

Willmar Cardinal Football

Parent/Player Handbook

2023-24

Willmar Cardinals Purpose:

The Willmar football program will strive to develop young men in the following three areas:

1. Develop Teamwork skills that will enhance their future.
2. Develop skills of individual student-athletes to handle adversity.
3. Build young men that are successful sons, fathers, and husbands.

Cardinal Cornerstones

The Cardinal Cornerstones are the foundation on which we will build our football program. We will not only talk about these characteristics, we will practice and live them daily. If we follow the Cardinal Cornerstones, they will lead us to success.

- TEAM
- ATTITUDE
- RESPONSIBILITY
- WORK
- EXCELLENCE
- HOPE
- FAITH
- DISCIPLINE
- DEDICATION

...in the classroom, on the field, and in the community.

Willmar Cardinal Football Philosophy

The philosophy of the Willmar Cardinal Football team is to develop and implement the Cardinal Cornerstones to enhance the lives of each young man that participates in Cardinal football. With the development of these Cornerstones, individual and team success will occur. Football is very demanding, but the rewards from hard work and dedication to the team cannot be measured. Our philosophy is to outwork your opponent in all aspects of the game and to have an attention to detail that is second to none. Cardinal football players will have excellent technique and play an aggressive style of football, always competing until the final whistle blows. Our players will always respect our opponents, displaying sportsmanship and respect for the game of football. The commitment of a Cardinal football player demands the commitment of his coaches. The coaching staff is committed to being a lifetime teacher, coach, and friend. The time spent in the Willmar Cardinal Football program will be an experience that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Program Goals:

1. The coaching staff will educate student-athletes to be ambassadors in the community and to exemplify class, character, integrity, and pride.
2. The team will be academically responsible.
 - a. 100% passing rate.
3. The coaching staff will strive to develop positive relationships with the student-athletes, parents, and community.
4. The football program will strive to have a high number of participants at all levels of the football program.
5. The school district and booster club will work to have the best facilities and resources for our players and coaches in order to have a safe and efficient working environment.
6. We will, year-after-year, strive to compete for a district, section, and state championships.

Team Rules:

- Follow Minnesota State High School League rules
- Do the RIGHT thing!
- Be where you need to be
- Do your best!

Cardinal Expectations

Captain Expectations

Our captains are the core and face of our football program. Being a captain is a tremendous responsibility and there is much that is expected.

- Captains are our leaders on the field, in the classroom, and in the community.
- Captains are expected to participate in team activities during the season and be a willing participant in off-season activities.
- Captains are elected by their teammates and the coaching staff. If they are not fulfilling their commitments to the team, the Head Coach has the responsibility to replace them.
- Any captain that has a MSHSL violation within one calendar year of their senior season, will be prohibited from being a captain in the Willmar Cardinal Football Program.

Playing Time Expectations

Playing time at all levels of our football program is earned. Playing time varies from level to level. The following are the expectations of each level:

Varsity Level

- Play as many players as possible, but remember playing time is earned.
- At the varsity level playing time is not equal. Player's ability, work habits, and attitude determine playing time.
- Attending practice is a requirement for playing time at the varsity level. Saturday practices(if scheduled), morning weight training sessions, and practice during MEA and Thanksgiving break are a requirement for playing time.

JV/Sophomore Level

- Playing time will not be equal, but all players will play as long as they follow the procedures listed below:
 - Attending practice, working hard in practice, and displaying a positive attitude are requirements for playing time at the sophomore/JV level.
 - Practice includes: daily and Saturday practices (if scheduled), weight training sessions, and any team activities that require your attendance.
 - The amount of playing time will be determined by the player's performance (practice and games), work habits, and attitude during practice.

Freshmen Level

- Everybody plays in games as long as they are following the procedures listed below:
 - Attending practice, working hard in practice, and displaying a positive attitude are requirements for playing time at the freshman level.
 - Practice includes: daily practices, weight training sessions, and any team activities that require your attendance.
 - Playing time will not always be equal, but every player will play in games if they follow the items list above.

Absences

If a player misses practice during the week and the absence is excused or unexcused, the player's playing time may be affected. Each situation will be discussed amongst the coaching staff and then discussed with the player(s) involved. Communication between coaching staff and players will be open and honest about the player's playing time.

Excused absence: (i.e. family or personal emergency or illness (Coach Konold must be notified, 9th graders must contact Coach Heitzman and 10th/JV must contact Coach Courtney)

Unexcused absence: (i.e. routine medical or dental appointments, senior pictures, family vacations, etc...)

Coach Konold will ultimately decide on whether playing time is missed due to an absence. Any absence (excused or unexcused) may be a result of a player missing playing time. The amount of playing time missed will also be determined by Coach Konold.

Playing Time

If a player does not agree with the amount of playing time he is receiving, below is a process he needs to follow:

1. **Player to Position Coach:** Players need to discuss issues with their position coach.
2. **Player to Head Coach:** If the player doesn't get the issue resolved, the player can discuss the situation with the head coach and position coach.
3. **Player to Head Coach and Parent:** After these two steps, if a player still is having issues with playing time, the player, parent, position coach, and head coach can sit down and discuss playing time.

*Parents-do not call or email the Head Coach or any Coach about playing time unless these steps have been followed.

Practice Expectations

1. All meetings, film sessions, and weightlifting sessions before school, after school, and during school breaks are considered practice time and your attendance is required.
2. All players 9th-12th are expected to be at practice every day. If there is a situation where a varsity player can't be at practice because of illness or emergency, they need to contact Coach Konold either by voice mail (320-214-6050) or email (konoldj@willmar.k12.mn.us). Do not wait for Coach Konold to contact you. If you are a freshman you need to contact Coach Heitzman (heitzmanm@willmar.k12.mn.us). If you are a JV/10th grade player contact Coach Tupa (courtneyp@willmar.k12.mn.us).
3. Injured players need to be at practice every day unless they are excused by Coach Konold. Injured 9th grade players need to be excused by Coach Heitzman and JV/10th grade players Coach Courtney.
4. During MEA break Varsity players will be required to be at practice every day. Do not plan a vacation during MEA break!
5. Players are expected to have all their equipment for practice every day. Players need to know the routine and what they will need for each practice. Coaches will inform players prior to practice (the day before or the Friday before Monday's practice) what they need to have for practice.
 - a. Full practice gear includes: helmets, shoulder pads, practice pants (all pads in pants), practice jersey, cleats, tennis shoes, mouth guard, Cardinal t-shirt and shorts.
 - b. Shells include: helmets, shoulder pads, practice jersey, cleats, tennis shoes, mouth guard, Cardinal t-shirt and shorts.
 - c. Always have cleats and tennis available for practice. Players need to dress and leave equipment in their lockers every day. Players will not be allowed to leave equipment in their car or at home.

Lettering Expectations

Any Willmar football player in grades 10th-12th is eligible to earn a Varsity letter by fulfilling the requirements below.

Lettering Policy:

1. Violations: Player is in good standing per Willmar School District and MSHSL policies.
2. Attendance: The Player has perfect attendance during the season.
 - a. The player is at and participates positively in practices, film sessions, weight training, team meetings, and required events during the season. If there is an absence, Coach Konold will determine if the absence is excused.
3. Playing Time: Player is a positive contributor to the Willmar Football team. A positive contributor could mean the player participates in Varsity games, but could also mean a positive influence at practice and in the locker room.

Fundraising

All Willmar football players are encouraged to fundraise to maintain and enhance the quality of our football program. Money that is raised from the fundraising is used to purchase equipment for the football team.

All players (9th-12th) are encouraged to sell 10 Gold Cards.

Fundraising is an important part of our program and it is encouraged that all players participate.

Bus Expectations

The school pays for the privilege to ride a bus, treat the bus and the driver with respect at all times.

1. Be on time for all bus departures.
2. Music can be listened to on personal headsets only.
3. No sunflower seeds on the bus.
4. During the bus ride players need to focus on the game. Talking needs to be limited and the last half hour players need to be awake and quiet, focusing on the game.
5. All players are required to ride the bus to and from all away games.
 - a. Exceptions: Parents must sign the player out after the game with a designated coach. Parents can only take their player. If someone other than a parent is taking a player home that needs to be communicated at minimum 24 hours in advance with the Athletic Director for approval.
 - b. Injured players are also required to ride the bus.

Equipment Protocol

The equipment issued to each player is the best our resources can afford. Players are expected to care for this equipment and treat it with respect. At the end of each season each individual player is expected to turn in the equipment that was issued to him at the beginning of the season.

- Players are not allowed to modify their equipment.
 - Adding face mask shields and cowboy collars are not allowed unless Coach Konold or the athletic trainer recommends this equipment.
 - Game jerseys are for players only. Jerseys will not be lent to friends or family members unless Coach Konold permits it.