

RUSK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXTRACURRICULAR HANDBOOK

2023-2024



Rusk ISD “RISD” encourages all students to participate in extracurricular activities. Rusk ISD strives to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Participation in extracurricular activities is a **privilege, not a right**, and extracurricular programs are a valuable extension of the regular education program and high school experience. **As a member of extracurricular organizations at RISD, you accept the responsibility to broaden and develop strength of character and to contribute in a positive manner to your team or organization and our school, always remembering you are role model to younger students in our community.**

With extracurricular activities being a privilege and not guaranteed, additional expectations on behavior and on conduct are involved. As students engaging in extracurricular activities and programs and events, whether or not they are actively competing, performing, participating, or attending events associated with their organization, and whether or not they are in uniform or school related attire, represent not only themselves, but their organization, RISD, and our community. As such, they must conduct themselves in a manner to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Our expectations are that these students conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the best and finest attributes of our schools and community. As such, this handbook is developed to outline the heightened expectations we have for students involved in extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular Activities

The term “extracurricular activities” is defined as an activity sponsored by the UIL, the Board, or an organization sanctioned by Board resolution. The activity is not necessarily directly related to instruction of the essential knowledge and skills, but may have an indirect relation to some areas of the curriculum. Extracurricular activities include public performances (except as identified at Board Policy FM Legal), contests, demonstrations, displays, and club activities. See 19 Texas Administrative Code section 76.1001(a).

The term “extracurricular activities” specifically includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all Interscholastic Athletics, Band, Choir, Theatre, Cheerleading, FFA, clubs, special interest clubs, Student Council, and any other activities or group that participates in contests, competition, community service projects on behalf of or as representatives of RISD.

Extracurricular Departmental Objectives

The Directors and Program Sponsors are dedicated to RISD being recognized as a premier extracurricular program in the state of Texas. In order to obtain this extraordinary level of competence in an incredibly competitive area, each person within the extracurricular program must demand excellence of himself/herself, as well as each individual for whom he/she is responsible.

The Directors and Program Sponsors are firmly committed to the following general objectives, which must be present in each activity and on every level, in order to continue in the pursuit of excellence for which our community has grown to expect.

- Increasing participation in all activities
- Including as many activities as possible to meet the needs of the students
- Providing adequate and equitable funding for all programs
- Affording all students the opportunity to try out for all activities
- Treating all students, parents, coaches/sponsors, district employees, opponents, and community supporters with dignity and respect
- Recruiting and hiring the best coaches/sponsors possible
- Encouraging continual development of coaches/sponsors
- Exhibiting outstanding sportsmanship in victory and defeat
- Developing lifelong skills needed in a competitive society
- Stressing the importance of excellence in the classroom, as well as in competition
- Fielding competitive teams in each category

Extracurricular Code

Students selected to a Rusk ISD extracurricular team must recognize this distinction as an honor and privilege and must be held accountable to a greater standard than that of the general school population. The students involved in extracurricular activities are recognized as representatives of the individual school as well as the district, and as such, must demonstrate the highest levels of character

and behavior. It is the responsibility of the Directors and each coach/sponsor to ensure this high level of expectation.

Coaches/sponsors must monitor the character and behavior of team members in and out of season, in and out of uniform, and on and off campus. The inordinate amount of time coaches/sponsors spend in various curricular and co-curricular activities provides a unique opportunity to observe, assist, and intercede to help the students make good decisions. RISD supports education and awareness training on adolescent chemical use issues, including chemical dependency, substance abuse and special issues affecting district student athletes in a helpful, non-punitive way.

Specialization/Recruiting

- Specialization in any one activity or sport is discouraged by Rusk ISD.
- All students are encouraged to participate in all extracurricular activities in which they have an interest.
- Students will not be restricted to any one activity by a coach/sponsor/director.
- Students will not be recruited from one activity to another by a coach/sponsor/director.
- Any student, parent, coach, director, or sponsor who suspects a violation of these rules is asked to notify the Principal or Superintendent at once.

Extracurricular Attendance Procedure

A student absent from school may not play or participate on that day unless:

- He/she attends school for a half day;
- An acceptable parent or doctor's excuse is submitted;
- The student is involved in a school activity; and
- The students' time in OCS (if applicable) is completed.

Example: one day of OCS (Completion will be from 8:25 a.m. to 4 p.m. or upon the end of the school day for that campus.)

After the student meets one of the four above options, the student must also have signed approval from all of the following:

- Athletic Director (if participating in athletics)
- Team coach, sponsor or director
- Campus Principal

Extracurricular Practice Procedures

Participant requirements prior to first practice

- All eligibility requirements have been satisfied
- Completed physical examination form
- Completed emergency medical cards
- Completed parent-student responsibility acknowledgement forms
- Fees paid (if any)
- Parent and Student UIL Marching Band Acknowledgement Form

Practice Procedures

- Practice sessions shall be scheduled so as to create a minimum amount of daily conflict with normal family activities and study time.
- Practice sessions should be well planned, well structured, and not to exceed the eight-hour rule set by UIL.
- Coaches and sponsors should be the first to arrive and the last to leave the practice sessions. At no time are students to practice without supervision.
- All equipment used in practice sessions shall be returned to its proper storage location at the end of each practice. The practice area must be clean and secured.
- Off-campus practices must have approval of the campus coordinator.

Restricted Practice Days

“Weekend and Holiday Practices”

- Coaches/sponsors who wish to practice on Saturday and holidays must receive written approval from the Superintendent.
- Sub-varsity practices should be kept to a minimum
- Practices held on vacation days such as over Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break should be scheduled with family commitments taken into consideration
- Parents must be notified prior to the start of a season if weekend or holiday practices will be scheduled.

Quitting an Extracurricular Activity Procedures

The privilege of participation in extracurricular activities should be cared for properly. Should a student quit or be dismissed from an extracurricular activity after the first four (4) weeks from the first required practice of the activity they are leaving, he/she will not be allowed to participate in another activity until the season of the activity the student quit has been completed. If a student is involved in two extracurricular activities at the same time and quits one activity, the student will not be allowed to participate in the other extracurricular activity as well. (This clause will be automatically reviewed by the coach/sponsor involved and the activities director if this circumstance may arise.)

Extracurricular Conflicts with Other Activities

Students participating in more than one activity could possibly have conflicts from time to time. Please notify the coaches/sponsors as soon as the conflict arises. The following order will be used to help settle these conflicts:

- State
- Regional Events
- Area
- Bi-District
- District
- Non-District

- Scrimmages
- Practice

Student Dual Participation

All students participating in Rusk ISD Extracurricular Activities make a commitment to the activity, their teammates, and their school. Each program demands the dedication of time and energy of the student. Part of this commitment is to be a student first and strive for academic excellence. Another integral part of that commitment is to place the Rusk ISD Extracurricular Activity above participation in any non-school sanctioned activity and attend all practices, games, and contests scheduled by Rusk ISD Extracurricular coaches, sponsors, and directors.

If a student chooses to miss a Rusk ISD Extracurricular Practice because of participation in an activity not under the auspices of Rusk ISD, the student will be suspended for one game/contest. On the second offense, the student has chosen the outside activity over the Rusk ISD activity and will be released from the team/group. In the event a student misses a Rusk ISD contest or interscholastic competition to participate in an activity not under the direction of Rusk ISD; he/she will be suspended from ten percent of the games in that sport or contests in that activity. On the second offense, the student has chosen the outside activity over the Rusk ISD activity and will be released from the team/group.

Other Rusk ISD school sanctioned activities do not fall under this policy.

The Director for the extracurricular activity may make an exception to this policy if the student is participating on a national or international level and representing the United States; i.e. U. S. Olympic Team.

Communications and Social Media

Certain standards are necessary for the integrity and reputation of any organization. Each participant in extracurricular activities should be a leader within the school and should set a good example before the public at all times. Student participants are expected to set a good example for their classmates, be honest and truthful,

show good sportsmanship, and show respect for the school, other team members, students, teachers, directors, and coaches at all times. Students engaging in inappropriate communications, including communications on social media, who do not uphold the standards and expectations of the RISD extracurricular programs, may be subject to disciplinary actions by the coach, director, or sponsor. Examples of conduct considered unbecoming include electronically transmitting inappropriate photographs or text material (i.e. photos showing nudity or undergarments, any inappropriate sexually explicit photo, photos showing drugs or alcohol, referring to drugs or alcohol, using vulgar language, threats, cyberbullying, or cursing). These consequences may include benching from activities, practices, and competitions, and removal from teams or activities, at the discretion of the coach, director, or sponsor.

Injuries and Concussions

Students who suffer injuries or illness in connection with extracurricular activities must consult a doctor or trainer within 24 hours. If an injury or illness hinders or limits a student's performance and/or practice capabilities, that student will be required to provide doctor's note outlining the specific limitations. Injured athletes and participants are expected to attend all events and practices in accordance with their doctor's notes. A student with a concussion must follow the RISD concussion policy until he or she is cleared to participate under the standards set forth by the RISD concussion policy, to the same extent as if the extracurricular activity was an interscholastic athletic activity, under Board Policy FM (Legal).

Extracurricular Transportation Policy/Procedure

School Sponsored Trips in General

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips shall be required to ride in transportation provided by the school to and from the event. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:

1. A student in prekindergarten–grade 5 may be allowed to ride home with a parent or other adult designated by the parent if a prior written request is submitted to the principal or designee.
2. A student in grades 6–12 may be allowed to ride home with a parent if the parent presents a written request to the coach or sponsor 24 hours prior to

the trip. A student shall only be permitted to ride home with another adult designated by the parent if a prior written request is to and approved by the principal or designee prior to the trip.

3. A parent is required to sign the student out with the coach/sponsor before leaving

In-State Overnight Trips

The principal shall have authority to approve in-state overnight trips by student organizations and other student groups.

Out-of-State Trips

Any out-of-state trips by student organizations or other student groups shall require approval from the Superintendent.

Travel Release Procedure

Under certain circumstances or exceptional situations where it creates an inconvenience to the family, students may be excused from riding from an event on school-authorized transportation. Extension of this privilege is to be kept to a minimum.

- Travel release forms will be made available to all students.
- The students will be released to the parent(s) (designated adult) by the coach/sponsor upon presentation of a copy of the approved travel release at the contest.
- In no case will a student be allowed to ride home with another student driver.

Bus Procedure

Students who miss the bus and arrive at the contest later shall not be permitted to participate unless unusual circumstances have arisen. The coach/sponsor needs to report this to the appropriate campus administrator.

- The buses need to be left clean and litter free.
- Athletes are not to wear any type of spiked shoes on the bus.
- The emergency door will only be used in case of emergency unless instructed otherwise by the driver.
- All students shall return home on the same bus or vehicles in which they traveled to the contests. The only exceptions would be if they have secured a travel release, signed by the parent, prior to leaving the school.

Extracurricular Traveling Procedure (Dress/Behavior)

- All students are expected to dress appropriately and neatly for all events when representing Rusk Independent School District.
- All participants are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times on activity trips. Foul language or obscene actions will not be tolerated.

Attendance

Promptness and attendance are expected at all times. Missed practices or games due to unexcused reasons may result in dismissal from the team. If you must be absent, call and talk to your coach/sponsor before the activity period. Coaches/Sponsors will have a reasonable make-up policy for absences from practice. This procedure will be clearly stated at the beginning of the season and have prior approval of the Activities Director.

A student absent from school may not play or participate on that day unless:

- He/she attends school for a half day;
- An acceptable parent or doctor's excuse is submitted;

- The student is involved in a school activity; and
- The students' time in OCS (if applicable) is completed.

Example: one day of OCS (Completion will be from 8:25 a.m. to 4 p.m. or upon the end of the school day for that campus.)

After the student meets one of the four above options, the student must also get signed approval from all of the following:

- Activity Director
- Team coach or sponsor
- Campus Principal

Excusable absences

- Sick from school
- Doctor's appointment (If this is a check-up, try to schedule around practice.)
- Death in the family
- Religious holiday

Non-Excusable absences (examples)

- Homework (You must learn to manage your time well.)
- Attending a rock concert or pro-sporting event
- Birthday
- Didn't have a ride

Injury or Illness

Report any injury or illness to our athletic trainers. If you are injured or ill, we do not expect you to work out, but we do expect you to dress out and observe so as to learn unless directed otherwise by the head coach.

Suspension/Dismissal/Removal

No student athlete may be suspended, dismissed, or removed from the team or the program before notifying the Activities Director and parents of the recommended action. All parties involved must speak before any action will take place. All suspensions and removals need 24 hours of contemplation before decisions are final.

Parent-Staff Conference Guidelines

- Call the Director's office and request a meeting with said coach/sponsor during his/her conference period.
- Provide three answers to the following questions as to the purpose of the conference.
 - a. What is the issue to be discussed at the parent conference?
 - b. How are you suggesting that the issue is to be resolved?
 - c. If this issue were to be resolved as you have stated in question #2, what negative impact could this possibly have on any of the students on the team?

Coaches may not discuss other members of the team or certain team personnel decisions, including playing time, with parents.

Conflict Resolution: The Next Step

If the parent-coach meeting procedure is unsatisfactory, contact the activities director. If the matter is not resolved, the parent may file a formal complaint, under Board Policy FNG (Local).

Equipment and Facilities

Use of Equipment and Facilities

It is important to emphasize to all students their responsibility to take care of school equipment and facilities and to report any abuses to their coach/sponsor. Replacing equipment and repair to facilities can only result in a loss of funding that could be used elsewhere in the extracurricular program.

Department-issued equipment is to be worn only during practice sessions and interscholastic contests, or by permission of coach/sponsor. At no times are students to wear school-issued equipment or uniforms for:

- Work or Job
- Socially
- School Wear

Collection and Storage of Equipment

As students turn in their equipment, it should be checked off his/her equipment card noting the condition of all returned equipment.

Students are expected to:

- Keep their equipment within their locker as directed;
- Take ownership of school facilities and assist in making sure they are well cared for; and
- Be financially responsible for any lost items checked out to them by the school.

If any equipment is lost or has abnormal usage, the student will be charged a replacement cost. The following actions will take place until all financial obligations are met:

- The student will not receive any Honors or awards; and
- The student will not be allowed to participate in another activity.
- A list of students still delinquent at the end of the school year will be turned in to the building principal.

Lettering/Honor Guidelines

Students who exhibit outstanding team qualities such as regular participation in practices, dependability, following rules, maintaining eligibility and behaving in a manner that reflects positively on the Rusk ISD, the schools, the organizations and the community may be considered for a varsity letter. Seniors who have consistently followed all program and school rules and who have participated for four years at Rusk High School, as well as serving as a good role model for underclass students, may be given special consideration for letter awards or other honors. Transfer students may also be granted special consideration on a case-by-case basis. The head coach of the individual sport will make the final decision for this special consideration. Other criteria may also be considered as deemed appropriate by the head coach/sponsor of the activity and approved by the Activities Director. Students must complete the season of the activity to be considered for letter awards or other honors.

The criteria to letter in an individual/team activity is limited to participation in the highest level of the activity offered in the school. The individual head coach/sponsor will set the criteria and the activities director will approve it prior to the start of completion. Students and parents will be informed of the criteria prior to participation.

Jurisdiction

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, RISD sets higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than for students who choose not to participate in these activities. Therefore, this Extracurricular Handbook extends beyond the RISD Student Code of Conduct not only in types of prohibited behavior, but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline.

This Extracurricular Handbook will be enforced with all RISD students participating in extracurricular activities:

- regardless of whether school is in session
- regardless of whether or not the behavior in question is on or off campus

- regardless of whether the student is directly involved with the extracurricular activity at the time the prohibited conduct occurs;
- regardless of whether the extracurricular activity is in-season; and
- regardless of where or when the conduct occurs.

A student who violates the Student Code of Conduct may incur consequences from both the appropriate school administrator and from his or her coach or sponsor for the same particular violation. A student participating in extracurricular activities may violate the RISD Extracurricular Handbook and be subject to discipline by a coach or sponsor without having violated the RISD Student Code of Conduct.

Prohibited Conduct.

RISD students who participate in extracurricular activities are prohibited at all times from willfully:

- Possessing or drinking alcoholic beverages illegally.
- Possessing or using smoke or smokeless tobacco or tobacco related product illegally or on school property, at a school activity, or at a school function.
- Possessing or consuming illegal drugs or possessing or using any drug paraphernalia.
- Misusing prescription drugs or non prescription drugs or other mood-altering substances.
- Attending or remaining at any activity where illegal alcohol consumption is occurring.
- Attending or remaining at any activity where illegal drugs are present or being used.
- Attending or remaining at any activity where prescription or non-prescription drugs are being misused, or where other mood-altering substances are being used.
- Committing theft on or off school property, at a school activity, or at a school function.

Consequences

Offenses are cumulative during a student's high school career and do not start over from year to year.

❖ First Offense:

- Suspension from any extracurricular activity for a minimum of twenty (20) school days from the date RISD received notice of the offense which will carry over year to year or season to season, if applicable. The student will remain in the program and practice, but may not participate in competitions or contests or performances. A student may also receive other consequences, such as demerits or removal from the activity, if the activity's constitution, handbook, or code of conduct allows.

❖ Second Offense:

- Suspension for ninety (90) school days from the date RISD received notice of the offense which will carry over year to year or season to season, if applicable. A student may be removed from the activity according to the activity's constitution, handbook, or code of conduct.

❖ Third Offense:

- Immediate dismissal from the extracurricular program for 365 days. After one year, student may seek reinstatement (if possible depending on the program) under the approval of the director/sponsor and the Campus Principal.

** Note: In the event a student is subsequently cleared of charges and no action (disciplinary or legal) results, the student may be reinstated immediately into the program if the RISD administration deems there was no violation of rules.

** Unless otherwise provided in the activity's constitution, handbook, or code of conduct, a suspension does not prohibit a student from participation during holidays including summer break.

** If permitted by an activity's constitution, handbook, or code of conduct and individual may try out for the organization/team for the following year while under suspension.

Indictment for a Felony

Students while under indictment for a felony whether on or off campus will not be allowed to participate in any capacity in the extracurricular program. This exclusion includes both practices and games. When the guilt or innocence is established, readmission into the program will be determined based upon the outcome.

Other Inappropriate Conduct

RISD prohibits hazing, harassment, and bullying. Students who are found to have engaged in hazing, harassment, and bullying will be disciplined according to the RISD Student Code of Conduct.

Due Process and Appeals

Before a student is suspended or removed from participation in an extracurricular activity, and before any other consequence is imposed as provided in this handbook, the alleged infraction will be documented and a reasonable investigation shall occur. The principal or designee shall then schedule a conference with the student and the student's parent to explain the reasons for which the action is being taken and to offer the student an opportunity to discuss the matter. The outcome or decision from the conference may be appealed through the procedures set forth in RISD Board policy FNG (Local). Disciplinary consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal.

Receipt of Extracurricular Handbook

This Handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official RISD policy manual. Rather it is a guide to and a brief explanation of RISD extracurricular guidelines. District policies and procedures can change at any time. This manual is not meant to be all encompassing and administrative discretion may be used when deemed appropriate.

I have received and read the RISD Extracurricular Handbook and I understand I am to the rules and regulations set forth in it. I fully understand its meaning and support its enforcement by RISD.

I specifically understand that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. As a member of extracurricular organizations I accept the responsibility to broaden and develop strength of character and contribute in a positive manner to my team, organization, and school, remembering I am a role model to younger students in my community.

I further understand I am subject to the consequences listed in the Extracurricular Handbook, including suspension from extracurricular activities.

I also understand I must comply with this Extracurricular Handbook, but also any additional rules set forth by the advisor, sponsor, or director.

Student Signature

Date

I understand in order to participate in _____,

My child, _____, must comply with all the rules and regulations set forth in the Extracurricular Handbook and from the advisor, director, or sponsor. Should my child violate one of the rules or regulations, my child is subject to the consequences set forth in the Extracurricular Handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

The parent and student must sign the Extracurricular Handbook receipt form prior to participation in the extracurricular activity.