

BLUFFS MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL HANDBOOK



Scottsbluff Bearcats

Family Academics Integrity Toughness Heart

Welcome and Overview

Welcome to the Bluffs Middle School football team. The purpose of this handbook is to inform parents and players of the organization and management of the middle school football program as well as provide a standard of consistency of expectations for the players, parents, and coaching staff.

Bluffs Middle School Football Program Objectives

- To develop quality students, players, and people
- To have fun playing the game of football
- To build a foundation of understanding of football
- To develop fundamentally sound football players with proper technique
- To prepare and develop players for the future of the SHS Bearcat Football Program
- To practice and play hard
- To have a unified, supportive team environment

Coaches

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● Kyle King: 7 th Grade | ● Tyler Koke: 8 th Grade |
| ● Josh Gomez: Head Coach, 7 th Grade | ● Scott Gullion: 8 th Grade |
| ● Dustin Stodola: 7 th Grade | ● Ryan Coffey: 8 th Grade |

Online Football Store - Coming Soon..

Last Day to Add New Players

Players will not be added after the determined date for the football season unless they are a new/transfer student to Scottsbluff Public Schools after the start of the season, are eligible for athletic competition under NSAA rules, and have fulfilled the listed requirements (Baseline Concussion Test, Forms, Activity Card, etc.).

BMS Coaching Staff Philosophy

The philosophy of the Bluffs Middle School football coaching staff is that attendance and good effort, both in class and on the football field, are the key components of success. We understand that our players are coming in with different experiences in football (no experience, school yard football, flag football, and tackle football). Middle school players are at a time in their lives where physically, some players are naturally more athletic than others or have matured at a faster rate. However, we believe that developing proper technique and habits will pay dividends for ALL athletes in the future when all have reached the

same level of physical maturity. This is why we want all athletes to participate and put forth their best effort for their own future and the future of Scottsbluff Football.

You may have heard the phrase hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard. We believe this to be true. In middle school athletes may get by on natural talent, but as time goes on, lack of effort or great effort will catch up with them and pay dividends for those who have worked hard and be detrimental to those who have not. This is why we stress putting forth effort in everything we do as students, players, and people. We strive to provide a strong foundation of solid fundamentals in all areas of the game (stance, tackling, terminology, formation alignment, etc.). We want our players to work hard, be successful, and to have fun doing so. In order for this to occur, student athletes need to take care of academics first. Student athletes, as you've heard many times before, are students first, and therefore academics is the first priority of the coaching staff at Bluffs Middle School. Work hard and succeed in the classroom so you can compete and succeed on the field.

Expectations for Coaches

- Role Models
- Teachers
- Family
- Academics
- Integrity
- Toughness
- Hear

Expectations for Players

- Be Safe
- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Family
- Academics
- Integrity
- Toughness
- Hear

Roles

- **Players-** practice and play games.
- **Coaches-** leading, coaching, and disciplining the team.
- **Parents-** provide positive support for the team.
- **Officials-** officiate the game.

It is important that everyone understands his or her role in the Bluffs Middle School football program. Problems arise when people get their roles confused. Do your best to provide a positive experience for your child. If the officials need to be addressed, let the coaches handle the situation properly.

Please refrain from “booing”, negative comments, swearing, or any other display of poor sportsmanship at all games. Support all members of the program, but most importantly show the team positive support. We also expect all of our fans to conduct themselves with manners and be respectful both at home and at away games. We want to show class and represent Scottsbluff Public Schools in a positive way. Let the players play, the coaches coach, the officials call the games, and the fans be supportive!

Baseline Concussion Testing

All 7th and any 8th grade players who did not have baseline testing last school year, will undergo baseline concussion testing. Baseline concussion testing is not an intelligence test, but a mental acuity test to ensure your student’s mental awareness to participate in athletics safely. Eighth graders who did not participate in athletics and didn’t take the test last school year or have had a concussion in any sport in the last school year will need to take the baseline concussion test. If a student should sustain a concussion during practice, competition, or any other event, they will be required to follow proper concussion protocol as set forth by the school and physician guidelines before being cleared to return to play. Failing to complete the baseline concussion test will delay players’ practice and playing time.

Behavior

Any player participating in behaviors that do not follow the expectations of players, as stated above, may be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the coaching staff and/or school administrators. Suspension for such behavior can include, but is not limited to one quarter, an entire contest, or the remainder of the season depending on the severity of the infraction. We coach our players to be “class acts” on and off the field and expect them to conduct themselves in such a manner. Actions, as previously stated, causing players, coaches, or the football program to be viewed negatively will not be taken lightly and are unacceptable. Any behavior or activity that negatively affects the team in any way may result in loss of playing time or other disciplinary actions based on the discretion of the coaching staff.

Athlete Drop Off and Pickup by Parents

Practices will be completed by 5:15 P.M. every night, Parents, please be here by 5:00 to pick up your child. There will be discipline for athletes NOT picked up on time.

- All parents who are not able to pick their child up please make arrangements for someone else to do so. Most behavior issues happen while kids are waiting to be picked up from practices and competitions. Coaches are ready to go home too.

Attendance and Playing Time

All athletes are expected to be at all practices and competitions.

- Each athlete is allowed three unexcused absences, the fourth unexcused absence will result in suspension from the next competition. The fifth will result in dismissal from the team.

- Please communicate absences. Plan ahead and let coaches know when you'll be gone. Bring a note or remind message before the absence or it will be considered unexcused.
 - Doctors Appointments: The athlete needs to bring a note from the doctor/dentist confirming the appointment in order for this type of absence to be excused.
 - "I didn't feel well after school" is considered unexcused.
 - Missing practices or competitions for club sports are considered unexcused absences.
 - Academic retakes, Haircuts, shopping, birthday parties, ect. are considered unexcused.
 - Practices start at a certain time if an athlete shows up once the doors are shut then they will not be allowed into practice and this will result in an unexcused absence.
- If a player is injured, they must be at practice unless the coach has given the player permission to receive treatment for the injury. Since practice time is limited, we need to make sure that the time is well spent.
- Players who attend study hall will have till 4:09 to get out to the locker room for practice. At 4:10 the locker room door will be shut and those who are late will watch practice. Failure to practice will affect playing time.

Equipment/Purchases

Every player is required to provide their own mouthpiece. The mouthpiece must be one solid color and cannot be clear or white. It is also required that the mouthpiece purchased must attach to the helmet.

Every player is required to provide a combination lock. The lock must be a combination lock of some kind (letters, numbers, or both). Keyed locks are not allowed. The player is also required to provide that combination to the coaches so that we can assist them if they forget the combination, they are sharing a locker, or an equipment issue should arise. Please note, this is a separate combination lock from the lock that players use in physical education class. We cannot guarantee the safety of any belongings, particularly those that are not locked up.

Players are also required to provide their own cleats. The cleats must be moldable or attached plastic/composite cleats and cannot be made of metal of any kind. The cleats can be baseball or soccer cleats as long as they are not made with metal. Baseball (metal) cleats, track (spikes) cleats, and/or any other kind of metal cleats are not allowed. The school does have a limited amount of donated cleats from previous players that we are happy to loan out, but sizes are limited, depending on the year and what has been donated.

A player may provide their own helmet, shoulder pads, or pants as long as it has been approved by a coach and meets NSAA regulations for proper football equipment. Helmets and pants must be white. Helmet visors are only allowed if they are clear and worn on a helmet that has been provided by the player and approved by a coach. In addition, the shield must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear without the presence of any tint.

According to NSAA rules players may only wear eye black or strips/stickers in a contest if there is a single stroke under each eye that does not extend below the cheek bone, is not smeared, and has no words, numbers, logos, or symbols within it. For further clarification please consult the NSAA football handbook.

Equipment Checkout

Equipment will be checked out only after a player has turned in **ALL** of the required forms and provided a proper combination lock. The school will provide the following certified equipment for all players unless a player decides to provide their own equipment:

Helmet
Chin Strap
Shoulder Pads
Football Pants
Practice Jersey
Game Jersey
(Cleats if necessary)

Once equipment has been checked out all players are responsible for returning **ALL** equipment in good condition. Players who complete the season will turn in equipment on scheduled days at the completion of the season. Players who quit or are dismissed from the team must return all equipment immediately upon dismissal. All washable equipment (jerseys and pants) is expected to be laundered regularly throughout the season and prior to check in at the end of the season. Players who lose equipment or damage equipment due to irresponsible behavior or improper use of equipment will be assessed a fine for repair or replacement of the equipment assigned to them.

Transportation

All members of the football program are encouraged to ride to and from away games on the bus. The bus allows for team unity, good communication with the coaches and players, and a safe form of transportation. If your son needs to ride home separately, an alternate transportation (blue slip—you can get one from the BMS school office) form must be filled out and received by the coaching staff **PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. ATHLETES WILL BE ABLE TO RIDE TO CONTESTS WITH THEIR PARENT OR GUARDIAN AND ONLY THAT PERSON IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO RIDE THE BUS. A BLUE SLIP WILL NEED TO BE RECEIVED BY THE COACHING STAFF PRIOR TO THE CONTEST** Meals will be provided when traveling over 50 miles from Scottsbluff.

Forms

All players must have a completed physical turned into the coaches and/or health office before they are allowed to participate in practice or check out equipment.

All players are required to have/fill out and return the following forms on Parent Square:

Drug Form 1
Drug Form 2
Consent for Activities/Athletic Participation Form (Blue)
Emergency Contact Information Form (Orange)
Baseline Concussion Testing Form (Light Purple)—7th graders only *
Insurance Form (Neon Green)

If the player is in 8th grade and has never participated in football, taken the concussion test, or has had a concussion in the last year (in any sport) they will need to fill out and return this form also. Please refer to the previous section (Baseline Concussion Testing).

Handbook Acknowledgement Forms (last page of this form) is the only paper turned into coaches

Activity Cards

All student athletes in the Scottsbluff Public School system are required to purchase an activity pass from the activities office. The activity pass will get students into all Scottsbluff Public Schools home activities throughout the school year (excluding special events, exp. Districts, GNAC, etc.). If it is a financial burden to purchase an activity card for your son there is a form you can fill out at the activities office to assist you in attaining an activity card. No player will participate in any contest without an activity card.

Academic Eligibility

Players are only allowed participation in activities and athletics based on academics. Players are student athletes and are therefore considered students first. Every player is expected to maintain eligible grades in order to participate in football. If a player has an "F" they are required to attend study hall each day until they get their grades up to passing academic standards. Students failing one class may use "Probation". Probation is a one-time exception students may use to participate in one contest. Eligibility is pulled on Wednesdays. If a student is failing a class, they must:

- Attend tutoring each day until 3:55 until the grade is passing.
- Get a note from the tutoring teacher and walk directly to practice.
- Once passing, obtain a Rewards Coupon from the office, administration, or coach
- Get Rewards Coupon signed by the teacher of the class that was previously failing
- Get Rewards Coupon signed by an administrator
- Turn the Rewards Coupon in to a BMS Football coach

Failure to fulfill academic requirements at home and during the regular school day will require students to attend study hall which in turn requires them to miss a large portion of practice. Again, playing time is a privilege and players missing large portions of practice to make up school work or raise grades will have their playing time affected not only because of absence, but also due to missed instructional time during practice to help ensure the success and safety of all players on the team.

Disclaimer

The Bluffs Middle School Football Handbook contains only general guidelines and information. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. For that reason, if you have any questions concerning a policy or practice you should address your specific questions to the coaches. This handbook does not guarantee any fixed terms or conditions. The administration and coaches reserve the right to adjust the handbook at any time for any reason to best fit the needs of the players and football program. Further academic and athletic policy clarification can be found in the BMS Student Handbook.

NOTIFICATIONS TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Elimination of Discrimination

The Scottsbluff Public School District hereby gives this statement of compliance and intends to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This School District intends to take any necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination.

The Scottsbluff Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture, and protective hairstyles), color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Students, Employees, and Others:

Dr. Wendy Kemling-Horner, Executive Director of Student Services

1722 1st Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69361

wkemling@sbps.net

(308) 635-6200

For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact:

U.S. Department of Education

One Petticoat Lane

1010 Walnut Street, Suite 320

Kansas City, MO 64106

Telephone: (816) 268-0550 (voice)

Fax: (816) 268-0559

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf: (800) 877-8339

OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov

The Scottsbluff Public School District is committed to offering employment and educational opportunities to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation of any kind by district employees, including,

co-workers, non-employees (such as volunteers), third parties, and others is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and includes verbal, non-verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to a person's sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status, that is sufficiently serious to deny, interfere with, or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational or work program or activity, including, but not limited to:

1. Conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive educational or work environment; or,
2. Requiring an individual to endure the offensive conduct as a condition of continued employment or educational programs or activities, including the receipt of aids, benefits, and services.

Educational programs and activities include all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs of the school, whether those programs take place in a school's facilities, on a school bus, at a class or training program sponsored by the school at another location, or elsewhere.

Discriminatory harassment because of a person's sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture, and protective hairstyles), color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status, may include, but is not limited to:

1. Name-calling;
2. Teasing or taunting;
3. Insults, slurs, or derogatory names or remarks;
4. Demeaning jokes;
5. Inappropriate gestures;
6. Graffiti or inappropriate written or electronic material;
7. Visual displays, such as cartoons, posters, or electronic images;
8. Threats or intimidating or hostile conduct;
9. Sexual harassment;
10. Physical acts of aggression, assault, or violence; and/or,
11. Criminal offenses.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you should initially report all instances of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to your teacher, coach, principal, or to the district

office (Dr. Wendy Kemling-Horner). If you are uncomfortable presenting the problem to a teacher or coach, or if the teacher or coach is the problem, you may report the alleged discrimination, harassment, or retaliation (“discrimination”) to another staff person (such as a counselor or principal). Other individuals may report alleged discrimination to the designated coordinator. If the designated coordinator is the person alleged to have committed the discriminatory act, then the complaint should be submitted to the Superintendent (Dr. Andrew Dick) for assignment. A discrimination complaint form is available in the office of each district building and on the District's website.

If the District knows, or reasonably should know, about possible harassment, including violence, the District will conduct a prompt, adequate, reliable, thorough, and impartial investigation to determine whether unlawful harassment occurred, and take appropriate interim measures, if necessary. If the District determines that unlawful harassment occurred, the District will take prompt and effective action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects, if appropriate. If harassment or violence that occurs off school property creates a hostile environment at school, the District will follow this policy and grievance procedure, within the scope of its authority.

Under no circumstances will a person filing a complaint or grievance involving discrimination be retaliated against for filing the complaint or grievance.

For further information, please refer to Board Policy 5401 and 4003b.

Contact Information

Josh Gomez, BMS Football Head Coach
Email Address: jgomez@sbps.net

BMS FOOTBALL HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

By signing below I acknowledge that I have read this handbook in its entirety and agree to follow the guidelines set forth in the Bluffs Middle School Football Handbook.

Parent Name (Printed): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name (Printed): _____

Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____