

SCHOOL DISTRICT #73

**ATHLETICS'
HANDBOOK**



*****Created November 2025

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INTRODUCTION

School District #73 extends its sincere appreciation to all individuals who serve as coaches and team sponsors within our athletics programs. The continued success of our athletic tradition is made possible through the dedication, professionalism, and personal commitment of those who contribute their time and expertise to support our student-athletes.

Coaches and sponsors play a vital role in fostering school spirit, sportsmanship, and excellence both on and off the field. Their efforts ensure that students are provided with meaningful athletic experiences that promote teamwork, discipline, and personal growth.

The Athletic Council of School District #73 and Secondary schools is committed to providing ongoing support to all coaches and sponsors. This includes assisting with organizational requirements, ensuring compliance with school and district policies, and facilitating communication throughout the season.

School District #73 recognizes and values the significant contribution of all who make our athletics program a continued source of pride and excellence.

Chair

Brian Tommassini (South Kamloops)

EOC REP

Rick Kielein (Assistant Superintendent)

COUNCIL

Marie Giesbrecht (Clearwater)

Ryan Porter (Westsyde)

Greg Gartrell (Valleyview)

Mary Bartucci (Sa-Hali)

Corey Yamaoka (South Kamloops) Jaimie Roos (Sa-Hali)



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we live, learn, play, and compete on the **unceded and traditional territory of the Secwépemc Nation**, within the lands of the **Secwépemcúl'ecw**.

We are grateful to be able to gather here—whether for training, competition, or celebration—in a place where sport continues to build community, respect, and connection. As athletes, coaches, and supporters, we recognize that physical activity and teamwork have long been a part of Indigenous cultures on these lands.

We honour the Secwépemc people and their enduring relationship with the land, waters, and community, and we commit to carrying forward these values of respect, inclusion, and stewardship through our athletic programs and events.

School District #73 Athletic Philosophy

The athletic programs within **School District #73 (SD #73)** is an integral component of the overall educational experience. Rooted in a long-standing tradition of excellence to promote student achievement, participation, and personal growth through sport.

Purpose

The purpose of the athletic programs within **School District #73** is to foster the physical, social, and emotional development of students by providing opportunities to participate in a variety of competitive and recreational activities. Athletics serve as an extension of the classroom, where students learn values and skills that contribute to their overall education and well-being.

Guiding Principles

1. Excellence

SD #73 is committed to maintaining a tradition of athletic excellence. Student-athletes, coaches, and teams are expected to demonstrate dedication, discipline, and integrity in all aspects of participation. Success is achieved through consistent effort, teamwork, and respect for opponents, officials, and the game itself.

2. Participation

The athletic program encourages broad student participation and values the contributions of all athletes, regardless of skill level. Opportunities are provided for students to engage in sport in a supportive environment that promotes sportsmanship and school spirit.

3. Growth

SD #73 recognizes athletics as a vehicle for lifelong learning. Through sport, students develop leadership, perseverance, accountability, and resilience. These attributes support personal growth and prepare student-athletes to contribute positively to their school and community.

Commitment

School District #73 is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and equitable athletic environment that upholds the values of each school and the principles of fair play. Coaches, athletes, and supporters are expected to represent the school with pride, professionalism, and sportsmanship at all times.

Through this philosophy, SD #73 affirms its dedication to developing well-rounded individuals who exemplify the tradition of **excellence, participation, and growth**—both on and off the field of play.

Administrative Procedure 492 - COMMUNITY COACHES

It is recognized that volunteer coaches play an important role in athletics programs in our school district and that the expertise and skill provided is of great benefit to our students. The district understands that Community Coaches are integral to school sports, and that they are necessary to ensure further opportunities for student athletes. All community coaches are to adopt the following

guidelines to ensure that the philosophy, objectives and values of School District No. 73 and [BC SCHOOL SPORTS](#) are maintained.

Procedures

1. Community Coaches should complete the [Community Coaches Application Form](#) and submit copies to the School's Athletic Director and the School Administrator. The form will enable School Representatives to start to determine the qualifications and suitability of the prospective Community Coach to supervise and coach students of school age, and to receive from the prospective Community Coach authorization to conduct a Criminal Records check.
2. In accordance with [Administrative Procedure 490 Volunteers in Schools](#), the School Principal and/or the Athletic Director shall undertake a Criminal Records Check of the Community Coach applicant pursuant to the Criminal Records Review Act.
3. It is strongly recommended that the Community Coach have completed a minimum of the [National Coaching Certification Program Community Sport Module](#).
4. The School Principal and/or Athletic Director should meet with each prospective Community Coach to discuss school athletic policy and school sport philosophy, ensuring that the coach understands:
 1. 4.1. the expectations for the supervision of students
 2. 4.2. emergency protocol within the school
 3. 4.3. accountability for equipment, uniforms, finances
 4. 4.4. league schedules and deadlines
 5. 4.5. practice times, restrictions, policies and access
 6. 4.6. school and/or District travel policies and insurance requirements
 7. 4.7. the BCSS Coach's Code of Conduct and procedures
 8. 4.8. the BCSS Eligibility Policies and procedures
 9. 4.9. the decision-making process and jurisdictional boundaries of the School, School District, Athletic Association, Sport Commission and BC SCHOOL SPORTS.
 10. 4.10. required paperwork for team and player registration and entry into events
 11. 4.11. how and where to register for NCCP clinics
- 4.12. health and safety protocols for the District/Province
12. 4.13. the [Extra-Curricular Athletics Safety Guidelines](#) for the School District
13. 4.14. the [SCHOOL DISTRICT #73 Student-Athlete Contract](#)
5. Unless otherwise approved by the school principal, schools are required to provide a school based SD73 employee who will sponsor the team and will assist with team organization and administration, including:
 1. 5.1. Communication and organization with the Athletic Director and/or School Administrator, parents/guardians and other teams.
 2. 5.2. Transportation and financial planning for the season of play and tournaments.
 3. 5.3. That out of town and overnight trips comply with the SD73 field trip [Administrative Procedure 260 Field Trips](#).
6. All Coaches must complete the online [BCSS Concussion Training](#) (CATT course). Upon completion of the course, the coach will send in the certification to the Athletic Director or Administrator.
7. The School Administrator and/or Athletic Director should request and check at least two references for each Community Coach candidate. Reference checks should include questions about previous conduct, suspensions or probationary penalties served, technical skill and ability, age group and/or gender previously coached and degree of commitment and interest.
8. The [BCSS Supervision Policies](#) does not require that a Teacher-Sponsor be present with adults who have been approved by the School Administrator. It is therefore strongly

recommended that periodic observations of the Community Coach at practice and in competition be conducted by the Athletic Director and/or Administrator.

SCHOOL DISTRICT #73 COACHING POLICIES

Coaches are the main force behind successfully running a well-balanced athletic program. The following are guidelines and policies set out by the School District #73 in consultation with coaches, Athletic Staff and Administration.

More information can be found at:

B.C. School Sports (BCSS)

<http://www.bcschoolsports.com/>

Okanagan Valley School Sports Association
(OVSSA)

<https://www.ovsaa.ca/home>

West Zone Athletics

<https://www.westzoneathletics.ca/home>

These guidelines are to be followed by all coaches in School District #73.

I. Rules and Regulations

All rules and regulations set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.

II. By - Laws

All by-laws set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.

III. Codes of Conduct

- a. All Codes of Conduct set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.
- b. The Coaches' Code of Conduct Sheet must be signed prior to the season.
- c. All community coaches must sign the Coaches Code of Conduct Sheet and Community Coach Application Form

IV. Conduct, Procedures, Definitions, and Penalties

All Conduct, Procedures, Definitions, and Penalties set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.

V. Recruiting, Gender Equity, Eligibility, Season of Play

All game limits set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.

VI. Competition, Game Rules

All matter pertaining to the above and set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.

VII. Player Registration

- a. All player registration policies set out by BCSS, OVSSA, West Zone Athletic Association and School District #73 must be adhered to.
- b. Rosters must be in to the Athletic Director no later than 10 days prior to the deadline set out by BCSS.
- c. Late Rosters may be subject to fines. (BCSS Rule)
- d. It is recommended that Athletic Directors get access to the school roster on MyEd to help facilitate in the registration of athletes.
- e. Any appeals, International students, transfers must be communicated to the Athletic Director by BCSS due dates in order to get the forms/appeals in.

VIII. Equipment and Uniforms

- a. Equipment and uniforms will be issued prior to the season.
- b. The coach is responsible for the issuing and return of all uniforms and equipment.
- c. The team or player(s) is responsible for replacement of any lost or damaged items.

IX. Fees

- a. No accounts shall be placed outside of the school.
- b. Coaches should not handle any fees or money
- c. The District Subsidy will be collected throughout the year and paid to the District at the end of each season, or end of year. This fee will be paid out by the Athletic Director.

X. Correspondence / Meetings

1. A meeting must be held at the start of every season with parents and team members outlining the season plan.
2. Information sheets may be obtained from the Athletic Director informing the coach of each athlete's personal, medical, emergency, and parent information. This does not have to be duplicated on a team form.
3. Each coach is asked to attend required meetings during the year

XI. Forms

Please become familiar with the following forms

1. School District #73 Student Athlete Contract
2. Spectator Code of Conduct
3. Coach's Code of Conduct
4. Community Coach Application
5. Any School based Policies and Procedures.

XII. TOC costs

1. School District #73 will not be paying for any TOC costs
2. TOC costs may be paid out at the discretion of each school

XIII. Procedures in finding information

To find out information, please follow this order

1. Websites (please be familiar with these)
School – West Zone – OVSAA – BCSS
2. Athletic Director
3. Sport or League Commissioner
4. President or District Athletic Director

5. BCSS
6. Volunteer Driver Form
7. School District #73n AP's - *click on the title*
Administrative Procedure 350 – Student Code of Conduct
Administrative Procedure 350 – Appendix C – School Codes of Conduct
Administrative Procedure 356 – Alcohol and Other Drugs
Administrative Procedure 356- Appendix – Alcohol and Other Drugs – Student-Athletes
School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) Extra Curricular Safety Guidelines Handbook
School-specific procedures addressing extra-curricular fees, uniform deposits, academic eligibility, athletic travel

XIV. Early Dismissal and Attendance

Early dismissals are for the purpose of allowing students to get to competitions on time and not to miss class time unnecessarily. Teams are expected to do their utmost to ensure that students miss the least amount of class time possible.

Coaches must be clear in communicating to their players that:

1. Students must communicate about their early dismissal with the teacher a few days prior to the absence..
2. Students who utilize early dismissal should leave immediately from their class and assemble at the designated area to depart to their games.
3. Attendance in class on game days is mandatory. In the case that a student athlete has not attended classes but has arrived expecting to play that afternoon, coaches are asked to not dress that athlete for competition on that day.
4. Coaches should email staff in advance of the team's absence.

XV. Guidelines for season Overlap Please refer to school procedures

SEASONAL CHECKLIST

In order to communicate between the school and the particular sport, a checklist has been devised for coaches to give some order to what needs to be done when and why.

This should help to provide a positive and cooperative environment.

Some of these items may not be required by each school.

PRE-SEASON:

- **BC School sport policies** must be followed while choosing teams. ie: no team

shall be chosen if a sport from the following season is not completed.

- **Find a manager**. This person may help with uniforms, med kit, etc.
- **Uniforms** must be carefully recorded and inventoried when handing out.
- **Fees** for athletics must be paid up front before the first league game.
- **Miscellaneous fees** must be outlined in a letter prior to the season. This is an estimate of the entry fees, hotels, transportation costs, etc. The policy for a student that is unable to pay is still in effect.
- **Meetings or correspondence** must be held prior to the season with parents and athletes regarding season, expectations, contracts, award criteria, BC School Sport policies, School policies, and District Policies. Consequences for their actions have been outlined in a Discipline Policy outlined in the contract.
- **Athletic Contract** must be explained and “parent waiver” signed prior to the first game. “No waiver, no play.”
- **Award criteria** for year end awards must be explained to the team members.
- **Equipment** will be supplied to the team prior to the season. This will include any equipment needed for trips. Extra equipment for practices will be in the equipment room. Only team equipment is needed for trips. This will be inventoried and must be returned complete.
- **Med Kits** may be supplied for each team. A list of supplies will be inventoried inside the kit. The coach, manager, and players are responsible for keeping the kit stocked and in good condition. The athletic director will help to give any supplies needed. **Tape** for players will be handed out on a limited basis. If an athlete’s ankles, knees, etc. consistently need taping, the athlete should purchase a preventative braces.

DURING SEASON

- **Attendance Sheets** may be required by the player and shown to the coach every week. This will help to communicate between the school and coach.
- **Policies and contractual obligations** must be adhered to.
- **Equipment** checks must be done periodically. (medical kits, travel equipment, etc.)
- **Correspondence and meetings** with parents, athletic director, and school must be done periodically.

POST SEASON

- **Uniforms** must be collected and inventoried.
- **Award material** must be handed in to the athletic director no later than two weeks after the end of season. This includes the resume for the Athletic Banquet Program and any awards that will be given in accordance with the Award procedure and

criteria.

- **Athletic Banquet** information and explanation must be given to the athletes and parents concerning the importance of attending.
- **Consequences** will be handed out for any students not adhering to policies, contractual obligations, and unreturned uniforms. This is outlined in detail in the **Athletic Contract**.

BC SCHOOL SPORTS

COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The coach/student-athlete relationship is a privileged one. Coaches play a critical role in the personal and athletic development of their student-athletes. Therefore, coaches are expected to model the fundamentally positive aspects of school sport. Coaches, including community coaches, are expected to uphold the following standards:

412.1 Recognize that school sport is an extension of the classroom, and shall conduct themselves accordingly when performing coaching duties;

412.2 Observe the Bylaws and Policies of BCSS and those of their local athletic association;

- 412.3** Observe the rules of the sport, the spirit of the rules of the sport, and shall encourage student-athletes to do the same;
- 412.4** Fulfil all competition, invitational, playoff and championship competitive and event obligations;
- 412.5** Treat all participants fairly regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental abilities, political belief or economic status;
- 412.6** Respect the rulings of officials without gesture or argument, and shall require student-athletes to do the same;
- 412.7** Shall not use foul, profane, harassing or offensive language or gestures in the conduct of coaching duties;
- 412.8** Shall not use the media, social media or networking forums to criticize or threaten student-athletes, coaches, officials, school teams, spectators or BCSS;
- 412.9** Shall not use physical force of any kind in the conduct of coaching duties;
- 412.10** Shall not, under any circumstances, endorse, recommend, or suggest the use of performance-enhancing drugs or supplements by any student-athlete;
- 412.11** Shall not use tobacco products and alcohol while in the presence of student-athletes, and shall discourage their use by student-athletes;
- 412.12** Shall not, under any circumstances, require or imply that a student-athlete must be involved in any summer program or club program as part of his/her responsibilities as a school team member;
- 412.13** Shall not, under any circumstances, require or imply that a student-athlete cannot or should not participate in any BCSS-approved sport in the season preceding or following the coach's season of play;
- 412.14** Shall not, under any circumstances, start pre-season tryouts or practices to the detriment of any in-season sport.

I have read and agree to abide by the BC SCHOOL SPORTS Coach's Code of Conduct.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

BC SCHOOL SPORTS recognizes that the Administrative head of each school is held ultimately responsible in all matters in his/her school which concern interscholastic athletic contests. The expectation of the Association is that Principals will ensure that BCSS policies established Member School interscholastic athletics will be followed by his/her staff.

1. To provide, with the cooperation of the Administration and Staff, a meaningful, well-balanced program of athletics which would include philosophy, attitudes and school expectations.
2. To see that the sections of the O.V.S.S.A. Constitution, B.C. School Sports Regulations and West Zone Constitution which are applicable to each sport are made clear to the Coaches of each

sport.

3. To ensure that Coaches receive from their players, evidence of adequate medical coverage and medical clearance certificate.
4. To assist Coaches in issuing necessary equipment and uniforms to their players, giving instructions on proper use and care of the equipment and uniforms, and to see that they are collected, cleaned and stored at the conclusion of the season.
5. To ensure that fees are collected by coaches from the players.
6. To see that the Coach fills out an eligibility form and that it is in the hands of the Sport Commission by the B.C. School Sports deadline.
7. To keep a record of Team Participants, season resumes and other information provided to him/her by each Coach (information to be used for Athletic Banquet).
8. To keep the student body, staff, Administration and parents informed of schedules, changes and other athletic matters.
9. To provide leadership in publicizing all Athletic Contests in which the school is involved and to promote school spirit to support the teams.
10. To arrange all interscholastic athletic contests.
11. To arrange for all gym and field schedules for practices and games.
12. To be responsible for securing game officials.
13. To arrange bus schedules or alternate transportation for all league games and tournaments.
14. To see to the administrative tasks of all home contests and tournaments such as officials, scorekeepers, gate keepers, concession, staff supervision, etc.
15. To be responsible for the preparation of the athletic budget and the approval of all expenditures of coaches and teams.
16. To co-ordinate the Annual Athletic Banquet.
17. To be responsible for communication with staff and administration concerning Athletics.
18. To attend the O.V.S.S.A. West Zone meetings throughout the Athletic year.
19. To ensure South Kamloops Secondary School is represented at the O.V.S.S.A. Annual General Meeting in June of each year.
20. To attend School District #73 Athletic Council Meetings as required.
21. To assist in and ensure the operation of a successful Athletic Program.
22. Promote the highest ideals of fair play by coaches, student-athletes, students and spectators in accordance with the BCSS codes of conduct.

23. Encourage coaches to report unsportsmanlike conduct and misbehavior to the school administrator and local athletic association as soon as possible.
24. Actively work to ensure that separate but equal opportunities in athletic programming be provided for both boys and girls. All programs should provide an opportunity for excellence by all participants.
25. Develop policies and procedures in the areas of team try-outs, team practices, team selection and participant playing opportunities, to be made available to coaches, students and parents each year.

BC SCHOOL SPORTS COMMUNITY COACH APPLICATION FORM

(for internal school use - this form should be completed for EVERY Community Coach)

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ P.C. _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (B) _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: (H) _____ (B) _____

NCCP Coaching Qualifications:

Certification Level Theory:

Date Completed: _____

Certification Level Technical:

Date Completed: _____

Date Completed: _____

Date Completed: _____

1) Previous Coaching Experience:

School(s):

Community/Other

Coaching Philosophy:

Personal Coaching History (please give a brief list of coaching experience):

Are you currently under probation or suspension from coaching duties within any school or community sport program? Yes No

Medical

- a. Do you know of any medical condition that may hamper or affect your ability to carry out coaching activities? Yes No

1) Which sport(s) would you like to coach, and at what level?

Sport(s): _____ Level: _____

Sport(s): _____ Level: _____

Sport(s): _____ Level: _____

References

Please provide the names and contact information for three (3) references: Coaching References:

1. _____
Name Relationship Telephone
2. _____
Name Relationship Telephone
3. _____
Name Relationship Telephone

I hereby certify that I have completed or in the process of completing the School approved Criminal Record Check and the BC School Sports approved Concussion course certification.

I hereby certify that the information given is complete and correct.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date

SAMPLE LETTER FOR PARENTS

To All Parents/Guardians of the _____ Team:

Congratulations! Your child has earned a position on the _____ team. We are excited to be working with this group of athletes and look forward to seeing their growth and development throughout the season.

We anticipate a busy schedule with approximately _____ practices per week, _____ league games, and _____ tournaments (possibly more). It is important that all athletes maintain good academic standing and positive behaviour. If a student is identified as struggling academically or behaviourally, they may be asked to step back from participation until the concern is resolved.

Budget Summary

Athletic Fee: \$ _____ (supports school athletic operations)

Sport-Specific Fee: \$ _____ (covers officials, league costs, equipment, etc.)

District Subsidy: \$ _____ (district athletic contribution)

Other Costs (e.g., TOC, travel, etc.): \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

Tournament Fees

List of tournaments and costs:

- _____ – \$ _____
- _____ – \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

Grand Total per Player = \$ _____

If all funds are not used, any remaining balance will go toward a year-end team activity.

Cheques payable to _____.

Playing Time and Expectations

This is a competitive team. Playing time will be based on factors such as effort, attitude, attendance, and performance. Coaches have full discretion regarding player participation during practices and games. Each athlete will have opportunities to contribute, but playing time may vary depending on the situation.

A **team and parent meeting** will be scheduled soon. Please ensure that each athlete has a parent or guardian representative in attendance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Coach Name: _____

Email: _____



R E S P E C T

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73 (KAMLOOPS-THOMPSON)

VOLUNTEER COACHES AGREEMENT

Name of Volunteer Coach: _____

School: _____

Team/Sport: _____

Season (Year/Semester): _____

1. Purpose

This agreement outlines the responsibilities, expectations, and commitments of volunteer coaches within School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson). The goal is to ensure a positive, safe, and educational athletic experience for all student-athletes.

2. Role of the Volunteer Coach

- Support the educational, athletic, and personal development of student-athletes.
- Model positive sportsmanship, respect, and professionalism at all times.
- Follow all SD73 policies, school procedures, and BC School Sports regulations.
- Work under the supervision of the school's Athletic Director or Principal.
- Communicate clearly with staff, students, and parents about team expectations and schedules.

3. Code of Conduct

- Treat all athletes, officials, spectators, and fellow coaches with respect and fairness.
- Promote a safe and inclusive team environment free from harassment, bullying, or discrimination.
- Refrain from the use of inappropriate language, substances, or behavior that may reflect negatively on the school or district.
- Prioritize athlete safety and well-being at all times.
- Report any injuries, accidents, or concerns immediately to school administration.

4. Screening and Requirements

- A Criminal Record Check (CRC)
- Required volunteer or coaching orientation/training sessions as directed by the school.
- Adherence to the SD73 Volunteer Policy and BC School Sports Coaching Standards.
- Completion of the BCSS approved Concussion Course

5. Responsibilities

- Attend practices, games, and team events as scheduled.
- Communicate absences or changes promptly to the Athletic Director/Secretary in Charge.
- Ensure equipment is used and stored properly.
- Adhere to school and district safety protocols for travel, equipment, and supervision.
- Avoid one-on-one unsupervised situations with athletes whenever possible.
- Support equitable playing opportunities and a growth-focused environment for all participants.

6. Supervision and Evaluation

The volunteer coach operates under the direction and supervision of the school's administration and Athletic Director. The school reserves the right to end this volunteer agreement at any time if expectations are not met or conduct is inconsistent with District standards.

7. Acknowledgement

By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that:

- You are serving as an unpaid volunteer and not an employee of School District No. 73.
- You have read, understood, and agree to comply with the terms of this agreement and all related district and school policies.
- You understand that this agreement may be terminated at the discretion of the school administration.

Volunteer Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

School District 73 (Kamloops–Thompson) Cultural Humility in Coaching Coaching in SD73: Every Athlete Brings a Story

Think about the last potluck you attended. Everyone brought a dish — something that reflected their tastes, traditions, or a favorite family recipe. No single person created the menu, and there was no “right” or “wrong” dish to bring. The magic of a potluck is in the experience: trying new things and hearing the stories behind them. Through curiosity and conversation, relationships deepen.

Coaching student-athletes in School District 73 can feel a lot like a potluck. Every athlete arrives with their own story, identity, background, and experiences. Some students may come from families where sport has always been part of life. Others may be joining a team for the first time.

Students in SD73 represent many communities, cultures, and lived experiences, including those from the Secwépemc Nation and the diverse communities across the Kamloops–Thompson region.

Approaching coaching with curiosity rather than assuming we already have the answers is the foundation of cultural humility.

Cultural humility reminds us that there is no single “correct” way to participate in sport, communicate, or build relationships. Instead, it encourages coaches to meet student-athletes where they are and to create team environments where everyone feels respected, valued, and safe to contribute.

Understanding Culture

Culture refers to shared traditions, values, beliefs, and ways of living that are learned within families and communities and passed from one generation to the next.

Culture can be thought of like an onion with layers. Outer Layers (What we see):

- Food
- Clothing
- Music
- Language

Middle Layers (How people interact):

- Communication styles
- Relationships with time and commitments
- Social interactions
- Team dynamics

Inner Layers (Core values):

- Beliefs and worldviews
- Family roles
- Expectations of authority
- Ways relationships are formed and maintained

Understanding that culture has layers helps coaches recognize that athletes may approach sport, teamwork, and communication in different way

Cultural Competency vs. Cultural Humility

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency refers to gaining knowledge and skills to interact effectively across cultures. This might include learning about cultural traditions or understanding different community perspectives.

While valuable, cultural competency can sometimes suggest that with enough learning, someone can fully understand another culture.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility recognizes that we will never fully understand someone else's culture in the same way they do.

Instead, it emphasizes:

- Self-reflection
- Openness to learning
- Awareness of bias
- Respect for lived experience

For coaches, this means approaching athletes and families with curiosity and a willingness to adapt communication and coaching styles when needed.

Why Cultural Humility Matters in School Sports

High school athletics are about more than competition. Teams are spaces where students develop confidence, leadership, identity, and relationships.

When coaches practice cultural humility, they help create environments where athletes feel safe, respected, and included.

Coaches who practice cultural humility are more likely to:

- Build stronger relationships with athletes
- Foster trust with families and communities
- Create psychologically safe team environments
- Support athletes from diverse backgrounds
- Strengthen team cohesion and belonging

Practical Ways SD73 Coaches Can Practice Cultural Humility

Reflect on your perspective

Consider how your own background and experiences influence how you coach and communicate.

Recognize personal biases

Everyone carries assumptions. Being aware of them helps us avoid unfair judgments.

Listen with curiosity

Take time to learn about the experiences and motivations of your athletes.

Encourage student voice

Invite athletes to share ideas, concerns, and feedback.

Understand that comfort levels differ

Some students may be hesitant to speak openly depending on past experiences with school, authority, or sport.

Build relationships first

Strong teams grow from trust, respect, and connection.

Coach Reflection

Before the start of the season, take a moment to reflect:

- What assumptions might I bring into my coaching?
- How do I create space for every athlete to feel heard?
- Do all athletes on my team feel they belong?
- How can I learn more about the communities and families my athletes come from?
- How do I respond when athletes' experiences or perspectives differ from my own?

The Goal: Strong Teams and Strong Relationships

Cultural humility is not something coaches complete — it is something we practice.

By approaching athletes with openness, respect, and curiosity, SD73 coaches help create teams where every student feels they belong.

This mindset strengthens not only athletic programs but also the relationships between schools, families, and the diverse communities across School District 73 and Secwépemcúl'ecw.

Strong relationships build strong teams — and strong teams help students thrive both on and off the field.

APPENDIX

CONCUSSION TRAINING (CATT)

VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORM

RESPECT (Spectator Code of Conduct)

SCHOOL DISTRICT #73 ATHLETIC CONTRACT

Extra-Curricular Athletics Safety Guidelines (entire document)

Administrative Procedure 260 - FIELD TRIPS

Administrative Procedure 262 - Extracurricular Athletic Program

Administrative Procedure 350 – Student Code of Conduct

Administrative Procedure 350.3 – Appendix - SCHOOL CODES OF CONDUCT

Administrative Procedure 356 – Alcohol and Other Drugs

Administrative Procedure 356 - Appendix – Alcohol and Other Drugs – Student-Athletes

Administrative Procedure 262.1 – Appendix EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETIC PROGRAMS: SAFETY GUIDELINES

Administrative Procedure 525 EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS, CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS

Cultural Humility In Coaching (Article)

Mental Health and Eating Disorder Awareness For Coaches