



HILLGROVE HIGH SCHOOL

Football Program Player and Parent Handbook

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Hillgrove High School Football Family!

This handbook contains valuable information to help you prepare for your involvement with the Hawks football program. While it would be very challenging to cover every situation, we have tried to create a reference for you in preparation for the season. We are excited about the direction of our program and to have you involved!

This handbook is divided into two sections, the first being coach-directed information for both players and parents, and the second is Grid Iron Club (Hillgrove's Football Booster Club) activities and events that are tied directly to the football program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Coach DeShon (justin.deshon@cobbk12.org) or the Hillgrove Grid Iron Club (HGIC) President (president@hillgrovefootball.org).

Dear Community, Parents, and Players of the Hillgrove Football Program

On behalf of the Grid Iron Club Executive Board, we'd like to thank you for joining the Hillgrove High School football community. It is our sincere desire, as a community, to continue to build upon the incredible legacy and traditions here at Hillgrove while empowering the success of our student-athletes and coaches. We know in our Hawk hearts that our program has tremendous potential – and we know it will take ALL OF US to realize that potential.

We ask that you and your student-athlete read this handbook, direct any questions to the HGIC president at president@hillgrovefootball.org.

Thank you once again, and we look forward to cheering on our incredible kids and coaching staff.

HAWK PHILOSOPHY AND PRIDE – From Coach DeShon

The Hillgrove High School football program strives to provide an excellent experience for each and every player. Starting in our youth program; players are taught the fundamentals of on and off the field skills so they can develop into productive high school players. We believe that it is critical to develop the player; emotionally, physically, and mentally in order to maximize his potential as a person and a player. This begins immediately as we teach and stress values such as; *commitment, determination, discipline, pride, sacrifice, service, and team work* through everything that we do!

As a program, our goal is to provide all our players with the coaching and resources to be successful as as people and as athletes. This includes providing the best environment, equipment, technology, teaching, and training methods. We appreciate the hard work that is required to prepare for and play football. We believe the memories and lessons learned with us will last a lifetime.

Our hope is that every player leaves our program better because they were a part of it!

Go Hawks!

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR COACHING STAFF

Be a positive role model: Coaches will always carry themselves in a professional manner, on the field, and in the community. Players and community members are always watching; as a representative of the program, a coach's actions will reflect on everyone, not just themselves

Coach every player: They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care. We will coach players to help prepare them to achieve their greatest potential as people and athletes. Each player is putting in the time and effort to make the team better, and it is the coach's responsibility to help him improve his skills.

Communicate: A football program consists of many parts, and everyone must work hard to stay on the same page. All coaches should work together to stay informed of what is going on with players, the community, and the program in general. Team-specific communications between coaches and parents is the responsibility of each head coach. Coaches should also strive to ensure the players understand the material presented in practice and be approachable if a player wants to talk.

Commitment: We ask our players to invest a lot of time into our program, and therefore the same commitment is needed from each coach. In turn, the program will try to prioritize using time wisely during meetings, practices, and team activities.

PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

Youth Program

Purpose: Introduce players to the game of football and instill the basic skills and knowledge to safely and effectively play the sport.

Emphasis: Introduce players to the game of football while maintaining a safe, fun and worthwhile experience.

Expectations: That every child that signs up finishes with a great experience and is excited to play again while also gaining solid foundational skills that will aid in development.

Middle School Program

Purpose: A continuation of building solid foundational skills that will aid the development of each individual player.

Emphasis: A continuation of maintaining a safe, fun, worthwhile experience while also intertwining High School tradition, terminology and scheme.

Expectations: That every child that signs up finishes with a great experience and is excited to play again. We also expect that our middle school programs are competitive and preparing our children.

High School Program

Junior Varsity and Freshman Football

Purpose: Teach players the intermediate rules of high school football and the strategies of Hillgrove football.

Emphasis: Prepare the players, both mentally and physically, for varsity football. Winning subvarsity games is not an emphasis. The largest difference between a sub-varsity player and a varsity player is their aggressiveness. Sub-varsity players tend to be more timid for one of two reasons: (1) they do not understand the game and they play confused or, (2) they do not have the size, strength, and agility to play aggressively. The focus of sub-varsity football is to overcome these shortcomings and develop players that are ready for Varsity.

Weight room: Develop strength, agility, quickness, and endurance through a structured lifting, agility, and conditioning program designed to make the players bigger, faster, and stronger. This will allow players to meet the physical demands of playing high school football. Increasing the strength, speed, and agility of the sub-varsity players will improve their ability to prepare for varsity.

Varsity Football

Purpose: Teach players the advanced rules of high school football and the strategies of Hillgrove football.

Emphasis: Win games by fielding the best team of players possible, who are both mentally and physically prepared to play football at the varsity level. Prepare potential college athletes for the collegiate level.

Weight room: Continue to improve strength, agility, quickness, and endurance to physically dominate opponents.

HAWK FOOTBALL PLAYER EXPECTATIONS¹

Code of Ethics/Guidelines:

- I will take responsibility for my actions. I will lead by example and make good decisions on and off the football field.

- I realize that my choices will impact not only myself but also the team.

- I understand that attendance at practices and games are mandatory. It is essential to be on time. If I cannot attend or be on time for some reason, I will notify the coaches immediately.

- I understand that I am responsible for maintaining a minimum of 2.0 GPA to participate in practices and games.

- When I am on the field, I will be coachable, and I will be a good teammate. I understand that I can be disciplined for not following the rules.

- I understand that the coaches will continually evaluate my performance and effort and determine what role I will have on the team.

- As a team member, I will show respect to my teammates and coaches. If there is a problem, I will address it immediately with my position coach first and then with the head coach.

-If I have a question regarding playing time, I will first meet with my position coach before meeting with the head coach. I will not have my parents or guardians discuss playing time with the coaching staff at any point.

**I understand my obligations as a member of the Hillgrove football family and program, and I am committed to the goals of the Hillgrove High School Football Team. I will do my best to represent Hillgrove High School with dignity and integrity. If there is a problem in one of these areas, I understand that my coaches will address it, and it may result in consequences, including but not limited to removal from the football program.

Hillgrove High School Football Attendance Policy

You are expected to be on time and attend all practices and team functions. Failure to do so will result in:

- First missed practice/function= 1 Quarter
- Second missed practice/function= 2 Quarters
- Third missed practice/function= Will not play

Organize your priorities as follows:

1. Family
2. School

¹ By completing the registration process on Team Snap, Parents and Players agree to the content and terms described in this Player Parent Handbook.

3. Football

There is no reason to fall behind in school. A 2.0 GPA is a very reasonable requirement

-If you can't stay organized and on task you may lose the privilege of being on this team.

- A missed practice during the week for any reason may prevent you from participating in that week's contest.

- Excused missed practice= Family emergency, medical, prior approval from Head Coach.

-Unexcused missed practice= dentist appointment, finishing homework, baby-sitting, detentions.

Cobb County Schools Athlete Code of Conduct ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Cobb County Public Schools' athletic programs are a great source of pride to our communities. Involvement in athletics helps students develop a better sense of responsibility, cooperation, self-discipline, self-confidence, and sportsmanship to help serve them long after graduation. The lessons and values learned by participating in athletic teams last a lifetime. All athletes are expected to abide by the highest fair play and sportsmanship standards while on the court or field. We also have high expectations regarding behavior when the students are not engaged in athletic competitions. Students participating in Georgia High School Association extracurricular athletic activities act as Cobb County Public Schools representatives. All students are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as to meet the highest standards of the school system at all times. The Athletic Code of Conduct is designed to establish high expectations and standards for all students participating in Georgia High School sanctioned athletic activities. The Code of Conduct also provides consistent consequences when violations occur. The consequences listed on the Code of Conduct are minimum standards. The Hillgrove Administration or Coach DeShon can set consequences over and above those listed on the Code of Conduct.

All players and parents/guardians are expected to read and comply with the Student-Parent Handbook, which can be found at <https://sbcobbstor.blob.core.windows.net/media/WWW/Cobb/frf/5/Student-ParentAthleticHandbook.pdf>.

HAWK FOOTBALL PARENT EXPECTATIONS²

Registration and Hillgrove Grid Iron Club Membership

Before inclusion in any mandatory football activity or event as designated by the coaches, all players must be registered, and, at a minimum, the first payment must be made.

Payment in full must be received by Aug 1. Any parents experiencing financial hardships who cannot comply with this expectation must apply for financial support by July 1. To do this please email the HGIC treasurer at treasurer@hillgrovefootball.org. The HGIC will contact you directly with information.

² By completing the registration process on Team Snap, Parents and Players agree to the content and terms described in this Player Parent Handbook.

All players whose registration is not fully paid or whose parents/guardians have not applied for financial support may not be permitted to play post-August 15.

Volunteer Obligations and Community Service

Volunteer Obligations:

All parents are expected to volunteer a minimum of six hours during the calendar year. This volunteer work can be performed in the concessions stand, spirit wear shack, pre-game meal service, or other HGIC-designated activity or event. This year all parents, from youth through high school, will be asked to serve the football and cheer community. No "volunteer fee" will be asked or required and there will be no opt-outs. As we will be asking our players at all levels to provide some service so too we will be asking our parents/guardians. It is our hope that varsity parents will volunteer for JV or freshman duties and vice versa. Middle School and Youth parents should volunteer for duties when their son or daughter is not performing. More information will follow on how to sign up.

Community Service:

We continually ask ourselves, "What is the mission of our high school athletic programs?" For some members of our community or some parents, the answer would center on how well the team does in terms of wins and losses. This viewpoint would evaluate the season based upon winning the region title or how far a team advances in the playoffs. We associate educational athletics as the intentional efforts of our coaches to teach skills, behaviors, actions, and attitudes that extend far beyond the Xs and O's of our sports. These positive character traits are hard work, discipline, teamwork, perseverance, sportsmanship, respect, and learning how to win and lose with dignity. In addition to these, we add *community service* as another character trait to be used in our pursuit of educational athletics. We define community service as giving back to the school and surrounding community through volunteerism. Service is doing something for somebody else without expecting anything in return. It is a selfless way for our team to give back to their community.

Throughout the year, all teams will participate in several community service activities. These activities will have the secondary benefit of being team-building events and allowing the players to claim hours for the National Honor Society and towards Scholarships. Community Service is a Team Function!

Player/Parent Concerns

From time to time, players or parents may have a concern about a specific aspect of your participation in our program. To help solve any concern efficiently, the following steps should be followed³:

1. *Player* needs to visit with the position coach that his concern involves. Request a conference if necessary.
2. *Player* needs to visit with Coach DeShon. Request a conference if necessary. The vast majority of concerns will be worked out at this level.
3. *Player* needs to have their Parent Email Coach DeShon with their concern. Parent can request a conference if necessary. If you are not satisfied with what transpires at the above levels, the

³ These steps are for those involved in the High School program and must be followed sequentially. Similar steps will be outlined for the Junior Hawks programs (Y and MS).

next step would be to speak with the Athletic Director, Mr. Brown. If all else fails, the Principal, Mrs. Stewart can be contacted.

During the season Coaches WILL NOT discuss player/parent concerns (other than injuries) within the time period 24 hours before a game to 24 hours after a game. A parent may send an email but a response should not be expected within this time period. At no time will a parent be permitted on the playing field or in the Hillgrove Field House unless invited by Coach DeShon or one of his staff.

PROGRAM BASICS

Football Registration

Registration Method and Timing

Starting this year, we will be using an online application called Team Snap to conduct registration for all levels and components of the Hillgrove Football program. Information on this will be provided via email and through BAND.

Registration Fees

ALL players receive much more in value than the actual cost of the fee. The fee covers only a very small portion of a player's participation and should be viewed as an investment in your player's passion for Hawks Football.

Why Do You Have to Pay for Football?

Cobb County does not fund athletic programs within the schools, which means that our program relies upon player participation fees and is even more heavily reliant upon the Grid Iron Club to grow and expand the Hillgrove Football Program. The types of things that registration fees go to pay for are:

- Capital Investments/Facilities maintenance and improvements
- Helmets, pads, game, and practice uniforms
- Weight Room and equipment
- Video equipment, technology, and services
- Training equipment, sleds, and other field equipment
- Team Meals/Food/Drinks
- Trainer and first responder presence at all games (county requirement)

- Transportation
- Scholarship programs
- Coach stipends and clothing
- Janitorial service
- Swag

Also worthy of note are the costs of outfitting a Hawks Football Player:

- Helmet - \$375
- Helmet Decals - \$ 12
- Mouthpiece - \$3
- Annual helmet reconditioning - \$80
- Practice Jersey - \$17
- Shoulder Pads - \$350
- Game Jersey - \$220
- Belts - \$15
- Game Pants - \$130
- Knee Pads - \$10
- Practice Pants - \$20
- Workout T shirt and shorts - \$30

Total Cost: \$ 1262

Equipment Deposits

As a part of registration process, MS and Y parents will need to submit a \$200 equipment deposit in the form of a check. These deposits will be collected during equipment issue meetings and will be maintained by the coaches of each team. Coaches, ultimately, will be responsible for ensuring all equipment is issued and returned at the start and conclusion of the season respectively.

What if I cannot afford the registration fees and deposits?

The Hillgrove Grid Iron Club wants every athlete who has the desire and commitment to participate in our program to have the chance to do so. We understand the registration fees/deposits are not insignificant.

In order to try to alleviate immediate financial pressures, we are offering the ability to pay by installments. During the initial registration process an initial payment is required.

If you are experiencing financial hardships that prevent you from completing all of your payments, don't hesitate to contact the Hillgrove Grid Iron Club VP of Financial Operations, Dylesha James, for information on and to be considered for financial support by July 1, 2022. Parents who cannot afford part or all of the registration fee will be provided with individualized alternatives such as partial payments and /or additional volunteer service. Again, our goal is to help every student athlete to have a chance to play in the Hillgrove program.

Refunds

Any parent who wants to pull their child from the program can apply for a refund by following this process:

1. Notify the team head coach via email.
2. For athletes, notify HGIC's VP of Financial Operations via email at treasurer@hillgrovefootball.org.

Refunds will be issued based on the following criteria:

- If emails are received before May 3rd, a full refund will be issued.
- If emails are received after May 3 but before August 15, a 50% refund will be issued.
- If emails are received after August 15, no refund will be issued.

The justification behind this policy is twofold. The first is the lead time required to ensure we have the right amount of uniforms, equipment, and coaching staff for each athlete. The second is the valuable time invested by the coaches, administrators, and volunteers at every level of our program.

HILLGROVE GRID IRON CLUB

The Hillgrove Grid Iron Club's purpose is to promote parent/student involvement: coordinate all supporting activities, including feeder programs; encourage attendance at football-related functions; provide those services, facilities, and equipment which the school does not provide; ensure recognition for the football program and its athletes and increase the enjoyment of the fans at all football activities at Hillgrove High School; and to conduct related activities which qualify this organization for exemption from taxation under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

To put it succinctly, the HGIC is responsible for all off-field football-related activities for the Hillgrove High School football program and its feeder programs (MS and Y football programs). Coaches DeShon, Pinckney, Spiegel, and Athletic Director Brown are responsible for all on-field football-related activities for Hillgrove High School football /cheer and its feeder programs (MS and Y).

One additional point worthy of note: The HGIC's mission statement is to "empower the success of our student-athletes and coaches." And as stated before "success" is not limited to on-field performance and wins. We continually develop and implement programs to empower the character development of the individuals involved in the Hillgrove football program and give back to our incredible community. These volunteer programs include the "Fathers of Footballers"/Mentoring initiative, Bible study group meetings, and the FCA summer camp.

Hillgrove Grid Iron Club Leadership Team

The HGIC leadership team is elected by the general membership⁴ and serves a one-year term that spans each calendar year. Exceptions to this are made when leaders resign during the year. Leadership roles are open to any fee-paying member of the HGIC. Depicted below is the current HGIC leadership team.

⁴ General membership is comprised of Parents/Guardians who have paid their HGIC membership fee (see following page).

Hillgrove Grid Iron Club Membership

What does "membership" in the HGIC mean?

Being a member of the HGIC means you are a committed member of the Hawk family. You, the parents or guardians of our student-athletes who become members, ultimately determine the priorities for the program. Members decide how we budget and spend our income. You help us ensure we are always acting following our vision of "enabling the success of our student-athletes and coaches." A single general membership entitles the individual or family to one vote on those matters which members shall be called upon to vote, to hold office, and to all other rights and responsibilities of membership in the HGIC. HGIC meetings are open to all members.

As the famous saying goes, "with membership comes privileges."

All members are invited to join the monthly HGIC leadership meetings.

What Can You Expect from the HGIC?

Financial Responsibility

We understand that the registration fees and fundraising efforts needed to enable our student-athletes the opportunities to develop and compete are not insignificant. The HGIC executive board's priority is to ensure that a) funds raised are effectively allocated across all levels of the program and b) that we leave the financial condition of the football program in a better state than we found it year after year. You can expect to be presented with budget plans and actuals throughout the calendar year.

Advocacy

As a leadership team, we are servants of our community first and foremost. As members of the HGIC, you can expect to have a voice in our priorities and plans through voting measures and direct access to the executive board and committee leadership. Members are welcome to participate in leadership meetings, and meeting schedules will be published as a part of team communications. As a leadership team, we will also conduct three surveys each year to guide our actions.

Communication

Based on the mid-season surveys, email, Team Snap, and the website (hillgrovefootball.org) were identified as the preferred means of communication, in that order. We will distribute all communications through email, Team Snap (replaces BAND), and the website. We ask that parents/guardians ensure the HGIC has the correct email address.

Execution

Using HGIC's by-laws, member-approved budgets, and perhaps most importantly, our community's passion for the success of our student-athletes and coaches, we must commit to doing everything in our power to effectively and efficiently execute the plans our program needs to achieve its goals. If at any time you feel that we are not heading in the right direction or executing our plans to your expectations, please do not hesitate to reach out to the HGIC at president@hillgrovefootball.org.

Conclusion

The Hillgrove football program has an incredible football legacy, from state championships to NFL players. We embark on this new season with excitement in our voices and passion in our hearts to build upon this legacy. The HGIC Executive Board thanks you for leaning into this program and looks forward to cheering with you in the weeks and months to come.

Go Hawks!

Hillgrove Grid Iron Club