



PARENT/STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Welcome to Salisbury Academy Athletics and Jaguar Country!

We believe every student can achieve success in and out of the classroom, and we strongly encourage participation in athletics. Our teams are highly competitive, yet what we value most is sportsmanship and respect. SA offers interscholastic teams in a growing number of sports for boys and girls.

Revised July 2026

Mission

To help each student-athlete excel in all areas and to be the best they can be both on and off the playing field.

Philosophy

At Salisbury Academy, our athletics program is an important component of the educational structure. Athletics complement our academics and provide another arena in which students can excel. We pride ourselves on giving students opportunities to try a new sport. While we strive to make our teams as competitive as possible, our primary objective is to help our student-athletes build character by developing important life skills. Cooperation, teamwork, responsibility, and self-respect are just a few life skills that become ingrained in our student-athletes. The personal growth and achievements of our student-athletes provide a balance among academic pursuits, physical endeavors, and social interaction.

Our coaches are focused on teaching student-athletes how to win yet are not solely focused on winning. Through positive reinforcement and intentional teaching, our coaches show our athletes how to be successful. Our student-athletes learn to be gracious competitors who embrace challenges, win with humility, handle defeat with dignity, advocate for their sports, and are positive role models.

Both individual and team sports are available to middle school students, and several sports are available to lower school students. More than 19 teams compete in 10 different sports, including basketball, cheerleading, cross country, golf, soccer, volleyball, track and field, tennis, flag football, and swimming. Over 90 percent of students in grades 5 through 8 participate in interscholastic athletics.

The focus of our program is on both individual and team progress. While winning is important, it is not our sole motivation; rather, it is a byproduct of individual and team talent and character development.

There are 5 major characteristics we strive to encourage in our student-athletes:

Academic Excellence: As a lasting influence on lifelong success, we hold academic achievement above athletic achievement.

Commitment: We expect SA athletes to be committed to the sports they participate in. This includes being on time and ready to work at all practices, games, and team events.

Teamwork: We expect each athlete to learn to value themselves and their teammates as different, but essential parts of a team effort.

Sportsmanship: Players are expected to display good sportsmanship and appropriately encourage their teammates, regardless of score, fans, opponents, or calls.

Self-discipline: Athletes are expected to follow team and school rules and to work hard to improve their skills by paying attention to their coach's instructions and through individual practice.

Sports Teams

Salisbury Academy is excited to offer the following sports:

Fall: JV and Varsity Girls Volleyball (5th-8th), Varsity Co-ed Soccer (5th-8th), Co-ed Cross-Country (4th-12th), Girls Tennis (5th-8th), Women's Tennis (9th-12th)

Winter: Varsity Cheerleading (3rd-8th), JV and Varsity Girls Basketball (5th-8th), JV and Varsity Boys Basketball (5th-8th), Swimming (5th-12th)

Spring: Co-ed Golf (5th-8th), Co-ed Track (k-12th), Girls Soccer (5th-8th), Boys Tennis (5th-8th), Flag Football (5th-8th), Men's Tennis (9th-12th), Men's Golf (9th-12th)

Eligibility

Academics: Academic eligibility for student athletes is tethered to work/study habits and performance. Athletes must manage timely completion of work in all core classes to remain eligible. Chronic concerns with missing or late work will impact eligibility until improvement is shown in a determined time period. Athletes must also maintain an overall 2 or above in core subjects (math, language arts, social studies, science) on grade reports (report cards, progress reports). If scores fall below this range, student athletes must commit to help sessions and other support as suggested. The Athletic Director is responsible for determining eligibility at the start of the season and at the time of grade reports and notifying parents and teachers in the event of suspension. Once the season begins, parents of students who do not meet the above criteria will receive written notification of a suspension from the team. The administration will allow the students to return to the team once supports are in place and grades are improving. An athlete may not have more than one suspension per season to remain eligible. Suspension is defined as no practice or play with the team and no participation in any team events or privileges (e.g., sitting on the bench, wearing the uniform).

Behavior: Athletes must adhere to all behavior expectations and rules as outlined in the Family/or Parent Student Policies and Procedures Handbook and any other rules established by the coach or athletic department. Any athlete may be denied participation at the discretion of the Head of School or Athletic Director.

5th Grade: 5th grade students are eligible to participate on varsity teams only in sports where a JV team is not offered.

Athletics Code of Conduct

Expectations of Athletes – Salisbury Academy athletes share a commitment to themselves, their teammates, and to the school. Student-athletes and parents are required to sign the Player/Parent Contract before participating in athletics and submit the signed agreement to the Athletic Director. The contract is included in this handbook and is also available on our website.

Student athletes are expected to exhibit:

- Respect - For oneself, teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, fans, team managers, bus drivers, and athletic staff.
- Responsibility - By attending practices/games, being on time every day, and being prepared to improve in skill level and knowledge of the sport. Athletes are expected to adhere to the school rules and expectations as stated in the Athletic Handbook. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to consequences.
- Sportsmanship - Every action, body language, attitude, and spoken word is a reflection of oneself and a reflection of the school. Student-athletes should be committed to being the "bigger" person in difficult situations.

Participation Policy/Sports Physical

Students must have an up-to-date sports physical form and signed concussion statement on file in the Athletic Director's office before participating on any Salisbury Academy athletic team. The forms are located on the school website.

Expectations of Parents/Spectators

The many values and attitudes learned by student-athletes include responsibility, self-discipline, sportsmanship, teamwork, work ethic, integrity, and personal sacrifice for the good of others. Parents are expected to support these values at all times by modeling the behavior generally referred to as "good sportsmanship." Parents and spectators should abide by the core principles of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

Included in the display of good sportsmanship by spectators are the following behaviors:

- Spectators are expected to treat players, coaches, and officials with respect. No personal, non-performance-related comments will be tolerated. Show respect for the decisions made by contest officials.
- Refrain from giving instructions during a game or practice. This is confusing and unnerving for players to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions during a game.
- Model positive support for the teams in every manner possible, including the content of cheers and signs.
- Spectators must follow all host site rules and follow directions and rules set by the administrators or designees from either school.

- Spectators must respect and follow the rules required by the host site where the contest is being held. These rules are put in place to create a safe environment that fully supports the goals of middle school athletics.

Pre-Season Parent Meetings

Before each team's first practice, all parents are asked to meet with their child's coach for a pre-season parents' meeting. These meetings will be brief and informal and will include the following: coach's expectations for practice/game participation, electing a team parent, and reviewing the team schedule.

Try-out and Cut Policy

Participating on a sports team provides the student-athlete an experience in skill development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We strive to provide athletic opportunities for all eligible students. Some of our teams may have a cap that requires limiting the number of players so that all team members have a meaningful experience. If needed, a tryout period will be held at the beginning of each season and, if cuts are necessary, the head coach will inform all players of their status on the team in a face-to-face meeting. Athletes who do not make the team of their choice may participate on another team if there is space on the roster.

Playing Time

At the JV level, coaches should attempt to get every player some playing time. The focus at this level should remain strongly on development. The exact amount of playing time may vary at the coach's discretion and may be influenced by attitude, effort, and talent.

At the Varsity level, players should be aware that they will earn playing time through maximum effort, attitude, teamwork, and talent.

Athletic Expenses

While Salisbury Academy tries to limit additional costs above and beyond tuition for athletic participation, there are a few exceptions. All student-athletes are required to return their uniforms after each athletic season, after cleaning. The exception is a sport where uniforms are retained, such as golf & tennis, and those are purchased by each player. Any uniforms returned with damage beyond normal wear and tear will be subject to a fee. Any unreturned uniform will be invoiced for the full cost of a new uniform. Booster Club will assign and check in uniforms.

Team Pictures/Awards

Team Pictures are taken early in each season. Information will be sent home to notify parents.

Near the end of the school year, we hold an annual awards banquet recognizing team and individual accomplishments. Parents are encouraged to attend.

Transportation

Students must ride in assigned vehicles to and from the events. Students wishing to ride home with their parents must notify their coach directly. The school will provide families with a list of school-approved drivers.

Attendance

Players may only miss games or practices for excused absences. Reasons for absences include illness, injury, or situations for which the coach has granted advance permission. Two unexcused absences will result in a one-game suspension. **Three unexcused absences will result in dismissal from the team. Athletes must be in school by 10:00 a.m. on the day of a game or practice to participate.** Exceptions to this policy will be handled on an individual basis by the AD. An athlete's first commitment must be to the school program. Coaches are not expected to excuse athletes from school games due to conflicts or commitments with outside community club or travel team practices, contests and/or tournaments.

Communication/Alerts

Athletes and their parents must be responsible for checking for text, Jag Weekly, and e-mail messages. This is the most efficient means of communicating, especially regarding last-minute changes. If you are not on the AD's e-mail list &/or phone list, please send him your e-mail address so you can receive these timely messages.

Social Media

"Like" the Salisbury Academy page on Facebook as scores and announcements will be posted there.

Inclement Weather Policy/Alerts

If rain, snow, ice, or other inclement weather impacts the practice or game schedule, parents will be updated as soon as the school has all necessary information to make an informed decision. Please keep in mind that safety is our top priority and will guide our decisions if changes are needed. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for cell phone alerts so they are notified immediately of changes.

Dress Code

Uniforms: Uniforms will be issued by the school. Uniforms will be provided for most of our sports. In cases where students get to keep their uniforms after the season (usually tennis and golf), students should be aware that they must purchase their own uniforms. Exceptions to this policy will be handled on an individual basis by the AD.

Dress Code at school: Students may wear game jerseys or dress uniforms on game days per their coach's instructions.

Conference Information

Salisbury Academy is one of the founding members of the Foothills Association of Middle School Athletes (FAMA). Conference members include Davidson Day School, Hickory Christian Academy, Statesville Christian School, and Tabernacle Christian School.

PARENT RELATIONSHIP PLAN

Parent-Coach Relationship: As a parent, you want what is best for your child. Allowing the coach to guide and instruct the team is crucial. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately after a game. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities, and it may be a very emotional moment. For many coaches, one of the post-game responsibilities is to meet with their players. Athletes should not be expected to stop and talk to parents and friends immediately after a game is over. These team meetings are essential to the learning process and are important in efforts to build team unity and understanding.

Parent-Player Relationship: Being positive and supportive is very important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations may be harmful. Allow your child to enjoy, grow, and take responsibility for their athletic experiences. Encourage your child to give 100% effort and to become a team player.

Communication You Should Expect from Your Child's Coach

1. Philosophy and expectations of the coach
2. Locations and times of all practices and contests
3. Team requirements, i.e., practices, and special equipment

Communication Coaches Expect from Parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns about a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your children become involved in the programs at Salisbury Academy, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

1. **Playing time**
2. **Team strategy**
3. **Play calling**
4. **Other student-athletes**

24-Hour Rule

"24-Hour Rule" Athletics can be an emotional endeavor, and occasionally conflict will arise. If you have an athletic issue concerning your student-athlete, please consider the "24-hour rule" – that is, please wait 24 hours before contacting the coach. We have found that if all parties involved with an athletic conflict take time to reflect on the situation, the ensuing conversation will be based less on emotions and more on facts. While the "24-hour rule" may not resolve your concern, it might prevent a misunderstanding from escalating into an adversarial situation. If after 24 hours you still feel that the situation merits attention, please follow the grievance procedures listed below:

1. The student-athlete should communicate concerns or issues first with the coach of that specific team. This meeting should be scheduled for a specific time, not during practice or a contest. No other outsiders other than the athlete and coach(es) should be present.
2. If not resolved in the first step, then the parent and athlete together should request a meeting with the coach(es) involved at a time outside of practice or a contest.
3. If not resolved in the second step, the parent, athlete, and coach(es) should meet with the Athletic Director at a time outside of practice or a contest.
4. In a rare case, the Head of School would become involved.
5. It is important that the above steps be followed in sequence.

Of course, the safety and well-being of our student athletes is our primary concern. If you ever feel you have an issue that relates to student safety, you should certainly go directly to the Athletic Director.

NC Dental Society Position on Mouth Guard Use for Athletes

The North Carolina Dental Society strongly recommends the use of mouth guards for male and female athletes in all sports, particularly football, basketball, soccer, baseball, wrestling, and volleyball. The use of mouth guards has been shown to reduce the severity of injuries to the lips, teeth, cheeks, and tongue. Mouth guards should be used in all practice and game situations.

Fast Facts:

- Soccer players have the highest potential for orofacial injury.
- Basketball players have an oral injury risk double that of football and ice hockey players.
- The American Dental Society estimates that mouth guards prevent about 20,000 oral injuries per year.
- Evidence shows that mouth guards may offer additional protection against concussions, jaw fractures, and other jaw injuries.

The Mouth Guard:

- Stock mouth guards are available through retail sporting goods stores, wholesale team division sales, and dental offices.
- Athletes wearing braces should seek guidance from their orthodontist.

Salisbury Academy Position Statement:

Salisbury Academy strongly recommends the use of mouth guards for male and female athletes in soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

For more information on mouth guards, visit www.ncdental.org and click on "Mouth Guard Project."

SA Concussion Statement

What is a concussion? A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head. It results in your brain not working as it should. It may or may not cause you to black out or pass out. It can happen to you from a fall, a hit to the head, or a hit to the body that causes your head and your brain to move back and forth.

How do I know if I have a concussion? There are many signs and symptoms that you may have following a concussion. A concussion can affect your thinking, the way your body feels, your mood, or your sleep. Here is what to look for:

Thinking/Remembering	Physical	Emotional/Mood	Sleep
Difficulty thinking clearly	Headache	Irritability – things bother you more easily	Sleeping more than usual
Taking longer to figure things out	Fuzzy or blurry vision	Sadness	Sleeping less than usual
Difficulty concentrating	Feeling sick to your stomach/queasy	Being more moody	Trouble falling asleep
Difficulty remembering new information	Vomiting/throwing up	Feeling nervous or worried	Feeling tired
	Dizziness	Crying more	
	Balance problems		
	Sensitivity to noise or light		

Table is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://cdc.gov/concussion>)

What should I do if I think I have a concussion? If you are having any signs or symptoms listed above, you should tell your parents, coach, or athletic trainer so they can get you the help you need. If a parent notices these symptoms, they should inform the athletic trainer.

When should I be particularly concerned? If you have a headache that gets worse over time, you are unable to control your body, you throw up repeatedly or feel more and more sick to your stomach, or your words are coming out funny/slurred, you should let an adult like your parent, coach, or teacher know right away, so they can get you the help you need before things get any worse.

What are some of the problems that may affect me after a concussion? You may have trouble in some of your classes at school or even with activities at home. If you continue to play or return to play too early with a concussion, you may have long-term trouble remembering things or paying attention, headaches may last a long time, or personality changes can occur. Once you have a concussion, you are more likely to have another concussion.

How do I know when it's ok to return to physical activity and my sport after a concussion? After telling your coach, your parents, and any medical personnel around that you think you have a concussion, you will probably be seen by a doctor trained in helping people with concussions. Your school and your parents can help you decide who is best to treat you and when you should return to activity/play or practice. Your school will have a policy in place for treating concussions. You should not return to play or practice on the same day as your suspected concussion.

You should not have any symptoms at rest or during/after activity when you return to play, as this is a sign that your brain has not recovered from injury.

This information was provided to you by the UNC Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related TBI Research Center, NC Medical Society, NC Athletic Trainer's Association, Brain Injury Association of NC, NC Neuropsychological Society, and NC High School Athletic Association.

Concussion Statement Form

Instructions: The student-athlete and their parent or legal custodian must initial beside each statement to acknowledge that they have read and understand it. The student-athlete should initial in the left column, and the parent or legal custodian should initial in the right column. Some statements are applicable only to the student-athlete and should only be initialed by the student-athlete. This form must be completed for each student-athlete, even if there are multiple student-athletes in the household.

Student-Athlete Name: (please print) _____

Parent/Legal Custodian Name: (please print) _____

Student-Athlete Initials		Parent/Legal Custodian(s) Initials
	A concussion is a brain injury, which should be reported to my parent(s) or legal custodian(s), my or my child's coach(es), or a medical professional if one is available.	
	A concussion cannot be "seen." Some signs and symptoms may appear immediately; however, others can appear hours or days after an injury.	
	I will tell my parents, my coach and/or a medical professional about my injuries and illnesses.	
	If I think a teammate has a concussion, I should tell my coach(es), parent(s)/legal custodian(s), or medical professional about the concussion.	
	I, or my child, will not return to play in a game or practice if a hit to my, or my child's, head or body causes any concussion-related symptoms.	
	I, or my child, will need written permission from a medical professional trained in concussion management to return to play or practice after a concussion.	
	Based on the latest data, most concussions take days or weeks to get better. A concussion may not go away right away. I realize that resolution from a concussion is a process that may require more than one medical visit.	
	I realize that ER/Urgent Care physicians will not provide clearance to return to play or practice if seen immediately or shortly after the injury.	
	After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that I or my child is much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before concussion symptoms go away.	
	Sometimes, repeat concussions can cause serious and long-lasting problems.	
	I have read the list of concussion symptoms on the Student-Athlete/Parent Legal Custodian Concussion Information Sheet.	
	I have asked an adult and/or medical professional to explain any information contained in the Student-Athlete & Parent Concussion Statement Form or Information Sheet that I do not understand.	

By signing below, we agree that we have read and understand the information contained in the Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Custodian Concussion Statement Form, and have initialed appropriately beside each statement.

Signature of Student-Athlete

Date

Signature of Parent/Legal Custodian

Date

Player/Parent Contract

The following rules and regulations govern all Salisbury Academy athletes:

- All student athletes and their parents agree with the policies and guidelines that are outlined in SA's athletic handbook.
- All athletes are representatives of Salisbury Academy and are expected to behave in an appropriate manner.
- Players and parents understand that competitive athletics can result in injuries. Although SA takes every possible precaution, athletes can suffer not only minor injuries, but potentially lifelong or even life-threatening injuries.
- Athletic functions, games, practices, special events, etc. are all school-related functions and all school rules apply during these events.
- Practice times are very important for the development of skills and teamwork. No player should miss a scheduled practice, except for illness or injury, without the prior approval of their coach.
- Playing time is a decision solely for the coach or coaches. Playing time is based on a player's ability, attitude, and the game situation. Parents with questions about their son's or daughter's playing time need to schedule an appointment with the Athletic Director. Parents should not confront coaches before or after a game.
- Athletes are expected to pursue academic excellence. All athletes must maintain a C average with no failing grades in core subjects on grade reports. Any player whose grades do not meet the above criteria will be suspended from the team until the grade has been improved to a D or the overall average is C. See The Athletic Handbook for further details.
- All SA uniforms are the property of the school and must be treated appropriately. All uniforms must be returned washed and in good condition at the end of the season. Any player who does not return their uniform will be charged the appropriate replacement fee from the required uniform deposit. Parents are responsible for lost or damaged uniforms.
- Playing for a SA team is a privilege and not a guaranteed right of our students. Any player whose actions are deemed by the coach or Athletic Director as detrimental to the team or as portraying a poor school image will be removed from the team. A player may be suspended briefly or permanently, depending on the athlete's actions and history. When a suspension is pending, the Athletic Director will notify the parents.
- Parents are responsible for picking up their child immediately after athletic events and practices. Families not following this rule will be asked to confer with the Athletic Director to work towards a solution. Athletes will generally be placed in after-school study hall, and their parents will be charged the standard fee.

Parents are responsible for providing the AD with their e-mail address(es) &/or phone number(s) to ensure proper notification regarding scheduled events.

I have read and understand the rules and consequences outlined in the Player/Parent Contract.

Athlete's signature

Parent's signature