

# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK HIGH SCHOOL 2025-26



YORKCOUNTYSCHOOLS.ORG

 @ycsdva

 @ycsdva

 @ycsdva

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

<b>Overview</b> .....	1
<b>The Athletics Mission</b> .....	1
<b>Our Beliefs</b> .....	1
<b>York County School Board Policy - Bay Rivers District Code of Conduct</b> .....	1
<b>Requirements and Responsibilities</b> .....	1
<b>High School Academic Requirements (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	1
<b>Attendance Expectations (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	2
<b>Behavior Requirements (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	2
<b>Consequences of Misbehavior (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	3
<b>Game and Practice Attendance (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	4
<b>Sportsmanship (In-person and Virtual Virginia)</b> .....	4
<b>Transfer Eligibility</b> .....	5
<b>Transportation</b> .....	5
<b>Uniforms/Equipment</b> .....	5
<b>Energy Drinks</b> .....	5
<b>Concussions</b> .....	5
<b>YCSO Concussion Information</b> .....	5
<b>What is a concussion?</b> .....	7
<b>What should happen if a concussion is suspected?</b> .....	7
<b>What should parents do in the first 24-48 hours?</b> .....	8
<b>When should student-athletes be taken to the doctor?</b> .....	8
<b>What medical tests are needed, and when should a student-athlete see a sports concussion specialist?</b> .....	8
<b>What is the best treatment and when can a student-athlete return to play following a concussion?</b> .....	8
<b>What happens if student-athletes keep on playing with a concussion or return to play too soon?</b> .....	8
<b>Why is it so important that student-athletes not return to play until completely recovered?</b> .....	9
<b>How can a concussion affect schoolwork?</b> .....	9
<b>Helpful website to reference</b> .....	9
<b>YCSO Concussion and Clinical Management Plan</b> .....	9
<b>Sudden Cardiac Arrest</b> .....	11
<b>YCSO Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information</b> .....	13

<b>What is sudden cardiac arrest? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Warning signs of potential heart issues .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Risk of Inaction:.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms? .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Removal from play/return to play: .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>How can we minimize the risk of SCA and improve outcomes? .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Heat-Related Illness in Student Athletes .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Other Rules and Regulations .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Social Media Position Statement .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) - VHSL Policy .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Athletic Participation Fees and Collection Schedule (to be paid via SchoolCash).....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The YCSD Athletics Pledge (to be completed via SchoolCash) .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Required Forms to be completed: (to be completed via paper).....</b>	<b>21</b>

## York County School Division Athletic Directors



Bruton High School  
185 East Rochambeau Drive  
Williamsburg, VA 23188  
(757) 220-4050

Visit us online at:

<https://ycsd.yorkcountyschools.org/domain/117>  
[@BHSPanther](#) [@BHSAD00](#)

Bryan Weaver  
Athletics Director  
(757) 220-4066



Grafton High School  
403 Grafton Drive  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
(757) 898-0530

Visit us online at:

<https://ycsd.yorkcountyschools.org/domain/308>  
[@GHSAD](#)

J. Clark Ward  
Athletics Director  
(757) 898-0563



Tabb High School  
4431 Big Bethel Road  
Yorktown, VA 23693  
(757) 867-7400

Visit us online at:

<https://ycsd.yorkcountyschools.org/domain/1063>  
[@TabbSports](#)

David Powell  
Athletics Director  
(757) 867-5306



York High School  
9300 George Washington Hwy  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
(757) 898-0354

Visit us online at:

<https://ycsd.yorkcountyschools.org/domain/797>  
[@YorkFalcons](#) [@YorkHSAD](#)

Amy Hunter  
Athletics Director  
(757) 898-0421

## Overview

### The Athletics Mission

The overall objective of athletics programs within the York County School Division is to provide an opportunity for student participation in properly supervised and controlled activities under guidelines established by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and the York County School Board. The school division's athletics programs encourage and support broad participation for as many boys and girls as possible, with teams competing on an equitable basis with other schools without sacrificing sportsmanship, scholarship, general welfare, and the health of the school and student.

### Our Beliefs

The York County School Division believes that:

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

### York County School Board Policy - Bay Rivers District Code of Conduct

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

## Requirements and Responsibilities

### High School Academic Requirements

All student-athletes must be currently enrolled in not fewer than five courses, or equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five courses, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding year or the immediately preceding semester for schools that certify credit on a semester basis.

A student has four years of athletics eligibility. All students entering the ninth grade are automatically eligible for their fall semester. A student-athlete's eligibility begins upon entry into the ninth grade and continues for four consecutive years.

Athletic academic eligibility/ineligibility is determined on the date each semester ends in accordance with the School Board's annual academic calendar.

The Athletic Department has the right to have higher academic standards throughout the school year.

A player must attend school for at least half of the school day (3 hours, 15 minutes) to be eligible to practice or participate in a VHSL event. Extenuating circumstances may be presented to the athletic director or principal.

To maintain eligibility, a student may not have reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday on or before the first day of August of the current school year.

A player must participate fully in physical education class to be eligible to attend practice and/or play in a game. (If a student does not dress out for PE class, but participates in class, they can practice/play)

### **Attendance Expectations**

School attendance is critical to learning. Student-athletes have great demands on their time, and attendance will be monitored to facilitate academic success. The attendance office will notify the athletic director when a student-athlete has had excessive absences during the school year. The principal (or his/her designee), athletic director, coach/sponsor, and counselor may decide on a course of intervention to help improve an athlete's attendance. Athletes may not participate in practice or games if they are absent from school. Athletes must attend school for at least half of the school day (3 hours, 15 minutes). Prior approval may be given by the Principal or Athletic Director, for family emergencies, college recruitment trips or school related events. Student-athletes who are tardy the day after an athletic contest (excused or unexcused) more than two times in a season may face consequences.

### **Behavior Requirements**

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

From the time a student becomes a YCSD student-athlete, he/she is a student-athlete 365 days per year. A student-athlete has a responsibility to self-report to the school athletic director any inappropriate behavior, including any legal charge or complaint, conviction, or deferred disposition or any other student handbook violation.

The YCSD Student Code of Conduct and consequences issued by principals may have additional impact on a student's participation in athletics or any other co-curricular activity.

## Consequences of Misbehavior

Violation of any portion of the YCSD Student Code of Conduct, Bay Rivers District Code of Conduct, VHSL Rules and Regulations herein and all student-eligibility requirements may result in one or more of the following actions by the coach and/or principal:

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

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

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

Hazing is defined as an activity that humiliates, degrades, abuses or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

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

Bullying is the systematic and chronic inflicting of physical hurt or psychological distress on another person. The Code of Virginia §22.1-276.01 defines bullying as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying, the use of electronic means for purposes of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Bullying does not include isolated incidents of ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict.

The York County School Division School Board adopts the definitions of bullying and cyber bullying as stated in the Code of Virginia and expounds upon it for further clarification to ensure an anti-bullying learning environment is maintained in all schools.

Bullying involves physical and emotional behaviors that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful that create harassing, intimidating, hostile or otherwise offensive educational environments. Bullying is unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult that is severe or pervasive enough to create feelings of intimidation, alienation, or humiliation and/or unreasonably interferes with the school performance or participation of others.

Cyber bullying which occurs off school grounds and or does not involve the use of the York County School Division network or computers may result in disciplinary actions if it causes a substantial disruption to the

operation of a school or the School Division, if it threatens the safety and mental or physical well-being of students or staff, or if it threatens the safety of school buildings or school property.

Participation in any hazing/bullying will result in suspension for a period of time, to be determined by the principal, from the next competitive event, current sports team, and/or the next sports season in which the athlete would participate.

### Game and Practice Attendance

Student-athletes are expected to be present for all competitive events, regular season, post-season, and make-up games. Exceptions are not made for vacations, Saturdays, work schedules, or other sports activities.

There are no consequences for student-athletes who miss a practice or game for absences due to school-sponsored trips or other academic activities **required** by the school.

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

### Sportsmanship

YCSD student-athletes are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship during practices and competitive events. Sportsmanship refers to the ethical framework and standards of conduct that define the honorable pursuit of victory in competitive activities. Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship are the six core principles embodied in the concept of sportsmanship. (Josephson, Michael. (2002). *Making Ethical Decisions*. Josephson Institute of Ethics)

Consequences for poor sportsmanship:

1. Repeated offenses of unsportsmanlike behavior may result in suspension from the team at the discretion of the principal.
2. Observed offenses by the athletic director or principal may result in suspension of future competitive events.
3. Ejections/Removals from game:

**Technical or referee ejection** – addressed by VHSL regulations.

**Coach removal** – the student-athlete may be suspended from future competitive events.

4. Gross unsportsmanlike conduct, such as fighting:

**First Offense** – the student-athlete will be declared ineligible from contests totaling a minimum of 30% of the total contest limitations for that sport.

**Second Offense** – the student-athlete will be declared ineligible for the remainder of the sports season.

Profanity and other forms of inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Student-athletes who exhibit this type of behavior during a game will be disciplined by their coaching staff.

## Transfer Eligibility

Any student-athlete who transfers within the YCSD boundaries or to another school division within Virginia may not be immediately eligible for participation at the new school. For more information, please see the school's athletic director or the VHSL transfer rules which can be found at <http://vhsl.org>.

## Transportation

All student-athletes must ride in school division vehicles, when transportation is provided by the school division, to and from athletic events that are held off school grounds, unless the proper YCSD private transportation forms O-39 and O-40 have been submitted to and approved by the athletic director (travel within the Peninsula and Williamsburg areas only). Failure to comply with this policy will result in immediate suspension of the student-athlete from the team pending a meeting with the athletic director. On special occasions, parents/guardians may request, in writing, permission to transport their own child to and from an athletic event. Only parents/guardians may transport their child to and from an athletic event. Under no circumstances will an athlete be allowed to leave with another student.

In an emergency, which includes injury, illness, family problems, and/or an unusual academic situation, only a parent/guardian may secure permission from the coach to transport his/her student-athlete. Identification will be required by the coach.

## Uniforms/Equipment

Sports uniforms are selected by the athletic director and coach with the approval of the principal. Any change of style must be approved by the Athletic Committee. Any uniforms, warm-ups, or spirit wear must be approved by the athletic director before purchase.

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

## Energy Drinks

The National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) and the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) recommends that energy drinks ARE NOT sports drinks and should not be used by athletes in training or competition. Because of potential serious safety and health issues, student-athletes may not consume energy drinks prior to or during participation in VHSL practice and competition. Water and appropriate sports drinks are recommended for rehydration by NFHS and SMAC.

## Concussions

### YCSD Concussion Information

The York County School Division follows concussion guidelines in accordance with Section 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia, as well as best practices suggested by the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Education, and Virginia High School League, resulting in YCSD policy JJAC: *Student-Athlete Concussions During Extracurricular Activities*.

In order for students to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions

provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing the short and long-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information (Form O-41), in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

This policy was first adopted in June of 2011 and revised in November of 2021, and mandates annual concussion education for staff, coaches, volunteers, administrative personnel, students and parents. It establishes appropriate return to play/return to classroom protocols and clearance procedures, and requires that a concussion policy management team annually reviews best practices. To manage concussion procedures, YCSD has partnered with the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD) Sports Concussion Program to have certified athletic trainers (ATC) monitor all sports at both middle and high schools.

The information below outlines general concussion information and best practices, and describes the YCSD Concussion and Clinical Management Plan. Although this information is gleaned from the sources listed above, licensed health care professionals must be included in the management of suspected and diagnosed concussions.

## What is a concussion?

*Sport-related concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, neck or body resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities.* A student-athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be “knocked out”) to suffer a concussion. A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others may develop over the next several hours to days. The symptoms of a concussion will usually go away within a few days. However, in some cases, symptoms may last for several weeks, or even months. The symptoms may be subtle and are often difficult to fully recognize. Even though many concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. If student-athletes report any symptoms of a concussion, or if symptoms of a concussion are noticed, parents are encouraged to seek medical attention right away.

Signs and symptoms that may present following a concussion:

<b>Signs Observed by Others</b>	<b>Signs Reported by Athletes</b>
Moves clumsily (altered coordination)	Just not feeling right or feeling down
Exhibits balance problems	Headaches or pressure in head
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Nausea or vomiting
Less Energetic	Double vision, blurry vision
Appears dazed or stunned	Sensitivity to light or noise
Seems confused	Feeling sluggish, fatigued, or groggy
Forgets plays or instructions	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure about game, score, opponent	Problems concentrating
Responds slowly to questions	Memory problems
Forgets events prior to hit or fall	Foggy or hazy feeling
Shows changes in mood or behavior	Difficulty falling or staying asleep

## What should happen if a concussion is suspected?

Any student-athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion will be removed from the game or practice immediately. No student-athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the student-athlete should continue for several hours. YCSD requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established “return to learn/play” best practice concussion guidelines:

1. A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.
2. Student-athletes may not return to play until they have been evaluated by a appropriate licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to play from that health care provider. The Virginia Board of Education defines that an *appropriate licensed health care provider* means a physician (i.e., M.D., D.O.), physician assistant, or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; a physical therapist licensed by the Virginia Board of Physical Therapy; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.

Parents should inform coaches if they think their child may have a concussion. It is better to miss one game than to miss an entire season.

**What should parents do in the first 24-48 hours?**

Relative (not strict) rest, which includes activities of daily living and reduced screen time, is indicated immediately and for up to the first 2 days after injury. Student athletes can return to light-intensity physical activity, such as walking that does not more than mildly exacerbate symptoms, during the initial 24–48 hours following a concussion.

**When should student-athletes be taken to the doctor?**

All student athletes who sustain a concussion must be evaluated by a licensed health care professional who is trained in management of concussions. Parents should call their student-athlete’s physician and explain what has happened. A follow-up appointment should be scheduled with a licensed health care provider or a sports concussion specialist, if directed by the health care provider. If a student-athlete’s signs or symptoms are worsening, he/she should be taken to an emergency room facility immediately.

Additional symptoms to watch for:

Headaches that worsen	Very drowsy, can’t be awakened	Can’t recognize people or places
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
Unusual behavior changes	Significant irritability	Less response than normal

**What happens if student-athletes keep on playing with a concussion or return to play too soon?**

Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the student-athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after the concussion occurs, particularly if the student-athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage student-athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries.

## How can a concussion affect schoolwork?

Following a concussion, many student-athletes may have difficulty in school. However, prolonged absence from school has been determined to be detrimental to concussion recovery, as well as to overall wellness. Therefore, it is recommended that students return to school as soon as tolerable. Even if minimal learning is taking place, return to school, before return to learn, improves recovery. Adjustments to mitigate symptom triggers (i.e., Billed hat or sunglasses if sensitive to lights, taking frequent breaks, postponing tests), and half-day attendance can help students better tolerate the school environment. A return to learn strategy is used to help students return to the school setting.

## YCSD Concussion and Clinical Management Plan

YCSD is committed to safe practice and play for student-athletes. Central office and school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, school nurses, teachers, student-athletes, parents, athletic trainers, and other licensed health care providers will form a team to work together to identify concussions once they occur and to ensure safe return to play.

### **Plan components:**

1. Training for athletic directors, coaches, volunteers, administrative personnel, and school nurses on concussion risks, recognition, and management will occur.
2. Education of parents and student-athletes on concussion risks, signs and symptoms, and post-injury management for sports and school will occur. Parents and student-athletes will sign that they are aware of this information.
3. Yearly neurocognitive baseline testing.
4. Immediate removal from play by the student-athlete's ATC, coach, or team physician of any student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice or game, followed by parent notification of the injury.
5. Written clearance to return to play for the student-athlete by a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of a concussion, before the student-athlete is allowed to return to play (clearance must be received by the AT and may not be completed by a parent who is a licensed health care professional).
6. As needed, an individualized school care plan for academics will be developed by school personnel and implemented to assist the student-athlete's recovery.

### **Steps for suspected concussion/concussion response:**

1. Student-athletes will be evaluated by the ATC at the time of injury. If confirmation of a concussion occurs, it will be treated as such, following these possible pathways:
  - a. Immediate transport to an emergency room facility via EMS
    - i. Deterioration of neurologic function
    - ii. Decreasing level of consciousness
    - iii. Decrease or irregularity of respirations
    - iv. Decrease or irregularity of pulse
    - v. Unequal, dilated, or unreactive pupils
    - vi. Cranial nerve abnormalities
    - vii. Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine, or skull fracture, or bleeding
    - viii. Mental sign changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, or agitation
    - ix. Seizure activity
    - x. Vomiting

- b. Referral to a licensed health care provider or sports concussion specialist
    - i. If academic adjustments are indicated
    - ii. If vestibular or oculomotor symptoms are present and a PT referral is indicated
    - iii. If symptoms are prolonged or are not improving
  - c. Management by the AT
2. If the AT is not available, the coach will remove student-athlete from game and/or practice, contact the parent, and refer the student-athlete to their licensed health care provider or to an emergency room facility.
  3. The student-athlete must be evaluated by his/her licensed health care provider or a sports concussion specialist prior to returning to play.
  4. If a concussion is ruled out, the student-athlete must bring written clearance from a licensed health care provider.
  5. If a concussion is diagnosed, Athletic Directors and ATs will notify school administrators and the school nurse of the concussion as soon as possible following the injury. The AT will provide guidance for temporary academic adjustments for the injured student-athlete as needed until more formal adjustments can be made by a physician or sports concussion specialist. Administrators will work with school staff (athletic directors, coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses) and parents as needed to develop individualized school care plans for academics, to assist the student-athlete's recovery.
  6. All student-athletes will complete the YCSD Return to Sports Program, after written medical clearance to proceed is provided.

As each sports concussion is unique, the concussion management plan will be individualized for each student-athlete. The ultimate goal of the concussion program is to minimize the impact of the concussion on a student-athlete's academic progress and allow a safe return to play while minimizing any long-term health problems from a concussion.

**Return-to-learn (RTL) strategy**

Step	Mental activity	Activity at each step	Goal
1	Daily activities that do not result in more than a mild exacerbation* of symptoms related to the current concussion	Typical activities during the day (eg, reading) while minimizing screen time. Start with 5–15 min at a time and increase gradually.	Gradual return to typical activities
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other cognitive activities outside of the classroom.	Increase tolerance to cognitive work
3	Return to school part time	Gradual introduction of schoolwork. May need to start with a partial school day or with greater access to rest breaks during the day.	Increase academic activities
4	Return to school full time	Gradually progress in school activities until a full day can be tolerated without more than mild* symptom exacerbation.	Return to full academic activities and catch up on missed work

**Return to Sports Program:**

A student-athlete’s participation in the gradual return to play program will be supervised by the AT.

Step	Exercise strategy	Activity at each step	Goal
1	Symptom-limited activity	Daily activities that do not exacerbate symptoms (eg, walking).	Gradual reintroduction of work/school
2	Aerobic exercise 2A—Light (up to approximately 55% maxHR) then 2B—Moderate (up to approximately 70% maxHR)	Stationary cycling or walking at slow to medium pace. May start light resistance training that does not result in more than mild and brief exacerbation* of concussion symptoms.	Increase heart rate
3	Individual sport-specific exercise Note: If sport-specific training involves any risk of inadvertent head impact, medical clearance should occur prior to Step 3	Sport-specific training away from the team environment (eg, running, change of direction and/or individual training drills away from the team environment). No activities at risk of head impact.	Add movement, change of direction
Steps 4–6 should begin after the resolution of any symptoms, abnormalities in cognitive function and any other clinical findings related to the current concussion, including with and after physical exertion.			
4	Non-contact training drills	Exercise to high intensity including more challenging training drills (eg, passing drills, multiplayer training) can integrate into a team environment.	Resume usual intensity of exercise, coordination and increased thinking
5	Full contact practice	Participate in normal training activities.	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6	Return to sport	Normal game play.	

- \*Mild and brief exacerbation of symptoms (ie, an increase of no more than 2 points on a 0–10 point scale for less than an hour when compared with the baseline value reported prior to physical activity). Athletes may begin Step 1 (ie, symptom-limited activity) within 24 hours of injury, with progression through each subsequent step typically taking a minimum of 24 hours. If more than mild exacerbation of symptoms (ie, more than 2 points on a 0–10 scale) occurs during Steps 1–3, the athlete should stop and attempt to exercise the next day. Athletes experiencing concussion-related symptoms during Steps 4–6 should return to Step 3 to establish full resolution of symptoms with exertion before engaging in at-risk activities. Written determination of readiness to RTS should be provided by an HCP before unrestricted RTS as directed by local laws and/or sporting regulations.

## Sudden Cardiac Arrest

### YCSD Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information

In order for students to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on sudden cardiac arrest provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing sudden cardiac arrest, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information (Form O-42), in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

### What is sudden cardiac arrest?

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Warning signs of potential heart issues**

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

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

**Risk of Inaction:**

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

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

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

**Removal from play/return to play:**

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

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

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

1. It is very important that you **carefully and accurately complete the personal history and heart health questions about your family** section of the current "VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form" available at <https://www.vhsl.org/forms/>.
2. Since the majority of these conditions are inherited, **be aware of your family history**, especially if any close family member:
  - a. had sudden unexplained and unexpected death before the age of 50.
  - b. was diagnosed with any of the heart conditions listed above.
  - c. died suddenly /unexpectedly during physical activity, during a seizure, from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or from drowning

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

## **Heat-Related Illness in Student Athletes**

In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information provided by the local school division on conditions related to heat-illness. After reviewing the materials, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information, in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

### **CONDITIONS**

"Heat-related illness" is a general term encompassing four specific conditions: (1) heat stroke (a medical emergency); (2) heat exhaustion; (3) heat syncope (fainting); and (4) heat cramps. The prevention of heat-related illness includes proper acclimatization for exercise in hot and humid environments and maintaining appropriate hydration levels.

"Heat acclimatization" involves gradual increases in the duration and intensity of physical activity in hot and humid environments over a 7-14 days period. Appropriate hydration begins prior to engaging in exercise, followed by minimizing fluid loss during activity and replacing fluid during and after activity.

Additionally, local monitoring of ambient temperature and humidity levels, combined with policies that limit practice duration, activity intensity, and the wearing of protective equipment during periods of high temperature and humidity levels, is critical to preventing heat-related illness and promoting student-athlete health and safety.

## STUDENT-ATHLETES

Student-athletes displaying the following signs and symptoms may be experiencing heat stroke and heat exhaustion, the two most concerning forms of heat-related illness, and should be removed from play immediately:

Irrational behavior, irritability, or emotional instability	Altered consciousness
Excessive fatigue, collapse	Disorientation
Dizziness	Headache
Confusion	Nausea or vomiting
Diarrhea	Staggering or sluggish feeling

## COACHES, ATHLETIC TRAINERS, AND OTHER STAFF

Coaches, athletic trainers, and other staff supervising the activity should be monitoring student-athletes for any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness. Coaches, athletic trainers and other staff should be prepared to immediately remove from activity any student-athlete reporting or displaying any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness and to rapidly cool the student-athlete with whole-body by:

- Cold-water immersion, which is essential when heat stroke is suspected;
- Dousing the student-athlete with cold water (cold shower);
- Rotating ice towels and/or ice bags over as much of the body of the student-athlete as possible; and/or
- Using fans to cool the student-athlete

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each school division shall develop and biennially update policies and procedures regarding prevention, recognition, and management of student-athletes who may be experiencing heat-related illness.

School staff supervising athletic activities in hot and humid environments should be monitoring student-athletes for any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness and should be prepared to immediately cool a student-athlete suspected of heat exhaustion or heat stroke with whole-body cold-water immersion, cold water dousing (cold shower), ice towels and/or ice bags, and/or the use of fans.

A student-athlete reporting signs or symptoms associated with a heat-related illness to a coach, athletic trainer, or team physician in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to be at risk of or experiencing heat stroke shall not return to play that same day.

## **RECOGNITION**

Each school division will ensure school staff have training in the recognition of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses (*heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, heat cramps, differentiating heat cramps and exertional sickling*).

Heat-related illnesses are not part of a continuum in the sense that an individual experiencing heat exhaustion who continues to exercise will in turn develop heat stroke. While some of the signs and symptoms are similar, these are unique conditions. That said, experiencing heat cramps or syncope one day may predispose an individual to more significant heat-related illnesses in the future.

## **PREVENTION**

Each school division will ensure that school staff have training of the risk factors (intrinsic and extrinsic) associated with and the prevention of heat-related illnesses for heat exhaustion and heat stroke, monitoring ambient temperature and humidity, and prevention through heat acclimatization and hydration. Student-athletes should strive to begin exercise properly hydrated while minimizing fluid loss during activity, followed by fluid replacement during and after activity. Additional guidance on maintaining appropriate hydration levels is available in the Resources section of this document.

## **MANAGEMENT**

Each school division will ensure each school has staff trained in the management of heat-related illnesses, including the development of Emergency Action Plans.

## **RESOURCES**

<https://www.vhsl.org/sports-medicine/heat-hydration/>  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/heat-illness-prevention-2>  
<https://ksi.uconn.edu/prevention/heat-acclimatization/>  
<https://ksi.uconn.edu/prevention/hydration/>

## **Other Rules and Regulations**

Student-athletes are required to attend tryouts. Exceptions to this rule may include new students who were not enrolled during tryouts, student-athletes with specific medical conditions, and student-athletes who have not completed the school sports season that precedes the try-out period (medical documentation may be required by the athletic director).

Student-athletes must pass a physical examination and submit a completed VHSL physician's certificate and parental consent form as required by the Virginia High School League before trying out for an athletic

team. Providing or offering false information regarding a student-athlete's physical condition shall result in suspension from VHSL activities for that school year.

It is strongly suggested that student-athletes have satisfactory medical insurance before participation will be allowed. YCSD schools provide information about supplemental and/or accident insurance.

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

Any student-athlete who quits or is dismissed from a team after tryouts may not play or practice out of season for another team during the same season.

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

### **Social Media Position Statement**

Social media technologies have many benefits in our world; however, they can also be disruptive when inappropriate social media postings occur. Using these communication tools in an inappropriate manner can have negative consequences, especially if unkind words or threats are used with the intent to hurt others.

The York County School Division Athletic Directors recognize and support student-athletes' and coaches' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context the student-athlete and coach must remember that participating in athletics is a privilege, not a right. With this in mind any online postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as team, school, school division rules and regulations (including those listed below).

Specifically prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal or defamatory language/actions.
- Derogatory language regarding school personnel or other students.
- Comments designed to harass or bully students and/or school personnel.
- Nude, sexually-oriented, or indecent photos, images or altered pictures.
- Distribution of hard copies of posts on school property.
- Re-communication on campus of the content of the posts.

**Any authorized or unauthorized use in school or out of school of computer software, computer networks, telecommunications devices, information technology, and related technologies, which disrupts or interferes with the educational process in any manner is prohibited and may result in removal from the team or activity and other action as chosen by the principal and athletic director.**

## Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) - VHSL Policy

**28B-2-4 Name, Image and Likeness (NIL)**-Students may receive compensation for the commercialization of their own name, image and likeness (NIL).

Common NIL activities include, but are not limited to commercials, product endorsements, personal appearances, autograph sessions, merchandise or apparel sales, group licensing, and acting as a social media influencer.

Schools and teams may not use NIL opportunities to incentivize a student's enrollment at a school or membership on a team.

A student may not receive compensation, endorsements or gifts of monetary value for Intellectual Property of the VHSL or any member school. Intellectual Property includes, but is not limited to, a school's district's, region's and VHSL name, uniform, mascot, and logo.

(a) This provision is not intended to restrict the right of any student and their family to engage in NIL activities for financial gain, except as prohibited by this guidance.

(b) Student-athletes are prohibited from engaging in the following while participating in NIL activities.

- Making any reference to a school team, school, district, region or VHSL.
- Appearing in the uniform of the student's school. Students may not utilize the marks, logos, etc. of their school team or any school's team during NIL activities.
- Endorsing or promoting goods or service of any third-party NIL partner during school-based team activities and events, including but not limited to wearing third-party apparel, displaying a third-party logo or brand, and displaying insignia or identifying mark unless it is part of the standard school uniform for that sport.

(c) Students may not engage in any NIL activities involving, displaying or endorsing the following categories of products and services:

- Adult entertainment products and services
- Alcohol products
- Tobacco and electronic smoking products and devices
- Opioids and prescription pharmaceuticals
- Controlled dangerous substances
- Casinos and gambling, including sports betting
- Weapons, firearms and ammunition

(d) No school or anyone employed by or affiliated with a member school, including booster clubs, coaches, administrators, alumni or an NIL Collective\*, may solicit, arrange, or negotiate compensation for a student's NIL, other than their own child.

(e) Students must notify the Principal or Athletic Director in writing of the student's school upon entering into any type of NIL contract within 72 hours of entering into the contract

**\*NIL Collective:** A group of alumni, supporters parents, or other people who form a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, non-profit organization foundation, or other entity to provide NIL opportunities to student-athletes of a specific school.

**28B-2-5 Penalty:** A pupil who has lost his/her amateur standing through violation of this rule shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition. Such student may be reinstated as an amateur by the Executive Committee, provided his/her principal requests in writing his/her reinstatement as an amateur and certifies that the student has not during that one-year period violated this rule, and that the student is not now under contract to, or owned by, any professional athletic organization.

### **Athletic Participation Fees and Collection Schedule (to be paid via SchoolCash)**

The York County School Division's approved operating budget for the 2025-26 school year includes an athletics participation fee of \$50 per student, per season for middle school sports and \$50 per student, per season for high school sports. Fees collected by the division will be used to defray the cost of equipment, supplies, officials, transportation costs, and VHSL membership fees.

Student-athletes who try out and become an official team member will be required to pay the participation fee prior to the first official contest in order to be eligible to compete. There is no relationship between athletics fees and a guarantee of a student's playing time. Playing time for student-athletes is at the sole discretion of the head coach and his/her staff. The athletics participation fee is non-refundable. The fee will be waived for student-athletes who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

### **The YCSD Athletics Pledge (to be completed via SchoolCash)**

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

Parents/guardians and supporters of athletics interfering with a game or participants of the game (student-athletes, coaches, and officials) may result in disciplinary action taken by the school division, the Bay Rivers District League, and/or the VHSL. Such actions may be taken against our student-athletes, our teams, and parent/guardian-spectators. Acceptable and appropriate sportsmanship is a fundamental component of our athletic program. Parents/guardians are advised to direct questions and concerns about their student-athlete to the following individuals: (1) team coach; (2) athletic director (AD); (3) principal. Please start with the coach before speaking with the AD or principal.

Parents/guardians are not to approach coaches during or after any practice or team competition. If there is a concern to discuss with the coach:

- The student-athlete should talk to the coach
- The parent/guardian should set up a meeting with the coach
- A telephone call should be made to set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss your concerns

By signing the Athletics Pledge, the student-athlete and parent/guardian indicates that they have read and agree to comply with the contents of conduct, philosophy, and eligibility expectations herein. The student-athlete and parent/guardian further agree that the student-athlete will attend all practices and games in which his or her high school athletic team participates. This implies that the high school team's activities take precedent over any club, recreational or non-school events.

**Required Forms to be completed: (to be completed via paper)**

Form **O-41** – Combined Concussions and Return to Play, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and Heat-Related Illness in Student Athletes (Submit signed hard copy to Athletic Director) prior to participating in any extracurricular physical activity **and** the Athletics Pledge (via SchoolCash).

**\*Forms located on school athletic website *and* AD’s office**

***\*Failure to submit required forms will result in the inability of the student-athlete to participate.***

*Virginia High School League Regulations*

VHSL regulations state the following: “Final authority and the ultimate responsibility in all matters pertaining to interscholastic activities of each school, both athletic and non-athletic, shall be vested in the principal who acts under the authority granted by the division superintendent of schools.”



302 Dare Rd.  
Yorktown, Virginia 23692

# REPORT IT

YCSD students, parents and staff members have a collective responsibility to report incidences of misconduct, such as threats, bullying, discrimination and/or harassment, to the York County School Division.



**Tell a  
trusted  
adult**



**Call the YCSD Hotline  
at  
757-890-5000**



**Report on the YCSD App or  
[yorkcountyschools.org/ReportIt](http://yorkcountyschools.org/ReportIt)**

***Choose the reporting method that works best for you!***

All reports made are confidential. Reports are retrieved and investigated daily (calls and forms submitted after 5 p.m. will be reviewed by 8 a.m. the next business day).

*The York County School Division does not discriminate on the basis of race (Title VI), color, religion, national origin, veteran status, sex, gender (Title IX), age or disability (Section 504), or any other protected class in its educational programs, activities or employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following positions have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:*

**Title IX Coordinator**  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
302 Dare Road  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
757-898-0349

**Section 504/ADA Coordinator**  
Director of Student Services  
302 Dare Road  
Yorktown, VA 23692  
757-898-0455

**YORKCOUNTYSCHOOLS.ORG**