**2024-2025 NG/SE Boys Basketball Team Handbook**

**Panther Basketball Philosophy**

Basketball is a very small part of life, but is also a way to learn about life. In basketball the players and coaches have a duty to team, school, and to one’s self. Players and coaches must perform their duty to all aspects of the game. A coach must first be responsible to the team and then the player. Because of our commitment to our program we must remember that after each game and each season only the team remains. Therefore, our only goal isn’t to win championships, but also to become people and a team of great character. The Panther basketball philosophy contains high expectations and standards for our team. These expectations will be a guide for our players’ and coaches’ conduct on and off the court. If we are to attain our goals of creating a strong tradition of Panther basketball, then all players and coaches must buy into this philosophy.

All players must understand their role as a member of our team. It is because of this, our veteran players have a critical role on the team. Their experience and knowledge must set a positive example for the younger players in games and practice. Veteran players must realize their conduct and attitude sets an example, so they must be exemplary in the classroom and in the community, as well as on the court. Veteran players must instill confidence in younger players to help the team excel at all levels of play. By believing in and respecting your teammates and coaches, realizing your collective responsibility, and having pride in your team and schools, the foundations of a successful program can be built.

Successful teams plan, prepare, and expect to win. We feel that if we are to be successful, we must be prepared to outwork other teams on both ends of the floor during games. Because of this philosophy, our practices must demand our full attention and effort. Non-productive, lazy practices build a poor work ethic and fundamentally unsound techniques. If poor performance in practice is allowed, it becomes the mode of operation in all things. We must practice well in order to perform well on the court. All players must make an effort in practice to prepare to be the best basketball player they can be, on and off the court.

**Being a Student Athlete**

Basketball is not the most important thing in life, being a good student and a good person is though. If you want to be a part of the Panther basketball program, academics will come first. Athletic participation is a special privilege in a student’s overall high school experience. Players are in school to get an education and graduate. We will follow all the policies outlined in the student handbook regarding ineligibility. Players may be excused from part or all of practice(s) in order to get extra academic help from teachers, IF INELIGIBLE. Ultimately it is the player’s responsibility to take care of their work in the classroom, otherwise the privilege of being able to play basketball for NG/SE will be taken away.

**Team Motto for 24-25: Unity in Adversity**

**Team Principles:**

* Put the goals of the TEAM ahead of individual goals (Unity in Adversity)
* Have a great work ethic and a great **attitude** at all times on the court and in the classroom
* Be on time to all team and school activities
* Have pride in the name on the front of the jersey
* #1 focus is on academics before basketball-Do your job in the classroom!

**Practice:**

* Be on time (you need to have your pre-practice work in and warmup and stretch as a team by 4 o’clock on regular school days) and work on YOUR game before practice starts.
* HUSTLE AT ALL TIMES – no walking during drills, between drills, to and from water breaks, etc. We want to play a fast-paced style, so hustling at all times will only help us get into that mindset.
* Be prepared (mentally and physically)
* WHEN A COACH SPEAKS—Absolute attention and silence is expected. Your eyes should be up and paying attention to what is being said.
* Be coachable with a **good attitude**.
* Make yourself and team better by pushing yourself and your teammates.
* **A player must be at practice the day before a game in order to start. No matter if the absence is Excused or Unexcused, if you are not at practice the day before, you will not start in the game the next day.**

**Games:**

**Before Games**

* Attendance at school must align with both school’s student handbooks in order to play. Be at school ON TIME every day!
* Dress properly (Game day dress will be determined the day before the game).
* Be prepared (mentally and physically).
* No junk food and no cell phones (except for music and emergencies) an hour before the game starts. Use that time to get focused on what you need to do be successful on the court.
* Sit together as a team before and/or after the game.

**During Games**

* Conduct yourself in a professional manner toward the opposing players, coaches, and the officials - you represent our school, the program, and your parents. Any other type of behavior will not be tolerated and there will be consequences for inappropriate behaviors.
* Give 100% effort at all times when you are in a game - if you make a mistake, do it going 100%!

**After Games**

* Every player and coach will shake hands with the opposing team and tell them “Good Game”
* Win or lose we are a team! **We** will win as a team and lose as a team – the sole responsibility does not fall on one player or coach. **We** are in this together!
* Unless absolutely necessary, every player should ride home on the bus **with the team**. If you are not going to ride the bus, Coach Gray needs to know and a parent/guardian must sign you out, per coop policy.
* Coaches, players, student managers will all be expected to leave every place better than we found it. Every action we take and every one we don’t directly reflects upon the NG/SE Panthers program and our communities. We will strive to leave a positive impact everywhere we go.

**Lettering Criteria:**

**An athlete will earn a varsity letter if they:**

* Complete the season in good standing, as a varsity player.
* Compete in at least half the varsity quarters played.
* Have no unexcused absences from practices or a game.
* Have no ejections and have no school suspensions.
	+ Coaches reserve the right to use discretion in all cases of lettering.

**Team Rules:**

**Academics**

* You are expected to be a student before a basketball player, as a result any ineligible players will have to follow all the rules of the handbook. Remember, you represent our schools and communities when you put on a NG/SE jersey.

**Substance Abuse Policy**

* If you get caught drinking or using drugs (including smoking/vaping) during the season, you will be given the punishments given in the Student Handbook. Once your punishment is up, you will have to start from the bottom to regain your spot on the team. BE SMART AND THINK!

**Illness**

* If you are going to miss practice because you are sick, Coach Gray needs to know! If you are sick in the morning make sure a parent/guardian calls the school and lets the school office know, each school office will communicate with Coach Gray or Coach Warren. If you get sick during the day, YOU NEED TO COME AND LET COACH GRAY OR COACH WARREN KNOW! It is your responsibility to communicate if you are leaving school for any reason, and won’t be at practice. If I don’t hear anything from YOU and you are not at practice, it will be counted as an unexcused absence and there will be consequences (see next section).

**Unexcused Absences**

* First, any sort of absence from practice or games needs to be communicated with the coaches beforehand. No matter what you are absent for, if you do not tell a coach it will be considered an unexcused absence. Any unexcused absence from school is also an unexcused absence from practice. Unexcused absences could prevent you from lettering.
* An unexcused absence will be defined as any absence from practice that is not caused by illness, medical appointment, or family emergency. Ultimately the validity of the absence will be determined by the coaching staff, and then will be communicated back to the player if the absence will be excused or not.
* Punishments for unexcused absences will be as follows:
	+ **1st Unexcused Absence:** Suspended for the 1st Half of the next scheduled game + Extra Conditioning
	+ **2nd Unexcused Absence:** Suspended for the entirety next scheduled game + Extra Conditioning
	+ **3rd Unexcused Absence:** Player will be suspended from games indefinitely until the coaching staff sees fit + Extra Conditioning.
	+ The coaching staff will have a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy after the 3rd time, which means if it happens a 4th time, the player will be asked to turn in all school issued equipment and no longer be a part of the team for the year.

**Communication**

* **Band App**
	+ The “Band” App will be the primary form of communication between coaches and players/parents. Using this app will help streamline communication for our basketball program, so as to not interfere with our school’s messaging systems.
	+ The Band App is only to be used to communicate critical team information by coaches, players, and parents. It is not to be used to communicate feelings about a player’s status on the team or playing time. If this happens, user communication settings will be revoked.
	+ Any changes to practices/games will be communicated ahead of time, so users will want to make sure to check the app frequently or turn on notification settings.
* **Chain of Command**
	+ Athlete/Parent » Coach » Athletic Director » Principal » Superintendent » School Board
	+ Athletes need to initiate any problems or concerns with the coach first. All issues shall be addressed in a meeting with the coach first and will follow the chain of command from that point forward (both districts will be represented in any meeting following the meeting with the coach). The time shall be agreed upon by both parties.

**Traveling**

* **Traveling to Practice**
	+ School transportation will be provided to all contests and practices, as well as other required events. Students are expected to ride to and from contests with the team. Students may drive his/her own car to a contest or practice only in special circumstances with the approval of the administration and parent/guardian. An athlete may ride home from a contest with a parent/guardian by a written request and personal contact by the parent to the coach in charge before leaving. Students will not be released to anyone else without prior approval by the administration and parent/guardian. Emergency situations may be handled by the coaching staff as they occur.
	+ ST. EDWARD STUDENTS ONLY: If a student is ineligible and is required to stay after school (per school policy), they will not be allowed to travel to the Newman Grove for practices on those days. If the practice is located in their home town, they are expected to come to practice once their after-school time is completed.
* **Inclement Weather**
	+ If school must be canceled or dismissed early because of inclement weather, practices and contests will not be held as a rule. Occasionally, weather and road conditions clear by early afternoon, and, if it is determined that athletes can travel safely, a practice or contest may be held only after approval by both administrations. This information will be communicated via the “Band” App.



**Parent/Player Acknowledgment and Agreement**

**Player**

I have read the entire NG/SE Boys Basketball Handbook, and I understand what is expected of me as a student-athlete. I understand the policies. I agree to follow all policies in this handbook, and I promise to always represent our schools and communities in a positive manner.

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent**

I have read the entire NG/SE Boys Basketball Handbook, and I understand what is expected of me as a parent. I understand and agree to the policies outlined in the handbook. I, as a parent, promise to support my child and the NG/SE coop and Newman Grove and St. Edward communities in a positive manner.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_