

## **Crandall ISD Athletics**

### **Social Media Policy**

Student-athletes are high-profile representatives of the Crandall Independent School District, and their behavior is subject to scrutiny by their peers, the campus, community, and the media. The actions of a single student-athlete can reflect positively or negatively not only on the individual student-athlete, but also on his or her team and coaches, the Athletics Department and the entire school campus. Therefore, student athletes are expected to represent themselves and CISD with honor, dignity and integrity at all times – including when interacting on social networking websites and in other online environments. The popularity of social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Vine, YouTube, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc.) has grown tremendously during the last few years. These websites can serve as valuable communication tools when used appropriately. The use of social media, however, has the potential to cause problems for both the student-athlete and the school environment. Almost anything a student-athlete posts on a social networking site may be viewed by others, and both the media and the general public are more likely to view the profiles of student-athletes than the profiles of other students.

The Athletics Department has developed this Student-Athlete Social Networking Guideline in order to:

- I. Provide recommendations and suggestions for student-athletes to help them use social media in a safe and responsible manner
- II. Outline important rules that student-athletes must follow when using social media

#### **Important Suggestions & Recommendations Regarding Social Networking Sites**

Some students mistakenly believe social networking websites have a veil of privacy about them and assume their profiles are viewed only by a close circle of friends and fellow students. To the contrary, the content on most of these sites is accessible by anyone in the general public unless security and privacy features are used. The public nature of these websites has created personal safety and personal welfare concerns. For example, student-athletes have been stalked or sexually harassed and assaulted as a result of their Facebook profiles. Fans of opposing teams have taunted student-athletes based on information obtained from social networking sites. Student-athletes also should be aware that potential employers and graduate school admissions officers now regularly screen applicants by conducting “Google” searches of an applicant’s name and by reviewing the applicant’s social networking profiles. Students are being passed over for interviews and denied admission to universities based on the content of their profiles. Student-athletes should be very careful about what

personal information they share on the internet. For their own security, protection and welfare and that of their teammates and friends, the Athletics Department strongly recommends and advises student-athletes to:

- Keep phone numbers, physical addresses, birthdates, current whereabouts, travel plans and other personal information strictly confidential. This information should not be contained in a student athlete's personal online profile.
- Limit the access of others to e-mail addresses and screen carefully those whom a student-athlete may accept as "friends" on a social networking site.
- Use whatever security and privacy features are available to restrict the ability of others view a student-athlete's site or to post pictures, messages and other content on a student-athlete's site.
- If an individual contacts a student-athlete via a social networking site and the nature of the contact makes the student-athlete concerned for his or her safety or uncomfortable in any way, the student athlete should immediately contact a parent, a coach, or a campus administrator.

### **Rules Regarding Social Networking Sites**

Participation in CISD Athletics is a privilege and not a right. As a condition of being a student-athlete in CISD, student-athletes must abide by the following rules related to the use of the internet and social networking sites:

1. Any postings or communications via social networking websites which disrupt either the educational or athletic environments or which advocates the violation of any school or team policy would be unacceptable.
2. Student-athletes may not post online any pictures, information or other content that might cause embarrassment to themselves, fellow student-athletes, teams, coaches, the Athletics Department or the campus (examples: obscene images or language, nudity, pictures at parties with alcohol, references to drugs, sex, or illegal activities, etc.).
3. Student-athletes may not post any content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual, teammate, coach, faculty member, or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another school; taunting comments aimed at a student-athlete, coach or team at another school). No posts should depict or encourage unacceptable or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, illegal drug use, etc.).
4. Student-athletes may not post any content online that would constitute a violation of the CISD Student Code of Conduct.
5. Student-athletes may not post any information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary to the Athletic Department or the school which is not public information (examples: tentative or future team schedules, student-athlete injuries and eligibility status, travel plans/itineraries or information).
6. Student-athletes are required to abide by all laws related to the use of the internet (including state and federal privacy laws such as FERPA and HIPPA), and student-athletes are personally liable for any violations of those laws.

**Student-athletes in CISD are required to abide by rules set forth in these guidelines.**

The failure to do so will be considered a violation of the student-athlete code of conduct and/or the CISD student code of conduct. The violation may result in disciplinary action by the athletics department and the campus.

1st Offense - Warning and parent conference with the athlete's specific coach (i.e. Freshman/JV/Position Coach). Consequences will be determined based on the severity of the infraction and may include suspension or dismissal from the team or athletic activities.

2nd Offense – Parent meeting with the athlete's specific coach and head coach of the sport involved. Consequences will be determined based on the severity of the infraction and may include suspension or dismissal from the team or athletic activities.

3rd Offense – Parent meeting with the head coach and the Athletic Director. Consequences will be determined based on the severity of the infraction and may include suspension or dismissal from the team or athletic activities.

In short, do not have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. The online social network sites are NOT a place where you can say and do whatever you want without repercussions. The information you post on a social networking site is considered public information. Think about who you represent: yourself, your family, your teammates and coaches, and your school. Like it or not, people are going to associate everything you post with you and what you represent. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image of which you can be proud for years to come.

-----  
As a Crandall Pirate athlete, I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to follow the previously mentioned commitments regarding the social media policy. I understand that failure to fulfill the previously mentioned commitments may lead to my removal as a member of the Crandall Athletic Program.

Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I recognize my son/daughter's commitment to the Crandall athletic program, and we pledge our loyalty and support in helping him/her achieve these commitments regarding the social media policy.

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_