Fowler School District
Athletic Handbook
2026-2027

Santa Maria Middle School
Western Valley Middle School

Valley Junior High Athletic Conference

Coed Cross Country, Coed Flag Football, Girls & Boys Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Cheerleading, Girls & Boys Basketball, Girls Softball, Boys Baseball, & Track and Field

Fowler Elementary School District Athletic Department

Santa Maria Middle School
7250 W. Lower Buckeye Rd Phoenix AZ, 85043
623-707-1100

Western Valley Middle School
6250 W. Durango St Phoenix AZ, 85043
623-707-2200

Dear Parents/Guardians and Athletes:

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Fowler School District Interscholastic Athletic Program. It is the hope of the Fowler Elementary School District Governing Board and the Fowler Athletic Department that we can meet the needs of the students by promoting their optimum physical, mental, social and ethical development, while ensuring staff and student safety. Players and their parents/guardians are expected to read through the handbook. After reading through this handbook you will gain a better understanding of the philosophy and goals of the Fowler Elementary School District athletic program.

Becoming a member of an athletic team provides students with many positive experiences and opportunities. Students are provided with the opportunity to gain knowledge, to learn the importance of teamwork and fair play, to develop a sense of loyalty, to promote school and community spirit as well as to develop a strong sense of self-accomplishment.
Our guiding belief is that athletics should be a healthy and pleasant experience. We want our students to have a positive experience in our programs.

As in all aspects of life, rules and regulations are necessary to provide a fair and orderly opportunity for all participants. This handbook provides you with the basic rules and regulations set forth by the Arizona Interscholastic Association, The Valley Junior High Athletic Conference and Fowler School District Athletic Department.

It is very important that both student athletes and parents read through and understand the district's mitigation plan and safety procedures. It is vital that we work collectively to ensure the safety of everyone involved in our district sports programs.

If you have any questions, please make arrangements to meet with your school's Athletic Director or school administrator.

Thank you and have a safe and enjoyable 2026-2027 sports season!

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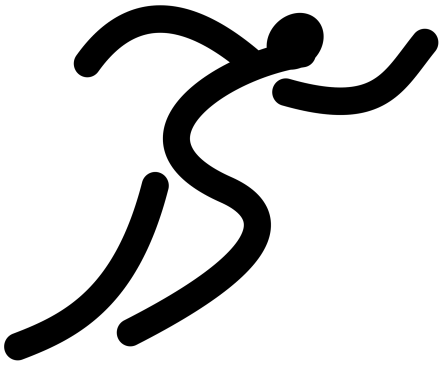
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BILL OF RIGHTS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

- Right to participate in athletics
- Right to participate at a level appropriate to each child's maturity and ability
- Right to have qualified adult leadership
- Right to play as child and not as an adult
- Right of children to share in leadership and decision-making of their sport
- Right to participate in safe and healthy environment
- Right to proper preparation for participation in athletics
- Right to an equal opportunity for success
- Right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Right to have fun in athletics



MISSION

The mission of the Fowler School District Athletic Program is to provide a positive and supportive learning environment that offers 6, 7 and 8th grade students the opportunity to enjoy the experiences of athletic competition, and to develop the skills necessary to participate in competitive sports while enriching the educational and personal experience of our athletes.

PHILOSOPHY

The Fowler School District offers athletics as an important component to the school's academic program. The athletic program offers unique opportunities outside of the classroom to promote self-discipline, improve self-image, and encourage a healthy sense of competition. It is our belief that the development of these principles leads to long-term athletic and academic success, while promoting character development that supports personal, social, and career success later in life.

GOALS

Athletics are an important component of the middle school campus. They contribute to our overall mission of educating our students and preparing them for the future by:

1. Exposing students to the rules, fundamentals and skills of individual and team sports
2. Providing physical training and physical outlets for adolescents' energies.
3. Providing healthy competition and cooperation within and between schools by inculcating in students the principles of good sportsmanship and teamwork.
4. Contributing to the development of sportsmanship and ethical behaviors in all aspects of students' lives.

CONFERENCE

The Fowler School District Middle Schools are a part of the Valley Junior High Athletic Conference, a non-profit organization that includes twenty-eight middle schools in the Valley. As a guest in this league, each school is obligated to comply with the organization's rules. The organization constructs schedules based on the number of teams entered by the participating schools. Each league has its own set of rules that govern play in that conference, and these rules vary from year to year and from season to season.

FOWLER SCHOOL DISTRICT ATHLETIC POLICY

Participation in interscholastic athletics in the Fowler School District is a privilege earned and maintained by demonstrating responsibility. The athletic policy has been established to promote the principles of fair play, mutual respect, and ethical conduct. Athletes are role models for their peers. FESD athletes have a responsibility to model

behavior that displays leadership, sportsmanship, cooperation, and academic excellence.

The following forms are Prerequisites for Participation:

- Completed Athletic Participation Card (signed by athlete and parent/guardian)
- Completed Emergency Information Card
- Completed Athletic Contract (signed by athlete and parent/guardian)
- Academically eligible to participate (academic grade sheet complete with grades and signatures provided by all the athlete's teachers)
- Proof of completed and current sports physical
- Signed media release form

Athletic Fees

We strive to provide a strong and cohesive sports program which closely parallels and prepares students for successful experiences in high school and beyond. Our district provides the primary fiscal support for our athletes. Although funds are allocated to each site annually for the purpose of supporting the after-school athletics program, these funds do not cover the total costs incurred throughout the year. The following are some of the expenses which we incur in sponsoring a student athletic team: transportation, uniforms, association and participation fees, maintaining safe practice and playing areas, etc. Student-athletes are asked to pay an activity fee to help offset the above costs and expenses. The activity fee is set at the beginning of the school year. All student-athletes are **expected to pay a fee of $20.00 per sport** prior to the first competition. Activity fees are non-refundable. In the event of hardship, student-athletes or their parents/guardians should contact the Athletic Director or School Administration for assistance.

Academic Eligibility

During the season of the activity, students must maintain passing grades in all classes in which they are enrolled. There will be grade checks conducted every week throughout the season. Each grade check will be based on the cumulative grading period. The first failure to meet the standard in any class will place the student into the INELIGIBILITY STATUS. Ineligible students will NOT be allowed to attend practices, or to participate in athletics events. They are expected to instead use this time as a study time. Students who fail to meet the academic requirements for the third time within a sport season will be removed from the team.

- Students' eligibility grade requirements: ONLY ONE D, and NO F's. Students who have more than one D or F will be ineligible for one week

- Students may return to competition after one week as long as they meet the grade requirement.
- Students will be notified of their status by the coach or athletic director

Our athletic season goes very quickly. If you are ineligible, you could be missing a lot of games. YOU ARE A STUDENT FIRST, and an ATHLETE SECOND.

Athlete's Responsibilities:

- ❖ Remain academically eligible.
- ❖ Maintain high standards of conduct at all times. Be honest and lawful both in school and out of school.
- ❖ On athletic event days, be in attendance for the entire school day, no student will practice or participate in an activity if they are not in attendance for the entire school day.
- ❖ Cooperate with all school personnel (coaches, teachers, managers, bus drivers, custodians, etc.) at all times.
- ❖ Report on time for all scheduled events unless previously excused by the coach.
- ❖ Travel to and from all contests under the supervision of the coach, unless alternate arrangements have been pre-approved. (The team coach may authorize alternate return transportation ONLY by the athlete's parent/guardian.)
- ❖ Take care of school equipment and personally ensure its return in a timely manner upon leaving a team or at the conclusion of the season. School-issued uniforms are only to be worn during school competitions or when otherwise approved by the Coach.
- ❖ Demonstrate a high level of sportsmanship.
- ❖ Be responsible to the end. Athletes quitting a sport must clear all responsibilities and obligations with the head coach of that sport.

There are three athletic seasons, fall, winter and spring (see page 9). You may not go out for another sport during the same athletic sport season. Follow all school Valley Athletic Conference, and AIA rules.

Athletes Code of Conduct

I understand that being an athlete is a privilege that requires a commitment to maintain acceptable academic and athletic standards of achievement.

- All athletes are expected to be prepared, ready to work, and punctual to all classes, practices and games.
- Athletes who exhibit chronic or serious behavior problems may be declared ineligible for the rest of that athletic season. Students receiving ISS or office

referrals will be given one warning. If a second behavior issue (ISS, referral, OSS) occurs they may be removed from the team.

- The athlete shall be expected to attend all required practices, meetings, and contests. The head coach shall be directly notified of an absence in advance. Excessive absences will adversely affect the cohesiveness of the team and will limit athlete's participation in scheduled contests.
- Missed practices, because of detention, will result in unexcused absences
- Missed games, because of detention, will result in suspension in the next contest.
- Athletes must inform their parents/guardians of the time and location for the pickup of students after an athletic event.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited and will result in a minimum of removal from the athletic program for the remainder of the year. (Other consequences may include suspension/expulsion and police action.)
- At times, as different situations occur, it becomes necessary to create new guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff members. Athletes shall abide by any additional rules and regulations presented to team members of a particular sport by the coaches and/or athletic director regardless of whether or not they have been stated within this handbook.
- Athletes who are ineligible for play will NOT travel with the team to any events.

Substance Abuse (See bullet 7 in prior section)
The use of smoking materials or any other tobacco product, any type of alcoholic product, or any narcotic or drug is forbidden. The possession of alcoholic beverages, any narcotics, or any drugs (except as noted in the student handbook as “Medication") is also forbidden. Any violation of school rules involving drugs or alcohol will result in dismissal from an athletic team. Athletes are expected to remove themselves from any situations of underage consumption of alcohol and/or illegal use of drugs, whether occurring on or off school grounds. Failure to comply with this requirement shall result in discipline which may include removal from the team as well as further school imposed disciplinary action.

Proper Student Conduct and Good Sportsmanship
Throughout this Code, when the terms proper conduct" and "good sportsmanship" are used, they refer to standards such as the following:

- Treat others fairly, as they should be treated, and as you wish them to treat you.
- Regarding the rules of the games which you play as an agreement; you should not seek to evade or break either the spirit or the letter of the agreement.
- Treat game officials and opponents with courtesy and respect.
- Consider and treat visiting teams and spectators as your own honored guests.

Similarly, when you visit another school, behave courteously as a responsible guest.
- Be gracious in victory and especially in defeat, learn to accept defeat gracefully.
- Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
- Remember that both on and off the field/court as an FESD athlete your actions reflect both on you, on the school and ultimately on our School District.
- Use school appropriate vocabulary at games, practices and any related events. The use of vulgar or obscene language will not be tolerated.
- During a game, athletes are to be completely focused upon the game. It is not appropriate to leave the bench to make phone calls, etc.

Playing Time

Some of the factors which are considered by the coach in determining playing time are the following: individual athlete's effort, attendance, participation in practice, teamwork, attitude, and the total number of students on the team. Every effort shall be made to maximize each participant's playing time. **However, playing time is NOT guaranteed.** Our goal is to strive for consistency and fairness within each sport. We want all athletes to have a chance to play in game situations and tournaments throughout the year.
(Please refer to page 10, item B)

Practice Time

Practices are held Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 3:45 P.M.- 5:00 P.M. However, individual scheduling changes may occur as a result of many factors which are beyond the coach's control. Athletes are expected to make any additional practice times which are scheduled by coaches. Coaches may schedule additional Saturday practices. Athletes are required to be at each practice on time. The individual coaches will cover details specific to the rules of each team.

Transportation

The student will travel with the group to and from all activities in school-provided transportation. The ONLY exceptions to this policy are:
1. When previously approved by the coach or athletic director, the student may ride with parents when the request has been made in writing to the appropriate coach.
2. If the request is approved, parents must sign the student out with the coach at the activity.
3. Under no circumstances are students allowed to travel to or from any school related athletic event, with any individual who is not normally allowed to check them out of school.
4. Coaches are not allowed to transport students in their own private vehicles. <u>Parents MUST pick students up in a timely manner.</u>

Fowler School District will provide transportation after school on practice days. The athletic bus will be available only for students who stay for athletic practice. (siblings who are not members of the team are not allowed to stay for practices nor games, unless supervised by parents, nor are they allowed to ride the athletic bus). The buses will leave the campus about 5:00 P.M. and will drop students off at bus stops within walking distance of their homes. Parents should notify their child's coach on the pick-up procedures for their child.

ATHLETIC SEASONS

Fall Sports	**Winter Sports**	**Spring Sports**
Co ed Flag Football	Varsity Boys Basketball	Track and Field
Varsity Girls Volleyball	JV Boys Basketball	Softball
JV Girls Volleyball	Varsity Girls Basketball	Baseball
Co ed Cross Country	JV Girls Basketball	
Cheerleading	Cheerleading	
	Girls Soccer	
	Boys Soccer	

* Sports are offered based on available coaching staff

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/CONDUCT CODE

The Parent-Coach Relationship

We recognize that at various times during the season our parents will have questions or will disagree with a decision made by the Coach. We ask that when this happens parents do not approach the coach during or at the conclusion of a contest. During scheduled events Coaches have the primary responsibility of supervising all children and giving appropriate instruction. Coaches are directed NOT to have individual parent conferences during team events. The appropriate manner in which to handle this situation is to call the front office on the following school day to request an appointment to individually meet with the coach. It will then be easier for both parties to have a calm and courteous discussion without distractions and without the emotion of the moment affecting positive resolution.

A. Examples of typical concerns of parents that are appropriate to discuss with a coach are:

- Any unhealthy mental or physical strain noted in the child
- How parents can contribute to a child's skill improvement and development.
- Any dramatic change in a child's behavior.
- The interrelationship between academics and sports

B. Should the following topics come up as points for further discussions parents are requested to refer the topics directly to the athletic director by requesting an appointment as per the previously described procedures.

- Playing time is a topic of primary concern to many parents. If you have questions you may meet with the athletic director on this topic.
- Team strategy or play calling.
- Other student athletes.

In order for students to fully realize their maximum potential and the worth of their athletic participation, it is essential that we maintain cooperation, communication, and support among coaches, athletes, parents and school personnel. Coaches, athletes and parents must all work together and make the commitments which will ensure the success of the athletic program. Together we will ensure that the athlete has a positive and enriching athletic experience.

As a parent of a Fowler School District Athlete you are asked to make the following commitment:

- ★ Make every effort to accompany my child to meetings, athletic contests and special events
- ★ Work to ensure that my child will attend all scheduled practices, games, special athletic events and team meetings
- ★ Refrain from making negative or derogatory statements about the coach or other team members in front of my child or other students.
- ★ Give the coach the opportunity to help resolve any concerns.
- ★ Help my child handle adversity with dignity, be gracious in defeat, humble in victory
- ★ Encourage my child to set and work towards achieving individual and team goals.
- ★ Be an exemplary role model by displaying good sportsmanship at all times and respecting fans, coaches, officials, directors and participants and always treat others with respect and consideration.
- ★ Remember that my involvement and support is vital to my child's overall academic, athletic and personal success.

★ Abide by the requests, rules and regulations set forth in this handbook.
★ Leave the coaching to the Coach. Parents are not to be coaching their own child, or any other team child from the side-line. This applies to the entire game, including half-time.
★ Parents are encouraged to motivate their child and to offer positive feedback, however they are to do so without offering any coaching.

Student Athletes

Monitoring Student Health

Fowler will require that families monitor their child's health on a daily basis and keep their child at home if the child is experiencing illness symptoms. This expectation, which is provided below, will be communicated to families through any means Fowler deems appropriate, and will be in addition to consistent, ongoing reminders included in subsequent Fowler communications:

Fowler Elementary School District requires that you, as a parent or guardian of a Fowler student, closely monitor your child for illness symptoms, including fever, every day before sending your child to school. For the health and safety of our children, faculty, and community, please review the questions below. Consider the following questions every day before you send your child to school. If the following apply to your child, ***keep your child at home****.*

• Has your child had a fever, which is defined as a temperature of 100°F or above, experienced any new cough or shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or any loss of sense of smell or taste in the last 24 hours?

Any child who has a fever as defined above or any of the symptoms listed above shall stay home, and the child's parents/guardians shall be required to communicate the absence to the school administrator and team coach. The student will be allowed to resume sports and practices, once they are cleared by the school nurse and school administrator. There will be no negative impact on the student athlete if she/he needs to stay home when sick.

A. Student Athletes with Disabilities or the Medically Vulnerable

Special accommodations, along with compliance with all applicable state, federal, and local laws, shall be made for Fowler student athletes with disabilities or those with unique medical needs. Where possible, these students are strongly encouraged to wear masks and maintain a 6 ft. social distance, and coaches/staff who interact with these students should be informed that wearing masks in their presence is uniquely important.

Fowler will also ensure that it protects the privacy of those students at higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions. Parents/Guardians should inform the school administration and coaching staff of these needs before the season begins.

Fowler School District Rights & Responsibility

The Fowler School District reserves the right to change our athletic policies in order to ensure the safety of students and staff. In addition, any student athlete and/or parent/guardian that does not adhere to the safety policies outlined in our district mitigation plan and Athletic Handbook is subject to an immediate and indefinite removal from all athletic programs.

FOWLER SCHOOL DISTRICT
ATHLETIC CONTRACT

We understand the high level of commitment that it takes to be a part of Fowler School District Athletic Program. After reading the athletic handbook. WE understand the expectations of the athletes and the parents. By signing this contract, we hope we can make this a pleasurable experience for your child and ourselves.

I agree to and am aware of the commitments and obligations required of me in order to be a part of the FESD Athletic Program.

Athletes Commitment and Obligations

1. All practices are mandatory except for weekend practices at which student participation is strongly encouraged.
2. Be at practices for the entire duration, starting at 3:45 P.M. and ending at 5:00 P.M.
3. Be respectful of your teammates, coaches, staff, officials and all those present at any related events.
4. Adhere to all mitigation strategies outlined for student athletes.

Parent Commitment and Obligations

1. Respect coach, players and officials.
2. Understand that my child must be academically eligible and be present at practices.
3. Be at school promptly at pick up. (Coaches have their own families and often need to pick up their own children or otherwise complete personal responsibilities. Please be respectful of their willingness to give their time to the betterment of your child by allowing them to meet their own personal obligations.)

Athletic Pick-up (when applicable):

All parents/ guardians should be here around 7:00 P.M. (or as otherwise instructed) for home and away games. Understand that there will be times that we will arrive earlier or even a little for reasons which are out of our control.

Uniforms:

Fowler School District supplies the athletic uniforms. If the uniform is lost, stolen or even not maintained in good condition the athlete will be charged for the uniform. The cost of the uniform is Athletic Jersey $30.00 and Athletic Shorts $20.00.

Athletic Contract:
I understand that I am/we are responsible for grades, behavior, uniforms and practices. We also understand that each athlete is a representative of the school and the community of Fowler School District. Signing the Athletic Contract allows me to be a part of Fowler School District Athletic Program and notifies the Athletic Department that we, parent/guardian, and I agree to this Athletic Contract.

_____	_____
Athlete Signature	Parent/Guardian Signature
_____	_____
Printed Name	Printed Name

FESD Athletic Handbook