone to be a friend.

➤ **Correct Mistakes**

Ensure that you have all the facts before you post. If you do make a mistake, correct it quickly and visibly. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post – just make it clear that you have done so.

➤ **Monitor Comments**

Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments as a way to engage their audience and build community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

➤ **Maintain Privacy**

Do not collect sensitive information, such as phone numbers, ID numbers, social security numbers, payment information, etc., via social media, as those are not secure channels. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

➤ **Remember the Internet's Permanence and Availability**

The internet is open to a world-wide audience. When using social media technologies, ask yourself:

1. Did I set my privacy settings to help control who can look at my profile, personal information and photos? You can limit access somewhat, but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
2. How much information do I want strangers to know about me? If I give them my cell phone number, date of birth, address, email, class schedule or a list of possessions, how might they use it? With whom will my information be shared? Not everyone will respect your personal or physical space.
3. Is the image I'm projecting by my communications and photos the one I want my parents, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty/staff and fans to know me by? What does my profile say to potential college interviewers? Potential employers? Which doors am I opening and which am I closing?
4. What if I want to remove information from my posts? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching statements? Removing materials from network caches can be difficult. Posted material can remain accessible on the internet until you complete the prescribed process for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines.
5. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Could I be hurting someone? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be subject to libel suits or other legal actions?
6. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protection installed and up to date? Some sites collect profile information to spam you. Others contain links that can infect your equipment with viruses that potentially can destroy data and infect others with whom you communicate. Remember to back up critical files on an external source in case of destructive attacks.