

Bridge to Independence Private School

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ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

MEMBER OF: Sunshine State Athletic Association

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“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

[1 Timothy 4:8](#)

Objective

The objective of the Athletic Department of Bridge to Independence is to be competitive in all sports within our school's framework that promotes the development of character, leadership, teamwork, and game competition for each player.

Mission

In addition to physical development, athletics provides a unique opportunity for students to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. The Athletic Department at Bridge to Independence (BTI) seeks to use the arena of physical training and competition to teach each student-athlete the disciplines needed to build good character and excellence in academics, teamwork, and leadership.

As part of our educational process, Bridge to Independence exists to serve these purposes:

- To develop student leaders.
- To develop a commitment to good sportsmanship and respect for others.
- To develop student leaders who are dedicated and loyal to their school and team; who exhibit fairness, integrity, consideration, hard-work, discipline; who persevere and sacrifice in the face of adversity and are thankful and gracious in victory.
- To develop God-given talents and instruct students in the rules, fundamentals, and skills of various individual and team sports.
- To develop a submissive and respectful spirit for authority.
- To provide physical training and physical outlet for adolescent energy.
- To develop and maintain the spirit of true amateur competition.
- To partner with parents to provide a healthy atmosphere in which student-athletes can apply principles learned in competitive sports to enhance relationships and quality of life.

Athletic Rules & Conduct: Students, Coaches, Staff, Parents, Spectators

It can be difficult to define the expectations for such subjective terms as "proper conduct" and "good sportsmanship." Yet, there is no more important task than to set standards which are fair, honorable, and consistent. When **anyone** is involved with the Wildcats Athletics, the following list acts as a guideline for BTI's standard of excellence:

- Always be conscious of your words and actions; they reflect you, your family, your school, and your community.
- Treat ALL athletes, coaches, officials, fans, etc. with respect.
- Regard the rules of your game as an agreement, the spirit and letter of which you should not evade or break.
- Accept absolutely, and without quarreling, the final decision of any official or authority (Coach, Administrator, or Referee)
- Honor visiting teams and spectators as your own guests and treat them as such. Likewise, behave as an honored guest when visiting another school.
- Be gracious in victory AND defeat.

- Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
- Remember that a student-athlete is a student first and foremost - what is done in the classroom influences what is done on the field or court.

Specific Guidelines for Coaches

- Coaches must remember that athletics is a part of a student's education and overall development - academics is always a priority to athletics.
- Coaches should help each child reach his/her full potential as an athlete and student.
- Coaches should remember that their team will reflect and model the coach's own attitude, manner, temper, conduct and behavior. They must conduct themselves in a way that brings honor to the athletic program, their school, their team, and themselves.
- Coaches will treat the student-athletes with proper respect. Instruction and correction should be overwhelmingly positive. Coaches should never intentionally demean, embarrass, or shame a student-athlete.
- Coaches are obligated to hold themselves to the same high standard of sportsmanship, respect, preparation, organization, dedication, hard work, self-discipline, sacrifice, and a behavior that they expect of their student-athletes.
- Coaches are expected to follow the policies, procedures and guidelines of the BTI Employee Handbook

Specific Guidelines for Student-Athletes

- Student-athletes should represent their family, their school, and themselves with honor, proper conduct, good sportsmanship, and a positive spirit.
- Student-athletes must remember that representing Bridge to Independence is both an honor and a responsibility. The school has established an expectation of high standards both on and off the playing field or court.
- Student-athletes must demonstrate respect for all athletes, coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
- Student athletes must comply fully with the ruling of any official. In no way should a student-athlete demonstrate by voice (profanity), action, or gesture, his or her dissatisfaction with an official's decision.
- Student-athletes are expected to exhibit positive behavior in the classroom and in other non-athletic activities.
- Student-athletes must maintain a balance between athletics and academics, remembering that academics is top priority.
- Student-athletes are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the team by **attending all required team practices, games, and meetings.**
- Student-athletes must understand that competitive rivalries are encouraged, but that disrespect for opponents is unacceptable.

Specific Guidelines for Parents/Spectators

- Spectators - whether students, staff, family, friends, or visitors - bear an important responsibility to facilitate an atmosphere at games which is conducive to good sportsmanship.
- Spectators must observe games from the designated spectators' areas (stands/bleachers).
- Any action that distracts the coaches, players, or officials from doing their best is not acceptable. You will be asked to leave and be escorted from the game.

- Any spectator, representing Bridge to Independence, who violates this standard of behavior, may not be allowed to attend Bridge to Independence events. Parents who violate this standard of behavior may forfeit the privilege of their child's participation in Bridge to Independence athletics.

Physical Evaluations

Physical Evaluations are required to be signed by a doctor as well as the student and a parent or guardian, before the first day of the upcoming school year. Students may not practice without the completed Physical Evaluation Form on file in the school office. Please note that practice usually begins on the first day of school.

Study Halls

The schedule for certain sports seasons may allow time for study halls before practice. These study halls are not a guarantee, but if time permits, study halls will be monitored by either the coach, a trusted volunteer parent, or Athletic Director. Students are expected to follow the behavior guidelines outlined above during study hall and understand that if study halls are not used productively, they may be eliminated.

Attendance

In athletics, as in life, attendance is crucial. It is imperative that athletes, trainers, and coaches be present for practices, meetings, and games. When someone chooses to participate in BTI Athletics, he/she is making a commitment, and it is important to follow-through on commitments.

Coach: It is understood that special situations arise where it is necessary to be absent. The key to this type of situation is open communication. If a coach needs to be absent he/she is to communicate with and receive approval from the Athletic Director and/or Head of School (Principal/Administrator).

Player: If, for any reason, an athlete must miss a practice or game, he/she must give notice to his/her coach in advance, not an hour before practice. All athletes must understand that discipline may be given to the athlete by the coach for missing a practice or a game.

Player Discipline

It is essential for each athlete and coach to remember that he/she represents not only BTI, but also Family and your community. As mentioned earlier, there are a number of rules and guidelines that must be followed to play sports at BTI. Let it be known that it is at the discretion of the coach, Athletic Director, and/or Head of School to administer discipline to an athlete who violates these rules.

A student can and should be disciplined for, but it may not be limited to, the following: tardy to practice or games, conduct or grades in the classroom, missing practices or games due to ineligibility, lunch detentions in school, lack of effort in practices or games, fighting with another student or athlete, disrespect to an official, coach, or teacher, etc...

Discipline can take place in the following ways: extra running or exercise above and beyond what is required of the team, **temporary or permanent probation from game(s)**, community service, loss of playing time in games, loss of leadership privileges, etc...

However, BTI will follow the disciplinary actions below:

I. Fighting

- **Student Athlete(s)** fighting in school or out school for the **first time** receives a **1 game suspension**. Regardless of school consequences.
- **Student Athlete(s)** fighting in school or out school a **second time** receives a **2 game suspension**. Regardless of school consequences
- **Student Athlete(s)** fighting in school or out school a **third time** are **officially dismissed from the team**. Regardless of school consequences

Note: If any student-athlete gets suspended from school, he/she is not permitted to play in the immediate game under no circumstances. Coaches do not have authorizations excuse student-athletes from game suspensions issued by the school administration.

- **Student athletes cannot play in a game if he/she was absent from school that day. No exceptions.** If the student arrives to school by 10:00am, he/she will be allowed to participate.

II. Technical Fouls

1. **First Technical Foul** for Unsportsmanlike conduct (Speak w/ Athletic Director or Dean)
2. **Second Technical Foul** for Unsportsmanlike conduct (Sit out a quarter next game)
3. **Third Technical Foul** for Unsportsmanlike conduct (Sit out a 2 quarters or a half next game)
4. **If a player receives 2 technical fouls** in a game for unsportsmanlike conduct the first time, he/she **sits out the next game**.
5. **If a player receives 2 technical fouls** in a game for unsportsmanlike conduct a **second time**, he/she will be **dismissed from the team**.

III. Practices:

6. Missed practices could result in missed games.
7. **Habitually missing practice that exceeds 5-7 days will result dismissal from the team.** However, the player can be excused due to a death in the family, an illness, or medical reasons.

Game Participation

The philosophy and directives concerning the amount of time each student will play in a game is an essential component of the overall athletic program. One of the purposes of our program is to develop fundamental skills. Game competition and practice are major factors in building these skills.

Desire alone to be an athlete on a team and to participate actively is not always sufficient. An athlete's playing time is exclusively the coach's decision based upon the following factors:

- Grade level – Because the Varsity level is more competitive, the amount of playing time for each player may not be as great as Junior Varsity
- The skill the player possesses.
- The growth and development of skills as the season progresses.
- The ability to function effectively as part of the team; to follow the game plan; to put **team success first**.
- The effort, attitude, and seriousness devoted to practice sessions and game situations at all times.

In keeping with good sportsmanship and fair play, Varsity level players are not allowed to play at the Junior Varsity level, unless under special circumstances and must be agreed upon by the administration.

Communication

- The Athletic Director and coaches must clearly communicate with parents and teachers about practice and game times. Schedules must be issued to parents and players in advance
- Coaches must communicate to a student if they have diminished play time due to poor attitude, attendance, or participation. If a problem persists with a student, the coach will contact the parents to inform them of the problem.
- Students and/or parents must clearly communicate with the coach about any absences or illnesses.
- Parent concerns should be brought to the coach first. If necessary, the Athletic Director may also become involved.

Uniforms

Bridge to Independence provides athletic uniforms for each team. New uniforms are a privilege. The standard rule applying to athletic uniforms is that the uniforms are on a four to five year rotation system. This means that each sport team wears their particular uniform for four years and then, at the discretion of the Athletic Director, new uniforms may be purchased.

Students will be given a uniform at the beginning of each season. They are expected to take proper care of the uniform and return it at the end of the season with only reasonable "wear and tear." **Students who lose their uniforms or whose uniform is damaged in any way (including stains) will be expected to pay for replacements.**

Students will wear their PE uniforms or reversible jersey tops for practices. Student-athletes are to be in proper uniform for every game and practice.

Eligibility

All student-athletes must remember that there are a limited number of spots on each team. Therefore, grades and conduct play an important role in the decision of who will and who will not be chosen for the allotted spots on a particular team. It is at the discretion of the coach, Athletic Director, and/or Head of School as to whether or not a student will be able to come back to the team after having been ineligible.

Academic

All students who participate in athletics must maintain a passing grade (C - 70% = 2.0 GPA or above) in all courses including the elective classes per the Department of Education. Eligibility will be determined at each **nine-week grading report**. If a student has a failing grade at the nine week grading period, he/she will be ineligible for athletics until the next grading check (progress report or report card).

Note: A failing grade on a report card **will** cause academic ineligibility. A failing grade on a progress report **will not** cause academic ineligibility, but should serve a strong warning to students, parents, and coaches and the child will be placed on academic probation, as well as attend study hall.

Conduct

Students must maintain an average of an "S" in conduct. Eligibility will be determined at each **three-week grading report**. Any student who has a "U" in conduct will become ineligible for athletics until the next grading check (progress report or report card).

Note: A "U" in conduct on a progress report or report card **will** cause ineligibility.

If a student-athlete becomes ineligible due to either academics or conduct, they **will be allowed** to continue to practice with the team at the coach's discretion, but **are not allowed** to travel with the team, dress for games, or sit with the team during games. He/she may rejoin the team (if there is a spot) when his/her grades or conduct are found acceptable at the next grade check.

Conference Play

Bridge to Independence is currently competing in an Independence Conference. This independent league consists of local schools in the Central Florida area. The league is operated and managed by a board of directors in conjunction with the coaches of the league. A simple majority by vote determines decisions made by the league.

Sports Offered: Middle School (Grades 5-8)

Bridge to Independence offers 6 sports: Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Tennis, Cheerleading, and Track. The cost for a student to play any one of these sports will be determined at the beginning of each year. These fees will cover incurred costs such as uniforms, officials, travel expenses, equipment, awards, etc...

Football – Middle School Boys

Football takes place in the fall during the first semester of school. The BTI Wildcats competes in a flag-football (7-on-7) league. Football is a team sport offered to boys ranging from the 5th grade to the 8th grade. BTI chooses to allow no more than 20 players on a team. If 20 or more players try-out for the football team the coach may institute a cut.

Volleyball –Varsity, JV, and Middle School Girls

Volleyball takes place in the fall during the first semester of school. Volleyball is a team sport offered to girls ranging from 5th grade to 8th grade. If the number of students interested in playing volleyball is large enough, BTI will fill two volleyball teams: a varsity team and a junior varsity team. If there is not enough student interest, there will only be one varsity team. BTI chooses to allow no more than 14 players per team. If 14 or more players try-out for the volleyball team the coach may institute a cut.

Basketball – Varsity, JV, and Middle School Boys & Girls

Basketball takes place in the winter during the first and second semesters of school. High school rulebooks are made available by the conference or organization. If the number of students interested in playing basketball is large enough, BTI will field four basketball teams: a varsity boys' basketball team, a varsity girls' basketball team, a junior varsity boys' basketball team, and a junior varsity girls' basketball team. If there is not enough student interest; there will only be one varsity team. Basketball is a team sport offered to girls and boys ranging from 5th grade to 8th grade. BTI chooses to allow no more than 12 players per team. If 12 or more players try-out for the basketball team the coach may institute a cut.

Track – Varsity, JV, and Middle School Boys & Girls

Track takes place during the spring in the second semesters of school. Track is a team sport, which consists of both individual and team events. Track is offered to boys and girls ranging from 5th grade to 8th grade. It will also be available for middle and high school. There is no maximum or minimum number of players that constitutes a team.

BTI will compete in about 5 track meets per season. The following events will be offered at different meets: shot put, discus, long jump, triple jump, 55 meter dash, 100 meter dash, 200 meter dash, 400 meter run, 800 meter run, 1600 meter run, 100 meter hurdles, 200 meter hurdles, 400 meter relay, 800 meter relay, and 1600 meter relay. School ranking is determined based upon points earned in each race or event.

Lacrosse – Middle School Boys & Girls

Lacrosse takes place during the spring in the second semesters of school. The High school rulebook is made available by the conference. Lacrosse is a team sport, which consists of team events. Lacrosse is offered to boys and girls ranging from 5th grade to 8th grade. There is no maximum or minimum number of players that constitutes a team; however we may only be allowed to enter a certain number of competitors per team.

Cheerleading – Varsity, JV, and Middle School Girls

Track takes place during the spring in the second semesters of school. Cheerleading is a team sport, which consists of both individual and team events. Cheerleading is offered to girls ranging from 6th grade to 12th grade. There is no maximum or minimum number of cheerleaders that constitutes a team. The team must meet all grade and behavior requirements set by BTI in order to participate.

Team Managers – Varsity, JV, and Middle School Boys & Girls

Team managers play an important role at BTI. Their job is to support the coach in the course of a season to ensure quality management. Their function on the team includes, but may not be limited to, videoing the game, keeping stats for games, filling up water bottles, wrapping ankles, participating in practice, taking care of equipment, etc...

It is at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director to choose a team manager for each team if needed. The team manager(s) should have a willing servant's heart. It is important that he/she be organized and detail-oriented, as he/she may be keeping the official stats for games. The team manager follows the same academic standards for eligibility as the athletes.

Transportation

Drivers

If vans are not available, drivers will be enlisted. All rules from the parent-student handbook about driving students will be followed.

Athletic Awards Ceremony

In order to celebrate the hard work and dedication of all athletes, BTI hosts an annual athletic award ceremony. The goal of the ceremony is to recognize and honor the achievements of the individual athlete, each team, the coaches, and parents. This is a time to also recognize our 8th grade student-athletes. The ceremony will take place in May after the year's athletic season has been completed.

The Athletic Director will meet with each coach of each team and together decide who has earned each of the following awards. BTI **may** present the following awards:

- The Coaches Award
This award is given to one player on each team who demonstrates the highest level of dedication, Christian character, trustworthiness, and encouragement of teammates.
- Most Improved Player Award
This award is given to one player on each team who demonstrated a spirit to learn and whose performance exhibited the highest level of improvement of athletic skill and knowledge of the sport.
- Most Valuable Player Award
This award is given to one player on each team whose performance exhibited the highest level of athletic skill and knowledge, sportsmanship, perseverance, and effort.
- Ironman Medals
Medals are given to each athlete who participated in ALL of the seasonal sports. For boys, that would be flag football, basketball, and track or tennis. For girls, that would consist of volleyball, basketball, and track or tennis.

Parent Participation

Each sport team is heavily dependent upon parent volunteers. Parents have many opportunities to be involved with their student-athletes sport team. These may include but are not limited to:

- **Team Parent / Team Coordinator**
Each team will have one volunteer Team Parent / Team Coordinator that will work closely with the coach and coordinate the team's transportation to away games, coordinate a clean-up crew for home games, and coordinate snacks and water for each game for the team.
- **Concession Coordinator**
During Volleyball and Basketball seasons, BTI may sell food and drink at each home game to raise money for the Athletic Department. The Concession Coordinator will be in charge of keeping the concession stocked and coordinating workers for each home game.
- **Concession Workers**
During Volleyball and Basketball seasons, BTI may sell food and drink at each home game to raise money for the Athletic Department. Workers will be in charge of setting up the concession stand, selling items, and closing down the concession stand.
- **Drivers**
If a van is not available, a team will need to be transported to away games and meets. Drivers will be needed on a regular basis. Drivers must have a copy of their driver's license and insurance in the office
- **Van Drivers**
Passenger Van drivers do not need a CDL. Drivers must have a copy of their driver's license and insurance in the office.
- **Snacks/Drinks**
Each parent will be assigned a turn by the Team Coordinator to bring snacks and drinks for the team. Snacks and drinks should be clearly labeled and dropped off in the gym the morning of the game.
- **Clean-up Crew**
After each home game, we will need help cleaning up the gym and lunch area so that they are ready for the next school day. This could include setting up chairs and tables, sweeping, picking up trash, etc...
- **Clock Workers**
During Volleyball and Basketball home games, each team will need trained adults to run the clock.
- **Score Book Keepers**
During Volleyball and Basketball home and away games, each team will need trained adults to record the stats and/or scorebook.

Athletic Budget

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director (with the approval and authority of the Head of School to implement and monitor the yearly athletic budget. The budget acts as a business plan for the working year and should be followed with careful attention.

The athletic budget includes every area of BTI Athletics such as conference fees, uniforms, equipment, banquets, banners, etc... It is important for the Athletic Director to work closely with the Administration of the school to ensure the accuracy of the budget. To ensure accountability, the Athletic Director must gain approval prior to any purchase.

Agreement

ALL **parents/guardians** and **student-athletes** must agree to the policies in the Athletic Handbook to participate in Athletics at Bridge to Independence Private School. Signature of an electronic form will confirm agreement.



Sports Offered and Fees

*Each sport for the **BTI Wildcats** requires a \$125.00 fee to cover gym use, referees, equipment, and coaches.*

❖ **6-8th (Middle School) Sports**

1. Basketball\$125.00
2. Flag Football.....\$125.00

❖ **9-12th (Junior Varsity & Varsity) Sports**

1. Basketball\$125.00
2. Flag Football.....\$125.00
3. Track & Field.....\$125.00

There is an additional \$25.00 to cover banquets and award. This does NOT include shooting shirts, shoes or sports bags.

 BTI's Elementary and Middle School (4th- 8th) Development League

➤ **SPORTS:** There is a \$55.00 fee to participate on BTI's Team.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| ▪ Volleyball | Developmental Co-Ed | (Fall) |
| ▪ Soccer | Developmental Co-Ed | (Fall) |
| ▪ Flag Football | | (Winter) |
| ▪ Basketball | | (Winter) |
| ▪ Lacrosse | Developmental Co-Ed | (Winter) |
| ▪ Baseball | Developmental Co-Ed | (Spring) |
| ▪ Track & Field | | (Spring) |