

Sherwood Githens Middle School



**Parent/Student
Athletic Guide
2025 – 2026**

Sherwood Githens Middle School
2025-2026 Parent/Guardian Information Guide

Parents/Guardians,

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in our athletic program. The student athletes as well as the coaching staff are excited about the upcoming season.

Our success is dependent upon the abilities and cooperation of other people. A team's aspirations succeed or fail because of the people involved. By attracting the best student-athletes, we believe, we can accomplish great things on and off the field.

The purpose of the parent information guide is to inform you, the parent or guardian, of an overview of our school athletic policies, expectations and procedures. This guide is designed to be a ready reference to assist you and your child in an efficient manner. Through this guide you and your child will also become acquainted with your duties, responsibilities, and expectations. Additional policies and procedures can be found in the **athletic handbook located on the DPS athletic website**.

Athletic Department Philosophy

Athletics is an integral part of the total education process and thus plays a major role in the philosophy of the athletic program. Athletics provide an opportunity for students to utilize critical thinking skills, as well as, put into practice those basic tenets cooperation and personal responsibilities. In this learning situation, we believe that all athletic personnel should strive to teach the basic principle of an attitude toward leadership, competitiveness, fair play, self-discipline and responsibility. We further believe that a pursuit of these personal and group goals are vital for the success of a healthy educational environment.

We adhere to the rules and regulations of the North Carolina Department of Instruction supplemented by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and the Durham Public Schools policies that govern athletics.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Adhere to the Fourteen Duties and Responsibilities of a Coach. All coaches **MUST** keep in mind that a student is an athlete second. Excellence in academics must always be promoted first. Athletics are enhanced by academics, not the opposite.
2. All coaches must operate in a manner of professionalism. Our coaches are disciplined role models and leaders and will exhibit such at all times.
3. All coaches must be committed to education, to the team, to the athletic program, and to Githens as a whole.

Participation and Playing Time

Participating in Githens athletics is a privilege; not a Right! Playing time is made at the **discretion of the coach**. Playing time is not guaranteed because your athlete is selected to make the team. ***Playing time is earned and is not a right!***

Coaching Philosophy

- We believe that your child is a Student First and an Athlete Second. Academic Excellence is and will always be promoted first. **There may be study time provided before or after practice for your child to begin homework assignments and to obtain educational assistance.**
- We believe that students gain confidence and a love for the game through knowledge of the game, positive feedback from parents, coaches, and other players and from skill development. Knowledge of the game and skill set develops at different rates for students, but effort and having fun can always be achieved. We try to always provide positive feedback for effort and we enhance knowledge/skill set development through constructive and corrective instruction; and situational analysis/discussion.
- We think it's important that a coach takes more than a casual interest in the players. We strive to talk with all players 1 on 1 at some point during the season. (i.e. at practices, games or during the school day.) We want them to know that their coach cares for him or her as a person.
- We believe in trying to make practices fun while providing the skill development and situational instruction needed to develop IQ and improve.
- Teamwork and Competition is an important element of any sport.
- We will teach fundamentals and skills during practice. However, we are developing your child to be able to perform on the next level. We will instruct accordingly.
- Winning at all cost, cost too much! Integrity, teamwork, fair play are very important

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Summer Off-Season Conditioning Guidance

The district will allow for off-season conditioning using the guidance of the NCDPI and DPS Athletics. However certain safety measures will be in place.

LOCKER ROOM GUIDANCE

This update will provide parameters of locker room usage for student-athletes for the 2025-2026 school year.

The district will allow for the use of locker room facilities with strict guidelines that must be followed. This requirement comes with additional safety measures for our student-athletes and athletic staff.

Locker Rooms

- Locker rooms can be utilized
- Athletic staff (Athletic Directors & Coaches) will ensure that the locker rooms remain clean in the evenings when utilized by athletic teams.
- Custodial Services will ensure locker rooms are clean.
- Athletic staff (Athletic Directors and Coaches) will work closely with Custodial Services to ensure locker rooms are disinfected and ready for use.

Locker Room Protocols

- Coaches will monitor and develop an appropriate system to ensure safety while students are in the lockers.
- **Students are encouraged to bring locks to keep their belongings safe. The school will not provide locks for athletics nor be responsible for missing items.**

Transportation

Each school will be permitted one activity bus. If an additional bus is needed, you must put in a request with transportation.

Equipment Cleaning

All equipment must be cleaned after every practice.

Practice Gear

Athletes may not share uniforms of any kind.

Food & Water

Student athletes are to provide their own water bottles and food during off-season conditioning. Student athletes may not share food or water.

Rules

We will always follow the standard NCDPI and DPS eligibility rules and the Sherwood Githens Middle School eligibility rules regarding academics, conduct, school attendance, etc. Team Rules may be added during the season if necessary. Application of athletic rules shall be implemented in conjunction with school rules. Violation of school rules will result in athletic participation consequences. An overview of some rules is listed below.

1. Participation in practice or games is at the discretion of the coaching staff.
2. Student-athletes may be denied participation for low grades or disciplinary reasons.
3. **NO PRACTICE, NO PARTICIPATION!!!!**
4. Report any injury of any type to the head coach immediately.
5. There is **zero tolerance** for violence, profanity, possession or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and any form of theft. Violations will result in athletes being denied participation, possible suspension, or removal from the team.
6. You are responsible for all equipment and uniforms assigned to you. **You will be charged for the full replacement cost of any and all equipment or uniform that is lost, damaged or stolen.**
7. All county and school rules will be enforced.
8. No leaving the field/bench during the contest, unless given permission.
9. No hazing or picking on other team members, we are a **TEAM**.
10. No horseplay in the locker room and the locker room will be cleaned each day.
11. **ANY behavior deemed detrimental** to the team chemistry or school may result in dismissal from the team.
12. Everyone is expected to be at every practice and game.
13. Be on time for every practice.
 - a. One unexcused absence = miss one-half of the next athletic game/match
 - b. Two unexcused absences = miss the next athletic game/match
 - c. Three unexcused absences = dismissal from the team
14. Disrespect towards any coach, faculty member, teammate, or manager is cause for game suspension or dismissal from the team.
15. Bring a positive attitude and desire to work towards excellence to each practice and game.
16. Out-of-School Suspension (1st offense) will result in dismissal from the team. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
17. Excessive silent lunch detention will result in disciplinary actions as determined by the Head Coach, Athletic Director, or Administration

18. Being assigned to Restorative Practice will result in disciplinary actions up to and including suspension from the team as determined by the Head Coach, Athletic Director, or Administration. For example, suspension from practices and/or up to 2 game suspension.

- a. Each student must be in good standing academically and behaviorally. Behavior will be monitored daily by the coach to ensure students maintain this requirement. RPC, minor, and major classroom issues will be handled by the coach, Athletic Director and/or School Principal.
 - i. **First RPC offense:** Student athlete is suspended from team for length of the RPC specified time (no practice/play) which may include missing 1 game.
 - ii. **Second and Third RPC offense:** Student athlete suspended for double the RPC time. (ex. RPC 2 days = 4 days team suspension, etc.) which may include missing games during the season.
 - iii. **Fourth RPC offense:** Student athlete is removed from the team.

Player Expectations Summary

1. Pass all classes on progress reports.
2. Be on time to study hall and practice.
3. Always show respect for yourself, the coaches, parents, teachers and other players on the team.
4. No hats, baseball caps, hoodies, or skull caps are to be worn in buildings.
5. Report any injury of any type to the head coach immediately.
6. Exhibit leadership characteristics on and off the competition venue.
7. Complete participation in the school sport before starting outside sports.

PLAYING TIME

Playing time is made at the **discretion of the coach**. Playing time is not guaranteed because an athlete is selected to participate on the team. Coaches may reduce playing time at their discretion due to any of the following:

1. Poor attendance and/or punctuality at practices and/or games;
2. Lack of effort, negative attitude, disrespect and/or inappropriate behavior during school, practices, games, staff/faculty, coaches, competitors, and/or officials;
3. Violation of school or team rules.

INDIVIDUAL COACHES RULES

Each coach may establish team rules in addition to the rules in the Athletic Handbook. Rules and penalties for tardiness, inappropriate practice/game dress and misconduct are examples of acceptable coach's guidelines. These rules will be given in writing to all athletes, parents and the

athletic director at the beginning of each season. In the event team rules are amended during the season, notification of the amended rules will be provided to the players and parents.

PRACTICES

Practices are closed to parents and spectators; especially during the winter sports. At no time is it permissible to video or to take photographs during practice. We may also have practices on some Saturdays when it is deemed necessary by the Head coach. We will endeavor to provide advance notice of Saturday practices.

GITHENS ELIGIBILITY

Githens students must follow certain additional guidelines that are tailor made to our student-athletes. Our principle is academics first... then athletics. The school sports guidelines are as follows:

- You must adhere to NCHSAA and DPS eligibility to be a part of the athletic department
- Must not have more than **13 ½ unexcused absences (85% attendance requirement)** in the semester prior to athletic participation. (*This is a State Board of Education requirement according to Board Policy 6860, students who participate in interscholastic athletics must meet all requirements of the State Board of Education.*)
- Must purchase regular school accident insurance or provide proof of insurance coverage by filling out the insurance information waiver on the Middle School Athletic Participation Form.
- Must not participate (practice or play) in any athletic event if suspended or is actively serving in the (Restorative Practice) in-school suspension program for that day or days.
- Once selected to participate, you must maintain passing grades.
- If at progress report or report card time you have an “F” in any class, you will be placed on academic probation and suspended from participation in practices and games until the grade(s) are back to passing status.
- Students who are retained in the previous school year are ineligible for tryouts for the following school year.
- Student Athletes must adhere to all of the rules set by the coach of your team.
- If a student is removed from (or quits) a team prior to the end of the season for any reason, then he or she will not receive an award for their participation during that athletic season.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Team sports have the potential to make for some of the most enjoyable memories. Parental attitudes and actions play a large part in that experience.

The coaches expect parents to be on time to pick up your child. We have families and other commitments in the evenings. We will not leave your child at the school unsupervised.

The coaching staff encourages you to help us enhance your child's athletic experience by stressing academics, teamwork, good sportsmanship, discipline, and skill development. Hopefully these concepts will stick with them for life.

Parent Expectations

- Pick up your child on time!
- Show good sportsmanship at all times!!
- Help out with team volunteer opportunities (Concessions, Organizing team day meals, Organizing 8th Grade Night Tokens of Appreciation for the 8th Grade athletes, etc) .
- Please encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game.
- Cheer for your child during games, but refrain from yelling instructions to them.
- Follow the Communication Protocol.

Parent/Coach Communication

It is our desire that positive relations can be maintained between parents and coaches. Parents are encouraged to ask questions regarding their child's performance and/or status, and a meeting can be arranged by contacting the coach. In the event that hostile feelings or arguments ensue, the meeting should be immediately terminated by either party and another meeting scheduled with the Athletic Director present.

Parents are to adhere to the following **protocol** when an issue arises.

1. Student-Athlete speaks to the coach directly
2. Parent speaks to the coach directly
3. If the issue has not been resolved, then the parent meets with the coach and Athletic Director.
4. If the parent seeks further assistance after having met with the coach and the Athletic Director, seek advice from the building administrator over athletics.

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5. If the issue is not resolved then request a meeting with the building principal. Please refrain from taking your concerns directly to the principal.
6. Do not approach a coach to discuss issues before, during or immediately after a game/contest, schedule an appointment.

PARENTS AS SPECTATORS

As a spectator, parents should:

- Realize you represent the school; therefore, you have an obligation to be a true sportsman, and encourage through your behavior the practice of good sportsmanship by others;
- Recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team;
- Remember that the primary purpose of interscholastic athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of contest;
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat; and
- Respect the judgment and integrity of game officials.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

The conduct of an athlete is closely observed in many areas of life. It is important that your behavior be above reproach in all of the following areas:

In the classroom Strong academics reinforce strong athletics. As an athlete, you must plan your schedule so that you give sufficient time and energy to your studies. In addition to maintaining strong academics, an athlete should give respectful attention to classroom activities and show respect for other students and faculty at all times.

School discipline and office referrals: Any student referred to the office or in Educator's Handbook by a teacher or staff member for rule violations may be denied the privilege of participation in all athletic activities for a period determined by either the principal, athletic director or head coach. This includes excessive silent lunch that originates from behavioral issues.

On the field: In the area of athletic competition, a true student-athlete does not use profanity or illegal tactics and understands that losing is part of the game. You should be gracious in defeat and modest in victory. It is always courteous to congratulate the opponent after the contest,

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whether in defeat or victory. Behaviors that impede the game and/or adversely affect the team will result in a consequence as deemed appropriate by the head coach, athletic director, or administration.

END OF SEASON CELEBRATION(S)

At Githens Middle School, we believe in honoring the dedication and efforts of all student-athletes. Regardless of a team's win-loss record or seasonal outcome, *every sport* will receive equal and equitable recognition during our official end-of-season programs.

Each program will include:

- Acknowledgment of individual student-athletes based on their contributions and performance throughout the season
- Light refreshments
- An opportunity for fellowship and celebration of the team's collective journey

Please note: Any additional celebrations, awards, or recognitions beyond this program are considered extracurricular and will be the sole responsibility of parents and/or the booster club affiliated with that specific sport. These supplementary events must be held off of the Githens campus.

We appreciate your continued support in celebrating all of our student-athletes with fairness, pride, and community spirit.

STUDENT and PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

It is the responsibility of the parents and students to read and be familiar with the **Githens Middle School Parent/Student Athletic Guide** prior to participating in our interscholastic athletic program. The information contained in this handbook outlines the policies, rules and regulations that govern our program. Each student-athlete and parent are required to sign this Acknowledgment Form and return to the **coach**. Please return the form as soon as possible. **No student athlete will be allowed to participate until this form is returned.**

WE have read the Githens Middle School Parent/Student Athletic Guide and understand the policies, rules and regulations that govern the program.

As the student athlete, I have read the **Athlete Code of Conduct** and thoroughly understand the consequences that I will face if I do not adhere to the expectations outlined in the **Athlete Code of Conduct**.

If a coach feels a student-athlete has violated the Athlete Code of Conduct, a team rule, or has accumulated an excessive number of unexcused absences that would result in a suspension or dismissal from a team, the coach will contact the Athletic Director and submit his/her recommendation for disciplinary action. The Athletic Director, after consultation with the Administrator over Athletics, and after discussing the circumstances with parents, shall render a decision. The Building Principal can implement disciplinary action at her/his discretion.

Print First and Last Name of Student-Athlete

Grade/Team

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE HEAD COACH

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