

# CHANOOKA BRAVES



2018 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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Dear Athlete and Parents,

Chanooka Braves is pleased that you have expressed an interest in participating in our Youth Football, Cheer and Dance program.

We hope that you will take the time to familiarize yourself with this booklet and understand the organizations guidelines, policies, and expectations for the athletes and their families. To begin, however, we would like you to read through the philosophy of our program as this is the foundation by which we make all of our decisions.

### **Philosophy of the Athletic Program**

Chanooka Braves recognizes the importance of athletic activities that teach lifetime values such as commitment, discipline, hard work, leadership, teamwork, respect for others and physical fitness, all of which are the foundation for athletic and academic success. Participation in athletic activities contributes to the physical, emotional and social health of our athletes and promotes a sense of unity and cooperation among athletes, and the communities involved.

Our sports teams will always strive to win, but never at the expense of character, healthy attitudes and habits, and good judgment. We will always emphasize excellence, effort, improvement, and respect for coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials. All Chanooka Braves athletes should be known for their character and class; humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Our athletic program is designed to develop, promote, and provide the following: self- esteem, pride, good citizenship, sportsmanship, cooperation, higher academic performance, responsibility to self and others, respect, positive role models, healthy lifestyles, team-building and lifelong wellness. We believe that the sports experience should not only be rewarding but fun.

Chanooka Braves recognizes the unique roles and responsibilities of its coaches and parents in sports activities. Coaches' and parents' primary roles should be to teach the lifetime values of our sports philosophy and to always lead by example. Chanooka Braves Youth Football is an integral part of the community. Their impact is immensely important in promoting a positive climate because they offer opportunities for adults to interact with our athletes in meaningful way.

Once again, we thank you for taking the time to read through this athletic handbook. We look forward to your support and involvement in our program. If you have any questions feel free to contact us.

Best Regards,

Chanooka Braves Board of Directors

## **I. CODE OF ETHICS FOR SPECTATORS, ATHLETES, COACHES AND PARENTS**

### **Code of Ethics for Spectators**

- Attempts to understand and be informed of the playing rules
- Appreciates a good play no matter who makes it
- Cooperates with and responds enthusiastically to cheerleaders/dancers
- Shows compassion for an injured player; applauds positive performance; does not heckle, jeer or distract players; and avoids use of profane and obnoxious language and behavior
- Respects the judgment and strategy of the coach, and does not criticize players, coaches, or referees/judges for a loss
- Respect officials and accepts their decisions
- Respects property of others and authority of those who administer the competition
- Censures those whose behavior is unbecoming
- No member is to physically or verbally abuse another parent, fan, coach player or referee.
- No member may approach a referee at any time. All concerns should be directed to the Athletic Director or Head Coach.
- Use of tobacco products, drugs, and or alcoholic beverages, are prohibited at practice fields, home and away events.
- No member is to interfere with practices, games, or coaching at any time. Any member that has a complaint or concern must immediately notify the Athletic Director or any Board Member of his or her complaint or concern.
- The Chanooka Braves name, logo and registered trademark cannot be used or duplicated without written permission from The Chanooka Braves Board of Directors.
- Social media exchanges are many times informal in nature, however, offensive comments, jokes, bullying, or critical comments with regards to any Braves or River Valley member or policies, is strictly prohibited

### **Code of Ethics for Athletes**

- Remember that academic performance is your primary responsibility
- Read, familiarize yourself and comply with policies outlined in the Athletic Handbook AND your coach's specific set of team policies.
- Treat advisors, coaches and opponents with respect.
- Respect officials and accept their decision without argument or gesture.
- Exercise self-control at all times, setting an example for others to follow
- Win without boasting, lose without excuse and never quit.

- Always remember that you represent Chanooka Braves and the community, and it is a privilege to be part of the organization.
- Return any equipment; uniforms issued to the participant must be returned in the same condition at the end of the season. Equipment lost, damaged or stolen is the sole responsibility of the participant, and it is the responsibility of the participant to make restitution to Chanooka Braves.
- Report any injury to the coach no matter how slight the injury may appear. If the injury requires a physician's care, the participant must have written permission from the doctor before returning to the activity.
- The Chanooka Braves are committed to a program of excellence. Participants are expected to attend all practices and games. Coaches must be notified in advance if a child will miss a practice or game. An unexcused absence may result in a one game suspension.
- The Chanooka Braves name, logo, and registered trademark cannot be used or duplicated without written permission from The Chanooka Braves Board of Directors.

### **Code of Ethics for Coaches**

- The responsibility of a coach is to teach positive attitudes, proper habits, knowledge and skills. Each athlete should be treated as an individual whose welfare shall be primary at all times. The coach must be aware that he or she serves as a model in the education of the athlete and, therefore, shall never place the value of winning above the value of character building.
- The coach must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the coaching profession. In all personal contact with the student athlete, officials, athletic directors, board members, and parents, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- The coach shall be thoroughly acquainted with local rules, River Valley rules, and is responsible for interpretation of those rules to team members. The coach shall abide by the letter and spirit of these rules at all times.
- Coaches shall actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship by their spectators, work closely with spirit groups, and board members.
- Officials shall have the respect and support of the coach. The coach shall not indulge in conduct that will incite players or spectators against the official or against each other. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical and will not be tolerated.
- Before and after games, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly greetings to set correct tone for the event.
- A coach shall not exert pressure on Board Members to give athletes special consideration

- Coaches will not openly criticize players or coaches, reserve constructive criticism for private or in a team setting. Abusive language or physical abuse is never acceptable.
- Use of tobacco products, drugs, or alcoholic beverages is prohibited at practice fields, home and away events.
- All coaches agree to follow instructions written or verbal from the Braves Board of Directors, and/or Athletic Directors.
- All coaches agree that only Head coaches will be allowed to question a decision made by the game officials. All coaches must respect at all times opposing organizations and game officials.
- All coaches will not permit an ineligible or injured player to participate in a practice or game.
- All coaches agree to inform the Athletic Director immediately of any problems with a player or parent of problem within a 24-hour period.
- Social media exchanges are many times informal in nature, however, offensive comments, jokes, bullying, or critical comments with regards to any Braves or River Valley member or policies, is strictly prohibited.
- All coaches agree to practice and participate in all games as set forth by the Braves Board of Directors. No coach may change or cancel practice dates or time(s) without prior notice of approval of Braves Executive Board.
- Provided dress attire (i.e. Braves shirt and hat), must be worn at all games.
- Communicate often. Remember, communication is a two way street. Be willing to listen to players and parents for the sole purpose of creating an educational environment of growth and development and team play.
- All coaches must take and pass a federal background check administered by USA Football before the first day of practice.
- All football coaches must go through USA Football and any other training programs directed by the Braves to coach at any level.

### **Code of Ethics for Parents of Athletes**

- Encourage your child and team – be enthusiastic – show Braves spirit.
- Maintain a positive attitude whether your team is winning or losing.
- Refrain from being insulting or showing bad sportsmanship during competition. Any problems or concerns should be brought to the attention of the Head Coach, Athletic Director, or Board Member at another time.
- Support the team with your Parent Volunteer responsibilities.
- Parents, as spectators, are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times.
- Spectators, including parents, who, in the judgment of the Athletic Director, Head Coach, and/or Board Members, behave in ways that are inappropriate and in violation

- of the guidelines will be warned about the behavior and then will be asked to leave the competition, immediately.
- Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach
- Do not criticize players, coaches, or referees/judges for the loss of the game/competition.
- At least one parent or responsible adult must attend their child's practices and games.
- Unexpected situations arise, such as storms, injuries, sudden illnesses, etc. at which time a parent or responsible adult must be present. If a parent or responsible adult must leave practice they must designate another parent to be responsible for their child and the Head Coach must be notified.
- All members' parents take responsibility for their child's uniform and equipment.
- All members' parents agree that equipment and uniforms will be returned cleaned and any lost or damaged equipment will be paid for.
- All members' parents will see that their child is picked up at a designated time after practice or game.
- All members' parents are required to work a minimum of (3) volunteer slots. If any parent does not show up for their volunteer event, or find a replacement for their volunteer activity, their parent volunteer check will then be cashed. If you fail to fulfill all of your volunteer obligations upon completion of the final Braves event, your family will lose veteran status. If your volunteer checks are returned NSF or for any other reason that prohibits the Braves from receiving the agreed funds, you will not be able to register for the next season without funds being paid in full.
- Social media exchanges are many times informal in nature, however, offensive comments, jokes, bullying, or critical comments with regards to any Braves or River Valley member or policies, is strictly prohibited.
- The Chanooka Braves name, logo, and registered trademark cannot be used or duplicated without written permission from The Chanooka Braves Board of Directors.

## II. ATHLETIC FORMS

The following athletic forms must be signed and returned before an athlete can attend the first practice:

- 1. Registration form**
- 2. Medical Emergency**
- 3. Current Physical**
- 4. Handbook Consent/Acknowledgment**

### III. LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

#### River Valley Youth Football League 2018 Age & Weight Matrix as of 1/1/18

*Ages as of August 31st of current year*

<b>Superlightweight:</b>	<b>With Equipment * (up to)</b>	<b>Starting Game 5 with Equipment* (up to)</b>
Age 6-7-8	88	91
Striper 6-7-8	93	96
Double Striper 6-7	unlimited	unlimited
Age 9	63	n/a

<b>Lightweight:</b>	<b>With Equipment ** (up to)</b>	<b>Starting Game 5 with Equipment** (up to)</b>
Age 8-9-10	108	111
Striper 8-9-10	113	116
Double Striper 8-9	unlimited	unlimited
Age 11	76	n/a

<b>Junior Varsity:</b>	<b>With Equipment ** (up to)</b>	<b>Starting Game 5 with Equipment** (up to)</b>
Age 10-11	128	131
Age 12	120	123
Striper 10-11	139	142
Double Striper 10-	unlimited	unlimited
Age 13	80	n/a

<b>Varsity</b>	<b>With Equipment ** (up to)</b>	<b>Starting Game 5 with Equipment** (up to)</b>
Age 12-13-14	166	169
Striper	197	200
Double Striper	unlimited	unlimited

#### **Notes:**

*Weights are subject to change by River Valley Youth Football League*

**\* Superlightweight Level ONLY - must weigh in with equipment including shoulder pads and game shoes**

**\*\* When Lightweight, Junior Varsity & Varsity players weigh in, they must be wearing a minimum of the following equipment:**

Pants (Thigh and Knee pads)  
Girdle Pads (Hip, Butt, Cup) Game Jersey  
Game Shoes & Socks  
**NO SHOULDER PADS ARE REQUIRED.**

Extra Pads and Sweatshirts:  
Rib Pads, Elbow Pads, Extra Sweatshirts, etc.  
do not have to go on until game time!

#### IV. CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

Concussions are the most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities. The Chanooka Braves will follow the IESA (Illinois Elementary School Association) Protocol for Implementation of NFHS Sports Playing Rules of Concussion.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) implemented a new national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires “any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.

##### **Definition of a Concussion**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be “knocked out”) to have suffered a concussion.

##### **Behavior or signs observed indicative of a possible concussion. Symptoms reported by a player indicative of a possible concussion**

- Loss of consciousness
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears confused
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after the injury
- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

**NOTE: The persons who should be alert for such signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion in an athlete include appropriate health-care professionals, coaches, officials, parents, teammates, and, if conscious, the athlete him/herself.**

**Protocol Background:** This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

**Policy:**

- 1.** During the season the Athletic Director shall remind the head coaches that an approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a practice or game for an apparent head injury, **unless that injury is the result of the student-athlete losing consciousness for any period of time. In such a situation, the student-athlete shall be removed from the practice or game and will not be allowed to return to activity that day and will be subject to the Association's Return to Play policy.**
- 2.** The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the previous rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the approved health care provider.
- 3. RETURN TO PLAY POLICY:** In cases when an athlete is not cleared by an approved health care professional to return to play the same day as he/she is removed from a contest following a possible head injury (i.e., concussion), the athlete shall not return to play or practice until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance from a licensed health care provider to return to play.
- 4.** Following the practice or game, a Concussion Special Report must be filed by the head coach and turned in to the Athletic Director.
- 5.** No player who is/was removed from practice or game due to concussion will be allowed to participate in practices or games until the Athletic Director receives a written release from approved medical professional.

## V. COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR ATHLETIC CONCERNS

Good Communication is critical in athletics, on and off the field. A communication plan is in place to assist and to improve communication between parents, coaches and board members, ultimately for the benefit of the athlete.

Involvement in athletics and activities will allow the athlete to experience some of the most rewarding times of their lives. However, there will likely be times when things don't go their way or they disagree with a coach. It is important that the athlete, parent(s) and family members

realize these difficult situations are as much a part of the learning experience as are the good times.

The coaches work hard to do the best they can for all their athletes, and we ask the players, parents, and family members to respect the fact that their decisions are often extremely difficult, and are made based on factors of which athletes and parents may not be aware. The athlete, not the parent, is strongly encouraged to talk to the coach about any issues or problems that arise during the season. This is not only the most direct and productive means of communication, but also a valuable method of teaching responsibility.

### **Communications the PARENT should accept from your child's COACH**

- Specific team policies and consequences for when policies and training rules are not followed
- Expectations that coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad
- Locations and times of all practices and games
- Team requirements, i.e. practices, special equipment, out of season conditioning
- Any special events or activities planned, including optional team garments that the team is considering to purchase
- Procedure to follow should your child be injured during participation
- Specific ways to improve upon athlete's ability

### **Appropriate concerns PARENTS should discuss with COACHES:**

- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.
- If their child, at any time, feels threatened or uncomfortable in any way by actions of teammates or coach(s).
- Any concerns a parent may have about their child's behavior. It is recognized that situations may arise where parents find it necessary to raise a concern with a coach, and it is imperative that parent(s) adhere to the following communication guidelines:

### **Protocol for registering concerns:**

1. Contact the coach first, to set up a meeting
2. If the coach cannot be reached, contact the Athletic Director

### **MOST IMPORTANTLY**

DO NOT CONFRONT A COACH BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER A PRACTICE OR GAME. THESE CAN BE EMOTIONAL TIMES FOR BOTH PARTIES. MEETINGS OF THIS NATURE DO NOT PROMOTE RESOLUTION.

It can be very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those listed below, must be left to the discretion of the coach:

**Issues NOT appropriate to discuss with coaches:**

1. Playing Time – (addressable if player is not getting any playing time)
2. Play Calling
3. Term Strategy
4. Other Athletes

These are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. In most instances, it is vital that the athlete be present. It is important that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position.

**Next Steps after parent/athlete coach meeting:**

What a parent can do if, in their opinion, the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution:

1. Call and set up a meeting with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
2. After this step, an additional meeting may be held with the parent, coach, athlete and athletic director
3. If the meeting with the athletic director does not resolve the issue then contact the Board of Directors.

**Other Important Talking Points:**

Please do not discuss with your child a coach's tactics or playing strategies, starting line-up decisions, or decisions a coach makes about the playing time of other players. This will only undermine the coach's ability to help your child improve, to develop team harmony and develop constructive team play.

The intent of this communication plan is to help make the experience in the Chanooka Braves program more enjoyable and productive for all athletes, coaches, parents and fans.

## **VI. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Each coach is entitled to have their own specific set of attendance/tardy policies which will be in writing and passed out at the beginning of the season. Missing practices or games is always a concern, and depending upon the game schedule, different coaches may have different consequences. As a courtesy to the coach and fairness to the team, it is vital and expected that the athlete, and if necessary the parent, communicates any vacation plans, or any other situations that may require the athlete to miss practices, or games to the coach well ahead of time. When parents choose to take family vacations during a sport season, it must be understood that the time missed by the athlete may affect team performance and chemistry. Athletes who miss practices or games for reasons related to vacation can (and likely will) have their playing time adjusted.

The coaching staff certainly recognizes that there are extenuating circumstances that may lead to an athlete missing practices.

## **VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR ALL MEMBERS AND COACHES**

Any violation of any written or implied rule(s) of the Chanooka Braves or River Valley Football League by a Braves Member or Coach will be handled in ANY of the following manners:

1. A verbal warning by a Braves Board Member or Athletic Director and a formal notification to the Braves Executive Board.
2. Executive Board may dismiss, issue a formal written warning, or issue and immediate suspension.
3. Brought before the Board of Directors for immediate termination from the program

### VIII. HEAT POLICY

In the event of high heat conditions (95 degree heat index or above determined by the OSHA Heat Index Tool), the Chanooka Braves board of directors has established the following guidelines to be implemented by ALL coaches.

1. Football coaches shall not have players in helmets, shoulder pads, or rib protectors.
2. Approval for equipment to be used will be allowed after the beginning of practice if the Athletic Director and Safety Director determine temperature to be within safe range. This decision will not be made without the Athletic Director being in agreement. If one or both are not available the decision will be made by either Athletic Director or an Executive Committee Member.
3. In football, all running will be kept to specific drills. (NO additional running will be permitted. Perimeters or sprints will not be permitted).
4. All Cheer and Dance will perform simplified moves only (aerobic activities shall be kept to a minimum).
5. Every 15 minutes all children shall be given a 5 minute water break.
6. In football, contact with equipment will be allowed after the start of practice if the Athletic Director, Safety Director, or Executive committee member determines temperature and humidity levels to be within safe range. This decision will not be made without two of the above mentioned people being in agreement.
7. In Cheers and Dance, increased levels of stunting and dance will be allowed after the start of practice if the Cheer and Dance Director, Safety Director or member of the Executive Committee determine temperature to be within safe ranges. This decision will not be made without two of the above mentioned people being in agreement.
8. All coaches need to be very vigilant and watch each child, paying extra attention to children with medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc.). REMEMBER all children are different and react differently to heat.
9. In the event a participant is experiencing heat related illness or symptoms, the participant shall be removed from physical activities for additional evaluation. Based upon severity, player shall be sent home with a parent or evaluated by paramedics.
10. ALL participants shall have water/sports drink with them at practice during high heat conditions. Coaches will assure that participants have water prior to practice.

If the participant does not have water/sports drink, they will not participate in practice.

11. This policy has been implemented for the protection of the participants and the coaches.
12. ANY deviation from his policy may result in disciplinary action from the Chanooka
13. Braves Board of Directors.

CHANOOKA BRAVES

Athlete \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT / GUARDIAN CERTIFICATION OF CONSENT, ACKNOWLEDGMENT & RELEASE

**THIS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK IS AVAILABLE ON THE CHANOOKA BRAVES WEBSITE AND WILL ALSO BE EMAILED OUT TO EACH FAMILY.**

(To be completed by all parents/guardians; where divorce or separation, parent with legal custody must sign)

- A. In accordance with the rules of Chanooka Braves and River Valley Football League, I hereby give my consent of the above athlete to participate in all athletics at Chanooka Braves.
- B. I/we know of and acknowledge that my son/daughter knows of the risks involved in such participation, and chooses to accept any and all responsibility for his/her safety and welfare while participating in athletics with Chanooka Braves. With full understanding of the risks involved, I/we release and hold harmless my coaches, Athletic Directors, any Board Of Directors, any Executive Board of Directors, Chanooka Braves and River Valley Football League of any and all responsibility and liability for any injury or claim resulting from such athletic participation, and agree to take no legal action against my coaches, Athletic Directors, any Board of Directors, any Executive Board of Directors, Chanooka Braves or River Valley Football League because of any accident or mishap involving the athletic participation of my son/daughter.
- C. As a parent and/or guardian of the above athlete, I have read the Athletic Handbook for Athletes, the Chanooka Braves Code of Conduct and discussed it with my son/daughter. I understand the Code and realize that it applies year-round. I also realized that my son/daughter is subject to disciplinary measures should he/she violate the rules of the Code or the coaches.

Signature Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Parent /Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Athlete \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Athlete \_\_\_\_\_