



FOOTBALL SAFETY GUIDELINES

***Prior to participating, both student and parent/guardian must read, sign and return this form.
Keep a copy for your reference and records.***

Valley School strives to protect each student from injury while engaging in interscholastic activities. The guidelines and/or practices described below have been established for this activity in order to protect the student and others from injury and/or illness. Participants and their parents or guardians should recognize that conditioning, nutrition, proper technique, safety procedures, and well-fitting equipment are important aspects to the safety and enjoyment of this sport.

When a person is involved in any athletic activity, an injury can occur, especially in a contact sport. Football can be highly competitive, and is a fast action game in which physical contact and collisions occur. The information provided in these safety guidelines is to inform the participant of proper techniques and potential dangers involved when playing football. Student athletes will abide by the following guidelines when participating in football (practices, warm-ups, drills, games, exercises, competitions) and are expected to follow the directions and standards of the coach(es).

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Proper warm-up is essential before strenuous activity takes place.
2. Proper safety equipment including mouth guards must be worn and used according to instructions given by the coach.
3. Be sure all equipment is fitting properly before each day's activity. If any piece of protective equipment does not fit or is damaged, report this condition to your coach immediately.
4. If a piece of equipment becomes damaged or broken during an activity, report to the coach immediately for repair or replacement.
5. If you wear eyeglasses, contact the coach for proper fitting of safety lenses, appropriate frames that are compatible with football helmets.
6. Remove all jewelry and metal hair fasteners and other body adornments as required by rules and regulations for football.
7. Wear outer and under garments appropriate for humidity and temperature.
8. Squad members must wear safe and proper fitting footwear. Be cautious when walking on slick surfaces with cleated shoes.
9. Travel to and from off-campus facilities and practice/competition sites must be in accordance with school procedures.
10. Be aware of your surroundings both home and away, including but not limited to field surface conditions, obstructions in the proximity to the playing field and safe entrance/egress to and from the field and the locker room.

11. In order to help protect the safety of all squad members, squad members with physically limiting injuries and/or health conditions must inform the coach prior to each day's activity of limiting conditions and participate only to the extent allowed by coach.
12. Practice only when the coach is present.
13. Perform only those skills and techniques as instructed and/or supervised by your coach.
14. Notify the coach immediately if injured or ill.
15. Hydration is essential with frequently scheduled drink breaks during practice and drinks available during all games. Players should hydrate themselves frequently during practice and games and follow the coach's direction on hydration prior to and following practices and games.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO PLAY

Coaches will teach players blocking and tackling techniques that are approved by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA). The following safety warnings are of major importance to player safety.

EQUIPMENT

- Read all warnings from helmet and safety equipment suppliers prior to the first fitting of equipment.
- An athlete is required to wear all issued equipment. If equipment is damaged or does not fit correctly, the athlete must inform the coach immediately before use. Shoulder pads, helmets, hip pads, and pants (including thigh pads and knee pads) must have proper fitting and use.
- A shoulder pad which is too small will leave the shoulder point vulnerable to bruises or separations. A shoulder pad that is too tight in the neck area may result in a possible pinched nerve. A shoulder pad which is too large will leave the neck area poorly protected and will slide on the shoulders making them vulnerable to bruises and separations.
- Helmets must fit snugly at the contact points: front, back, and top of the head. The helmet must be safety "NOCSAE" branded, the chin straps must be fastened, the cheek pads must be of the proper thickness. A fit which is too loose could result in headaches, a concussion, a face injury such as a broken nose or cheek bone, or a blow to the back of the neck, causing a neck injury possibly quite serious such as paralysis or even death.
- Cleats are restricted to no more than one-half inch to further help prevent knee injuries.

BASIC CONTACT POSITION AND FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUE

Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same. The player should always be in a position of balance, knees bent, back straight, body slightly bent forward, head up, and the target area as near to the body as possible with the main contact being made with the shoulder. Contact is to be made above the belt, but not initially with the helmet.

- When properly blocking or tackling an opponent, contact with your helmet will naturally result. Therefore, technique is most important in order to prevent or reduce the likelihood of injury.
- Tackle, block or break tackles with the shoulder pads. NEVER USE THE HELMET TO STRIKE AN OPPONENT.
- Keep the eyes and chin up when blocking, tackling or running with the ball. Lowering the head/helmet jeopardizes the neck and spinal cord.
- Block from the front, side and above the waist according to the current rules of football.
- Blocking below the waist (outside a two-yard area next to the football) is illegal.

- Be aware of the potentially serious injuries if you do not follow correct procedures in blocking and tackling.

Injuries will be mitigated using proper techniques, but are possible in any situation, with severity ranging from minor to disabling or even death. Blocking and tackling by not keeping the helmet as close to the body as possible may result in a shoulder injury and a separation or a pinched nerve in the neck area.

Improper body alignment can put the spinal column in a vulnerable position for injury. Strained muscle injuries can range from ankle injuries to serious knee injuries requiring surgery.

In tackling, initial contact with the helmet or grabbing the face mask on the edge of the helmet is prohibited. Initial helmet contact may result in a bruise, dislocation, broken bones, head injury, or internal injuries to the kidneys, spleen, bladder, etc. Grabbing the face mask or helmet edge may result in a neck injury ranging in severity from a muscle strain to a dislocation, nerve injury, or spinal column damage, which could cause paralysis or death.

- Do not chop block.
- Do not slash with a rigid arm when executing a tackle.

AVOIDANCE OF INJURY

- Strength and conditioning training is an important part of football. Observe all proper weight lifting procedures, including lifting, spotting, storage of weights and general safety.
- Participate fully in all neck-strengthening exercises.
- When on the ground, you are vulnerable to being stepped on or receiving a leg, shoulder or knee injury. If you are able to move, GET UP!
- If injured and unable to move or movement is limited, stay on the ground until assistance is given to move you or you are capable of getting up without fear of additional injury.

STUDENT/PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read and understand the technique guidelines, safety rules and procedures provided herein. I also understand the necessity of using the proper techniques while participating in the football program.

<i>Student Name (printed)</i>	<i>Student Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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<i>Parent/Guardian Name (printed)</i>	<i>Parent/Guardian Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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