

Houston Football 2026



Return to Glory

2026–2027 Player & Parent Expectations Handbook:

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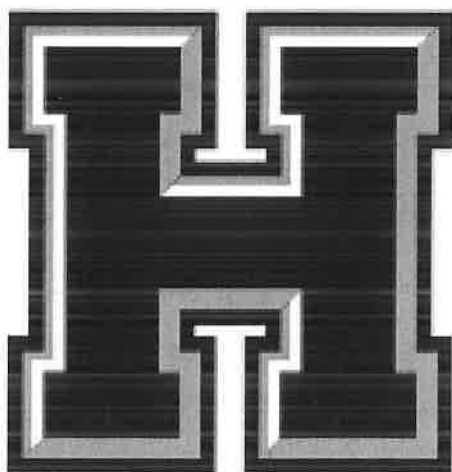
1. Welcome, Governance, and Mission

Welcome to the Houston Mustang Football Family!

This handbook is designed to help you prepare for your involvement with the Houston High School football program. While it cannot cover every single situation, it serves as a core reference for the season. We are building a tradition of excellence that is based on discipline, accountability, and toughness. We are excited to have you as part of our future.

Governance: The Houston Mustang Football program operates in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) and the policies set forth by the Germantown Municipal School District (GMSD).

Mission: The Houston Mustang Football Program develops every member into the best person, student, teammate, and player, in pursuit of excellence at the championship level both on and off the field.



2. A Message from the Head Coach



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to what we believe will be a defining experience for your son. Our coaching staff, together with the Booster Club, created this guide to share the expectations of our program. Our goal is to shape strong young men first and skilled football players second.

We use football to build accountability, discipline, and toughness—skills that matter long after the season ends. We ask our players to give full effort every day for the good of the TEAM. Playing for the Mustangs is a privilege earned through hard work.

Go Mustangs!

James Thomas
Head Football Coach



3. Program Philosophy & Alignment

Goal: To foster a rewarding environment that values participation and belonging alongside competitive excellence. We utilize a Vertical Alignment Model to ensure consistent terminology and technique across all levels of the program.

- **Freshman Football:** Focuses on the transition to high school ball. To ensure a smooth academic and social transition into high school, all Freshmen players will participate in mandatory Transition Meetings (minimum of 2x per month). These sessions address the unique adjustments of high school life and reinforce the standards of our program.
- **Junior Varsity (JV):** Led by JV Coach Keith Gibbs, this program features dedicated JV-only practices twice a week in addition to reps during Varsity practice to ensure meaningful growth and skill development for every roster member.
- **Varsity Football:** The highest level of competition. Emphasis is on winning games through elite mental and physical preparation and high-stakes execution.
- **Year-Round Development:** Regardless of level, we expect a year-round commitment to our strength and conditioning program (December–July) to ensure player safety and competitive readiness.

4. Coach Expectations & Commitment

The Houston High School coaching staff is committed to providing a professional, safe, and elite athletic environment. To that end, our staff commits to the following:

- **Lead by Example:** We model the character, work ethic, and sportsmanship we expect from our players. We are mentors first.
- **Coach Every Player:** We are committed to coaching every player on the roster. Regardless of depth chart position, every athlete deserves—and will receive—quality instruction, feedback, and developmental attention.
- **Professional Communication:** Coaches will maintain clear and professional communication with parents. We commit to responding to non-emergency emails or messages within 24–48 hours during the business week.
- **Safety First:** Our staff is trained in current TSSAA safety protocols, including heat acclimation, concussion recognition, and injury prevention. We will never prioritize a win over the health of a student-athlete.
- **The "Mustang Family" Partnership:** We acknowledge the sacrifice families make for this program. We commit to respecting your time by starting and ending practices as scheduled and providing as much notice as possible for any calendar changes.

5. The Mustang Student-Athlete Standard

Being a Houston Mustang is a 24/7 commitment. We expect our athletes to represent this program with excellence in every arena of their lives—from the classroom to the community.

Attendance & Academics

Goal: To ensure every athlete remains on track for graduation and eligible for collegiate recruitment.

- **The "Tuesday Rule":** Every Tuesday, Mrs. Thomas and Coach Gibbs conduct a comprehensive grade and attendance check. We monitor for failing grades, missing assignments, tardies, and excessive absences.
- **Academic Support:** Study Hall is required for any student-athlete identified as "at-risk." To ensure success, the staff provides referrals to school Math Labs and teacher-led tutoring sessions.
- **The Presence Standard:** Not feeling well is not an excuse to miss practice. If a player is at school, they are at practice. If physically unable to participate, players must still observe and take "mental reps" with their position group unless sent home by the trainer or nurse.
- **Absence Communication:** In an emergency, the player (not the parent) must contact Coach Thomas or their position coach via the team app or email before the school day starts.
- **The Punctuality Standard:** If you are early, you are on time. Lateness to class or practice results in mandatory make-up time.

Athletic Preparation & Engagement

- **In season:** Football season begins after the TSSAA-mandated dead period, the last week of June and the first week of July. Practices will be held 4 days a week from 3-5 or 5:30 unless the TSSAA heat policies require otherwise. Players are expected to attend all practices during the season and participate to the fullest extent, and dress in the practice apparel provided
- **Games:** Freshmen and JV games are held on Monday nights beginning at 5:30. Varsity games are held on Friday nights at 7 pm. All players are expected to attend games regardless of injury or playing positions. Players not dressed out in game uniform are to only wear Houston Football attire and tennis shoes. No backpacks, phones, headphones, or other items are permitted.
- **Weight Room:** Off-season training is crucial to player development and expected for all players not participating in a spring sport. Championships are built here from December to July.
- **Film Study (HUDL):** Modern football is won in the film room. Players are expected to log hours on HUDL each week to study their own performance and scout upcoming opponents.
- **Team Support:** Varsity players are expected to attend Freshman, JV, middle school, and GFL home games whenever possible to support the future of the program. Players are expected to be dressed in Houston Football attire and tennis shoes only when on the sidelines at these events.
- **Post High School Recruiting:** Players interested in furthering their athletic career past the high school level are expected to work with their parents to do the following:
 - Communicate goals to parents, Coach Thomas, and position coaches
 - Communicate with your grade level guidance counselor that you are interested in playing football after high school
 - Research schools you are interested in attending and playing for, and determine the following:
 - Do they have your major?
 - Do you meet the academic requirements for admission?
 - Do your physical measurables match up to those of the players currently on the roster?
 - Do your athletic strengths and abilities match those of the players currently on the roster?
 - How many players currently on the roster play in your position?
 - Create a highlight film using HUDL
 - Create a Twitter account that becomes a vehicle to market yourself

- Check Twitter and email often and reply/retweet any communication from schools
- Talk to your parents about football camps you can attend and schools you can visit
- Maintain adequate grades and attendance in school
- Continue to improve your performance on the field and in the weight room
- Communicate with your coaches often about which schools you are seeking, currently in communication with, or have questions about
- Perform on Friday night!

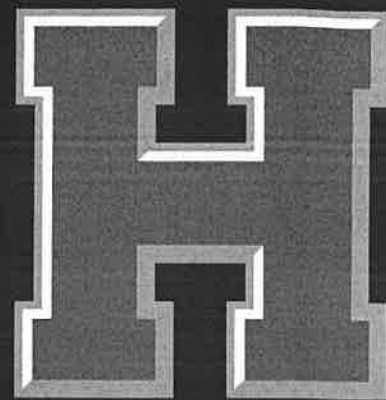
3. Community & Service (The Mustang Way)

"If we want our community to support us on Friday nights, we have to support our community." — **Coach James Thomas**

- **Meals to Missions** is a new program-wide fundraiser that will be implemented this year, beginning in July. Players will raise funds to support Meals to Missions and package meals to help those in need locally, in the United States, or internationally
- **Germantown Education Foundation (GEF) Run:** Full team participation as event volunteers is expected at this annual event.
- **Youth Mentorship (GFL):** Our players will volunteer with the Germantown Football League to mentor younger athletes.
- **Gameday Operations:** Players will assist with gameday logistics for our feeder middle schools (e.g., running chains) and assist in stocking the concession stands as needed.

RAISING MONEY AND GIVING BACK WITH MEALS TO MISSIONS AT HOUSTON HIGH SCHOOL

At Houston High School, we strive to develop all members of our football program into the best person, student, teammate, and football player they can be, allowing our program to excel at a championship level on and off the field



WHAT WE'RE DOING THIS YEAR

We're **packing and distributing 10,000 meals**—providing food for families locally through the Mid-South Food Bank, while sending meals to children and families in impoverished parts of Harlan County, Kentucky.



HOW IT WORKS

All players will pack meals: scooping ingredients, weighing, and heat-sealing bags, and ultimately packing them into boxes. It's an interactive way for players to serve and make a tangible difference!



FUNDRAISING PROCESS

Just like a walkathon, each participant will raise money before the event by texting friends and family. **Every donation helps** fund both the meals and our football program.



SUPPORT EVERY PLAYER

With Meals to Missions, we **raise money to support** football program needs such as transportation, player travel gear, and nutrition to provide our athletes with the best opportunities to succeed.

SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR PACKING PARTY

Thursday, July 30, 2026
3:00-6:00 p.m.
Fieldhouse

4. Leadership

- **Accountability Groups:** Consisting of a collection of athletes with 1-2 team leaders per group and a coach. Group leaders will meet weekly with Coach Thomas to discuss the "pulse of the team" and ensure all members are meeting the Mustang Standard. Points will be awarded weekly for academic and physical performance.
- **Junior Leadership:** During the off-season, Junior players are tasked with leadership responsibilities, including locker room management and leading team stretches, to prepare for Senior year.

5. Player Recognition

- **Recognition:** Players earn Horseshoe stickers for achievement of team goals based on their performance the week before
- **Accountability Groups:** Groups will be recognized weekly for their athletic and academic contributions from the week before
- **Players of the Week:** The coaching staff meets weekly to discuss the previous game and submit names for players of the week in a variety of categories that include both on and off the field metrics
- **Scholarships:** The Donald D. Thomas scholarship is awarded annually to a senior Mustang football player and is based entirely on **off-the-field metrics**, including character, community service, and academic growth.

6. Equipment & Apparel Accountability

The gear issued to a Mustang is a reflection of the program's investment in that player. We expect it to be treated with respect.

- **Workout Apparel & Laundry Bags:** Each player is issued a set of workout apparel and a designated laundry bag.
- **The Daily Clean:** Laundry bags must be taken home **daily**, washed, and brought back clean for the next day's workout. Success begins with personal hygiene and preparation.
- **Apparel Integrity:** Borrowing or taking another teammate's clothing or equipment is strictly prohibited and considered a violation of team trust.
- **Replacement Policy:** Any lost or damaged gear (including laundry bags, locks, or practice jerseys) is the financial responsibility of the player and must be paid for via SchoolCash Online before replacement gear is issued.
- **Substitutions:** Players who are provided with equipment belonging to the school should not replace any items they are given with items they have purchased without the knowledge and approval of Coach Thomas.

7. Student-Athlete Conduct & Safety

- **Hazing:** Houston High School has a zero-tolerance policy for hazing. Any player involved in the harassment, intimidation, or "initiation" of a teammate will face immediate disciplinary action, including potential removal from the team.
- **Locker Room Integrity:** Every player is issued a team lock. **All items must be locked up** during workouts and practices. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items that were left unsecured.
- **Locker Room Behavior:** It is the job of everyone on the team to maintain the safety and cleanliness of the space we are fortunate enough to have available for our team. All players are responsible for keeping lockers clean, free of opened food and drinks, garbage, and wet clothing or towels. No horseplay or wrestling of any kind is permitted in the locker room.
- **Staff & Volunteer Respect:** Mustangs treat all student volunteers—including student trainers, film crew, and managers—with the highest level of respect. They are vital members of our program.
- **Social Media:** You represent the program 24/7. Think before you post. Disparaging comments about teammates, coaches, or opponents are a violation of the Mustang Standard.
- **Nutrition:** Follow the **Nutrition Cheat Sheet** (Addendum XXII). Prioritize sleep and hydration. Report all injuries to **Haley Vance** immediately.

Self-Advocacy & Communication

We want our players to grow into men who can navigate difficult conversations. If you have a concern about your role, your technique, or your standing on the team:

- **Step 1: Self-Reflection.** Check the film on **HUDL**. See what the coaches are seeing.
- **Step 2: Direct Dialogue.** Schedule a time to speak with your **Position Coach** before or after practice.
- **Step 3: Head Coach Review.** If you still need clarity, ask your Position Coach to help you set up a meeting with **Coach Thomas**.
- **The Mustang Promise:** We will always be honest with you. We may tell you things you don't want to hear, but we will always tell you what you *need* to hear to improve

7. Parent & Booster Expectations

The success of the Houston Mustang Football program depends on a healthy partnership between coaches, players, and parents. We ask our parents to model the same "Tradition of Excellence" we expect from our athletes.

Supporting the "Mustang Standard"

- **The Self-Advocacy Shift:** We ask parents to support our goal of building independent young men. Before intervening in a situation, please encourage your son to follow the Player-First Communication steps.
- **Academic Reinforcement:** Support the "Tuesday Rule" at home. If your son is assigned to mandatory study hall, please help us prioritize that time.
- **Hygiene & Preparation:** Ensure laundry bags are washed daily and that your athlete is prioritizing the nutrition and sleep needed for elite performance.
- **Post High School Football:** Parents of players interested in playing sports after high school should be present and active in the process.
 - Assist your player with:
 - Communicating with HHS Coaches
 - Marketing themselves on Twitter
 - Replying to coaches on Twitter or email
 - Managing expectations
 - Signing up for camps and visits

The H Club (Booster Support)

Welcome to the H Club!

Any caregiver of a Houston football player is a member of the H Club. The H Club is a volunteer-driven support organization seeking to elevate the Mustang football experience for all players and coaches.

H Club Board

Russ Waggener- President

Susannah Odle- Vice President

Debbie Brown- Secretary

Mike Anderson- Treasurer

Ashley Chambliss- Class of 2027 Liason

Jonathan Crews- Class of 2028 Liason

Juliann DeMatteo- Class of 2029 Liason

Ashley Webb- Class of 2030 Liason

The core objectives of the H Club are as follows:

- **Active Membership:** Every parent is a member of the Mustang Family. We encourage all families to join the H Club in volunteering to help provide the resources—meals, equipment, and travel—that the school budget does not cover.
- **Volunteerism:** The program runs on parent power. We expect every family to contribute to the program's success through volunteer opportunities (concessions, chains, etc.) as the community's support is vital to our growth. This includes overseeing fundraising efforts and serving on committee's in order to enhance and grow the resources available to the program.
- **Positive Ambassadorship:** Parents are the face of our program in the Collierville and Germantown communities.
 - We expect our parents to:
 - Speak positively about all players and coaches in public and on social media.
 - Act as ambassadors of the sport, representing the Houston community area, developing community excitement and involvement in the program.

- Develop relationships in the local community consistent with the program's needs and growth initiatives.
- Monitor performance via objective comparison to other leading benchmark football programs.

Communication Guidelines & Chain of Command

- **The 24-Hour Rule:** Parents and guardians are required to wait **24 hours** after a contest before contacting any member of the coaching staff regarding game-related concerns.
- **Scheduled Meetings Only:** Coaches will not hold meetings on the field, in the parking lot, or immediately following a game. All meetings must be scheduled 24 hours in advance and the player must be present for the meeting.
- **Discussion Boundaries:** * **WE WILL DISCUSS:** Your son's work ethic, his academic progress, his character development, and his safety/health. **WE WILL NOT DISCUSS:** Playing time, play-calling/strategy, or other student-athletes on the roster.
- **The Chain of Command:**
 1. Player to Position Coach
 2. Player to Head Coach
 3. Player and Parent to Head Coach and Position Coach (Scheduled Meeting)
 4. Player and Parent to Head Coach and Athletic Director (Scheduled Meeting)

8. Spectator & Parent Code of Conduct

As representatives of the Houston Mustang program, we expect our fans to lead the league in sportsmanship. Our goal is to create a home-field advantage that is loud, supportive, and respectful.

- **Support the Mustangs, Not the Opponent's Mistakes:** Cheer for our players' successes. Avoid heckling opposing players, coaches, or fans.
- **Respect the Officials:** Officials are human and will make mistakes. Berating officials from the stands is counterproductive and sets a poor example for our student-athletes. Under TSSAA rules, spectator misconduct can result in penalties against our team or fines for the school.
- **Sideline Boundaries:** During games and practices, parents and fans must remain in the designated spectator areas (bleachers/stands). Access to the track, sideline, or locker room areas are restricted to credentialed personnel only.
- **Positive Digital Citizenship:** Your online presence is an extension of our stadium. Do not use social media to disparage officials, opponents, or members of our own program.
- **Zero Tolerance for Harassment:** Any spectator who engages in verbal or physical harassment of officials, coaches, or other fans will be asked to leave the premises and may be banned from future contests.

9. TSSAA Compliance & Medical Eligibility

To ensure the safety of our athletes and remain in compliance with the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA), the following medical requirements must be met before any student-athlete can participate in practices, scrimmages, or games.

Medical Clearance

- **The "June 1" Deadline:** All medical paperwork must be completed and turned in to Mrs. Thomas or Haley Vance by **June 1, 2026**. Athletes who are not cleared by this date will not be allowed to participate in summer workouts or team activities.

Physical Examination Requirements

- **The "After 4/15" Rule:** Per TSSAA regulations, a student-athlete must have a physical examination performed by a licensed medical professional (MD, DO, NP, or PA) that is dated **after April 15, 2026**. Physicals dated prior to this will not be accepted for the 2026–2027 season.

Athletic Training & Injury Protocol

- Our primary goal is the health and safety of our athletes. We work in close partnership with our athletic training staff to ensure proper care.
- **Reporting Injuries:** All injuries, no matter how minor they seem, must be reported to **Haley Vance** before practice begins.
- **Participation Status:** Haley Vance and/or team physician are the only staff members authorized to make decisions on status of injury and return to play. If a player is seen by a physician, Haley must be given a doctor's note.
- **Medications/Braces:** Any medications, inhalers, special braces required for players should be given to Haley before every practice or game. She will have them available for players on the sidelines
- **The "Training Room" Rule:** If an athlete is unable to practice due to injury, they are still expected to be present for "mental reps" unless

they are receiving active treatment or have been sent home by a medical professional.

- **Parent Notification:** Haley Vance will contact parents directly to discuss treatment plans for injuries sustained during team activities.
- **Concussion Protocol:** Houston High School follows a strict concussion management policy. Any athlete suspected of a concussion will be removed from play immediately and must receive MD/DO clearance followed by a mandatory 5 step graduated return-to-play protocol.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)?

SCA is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. This causes blood and oxygen to stop flowing to the rest of the body. The individual will not have a pulse. It can happen without warning and can lead to death within minutes if the person does not receive immediate help. Only **1 in 10** survives SCA. If Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is given and an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is administered early, **5 in 10** could survive.



SCA is NOT a heart attack, which is caused by reduced or blocked blood flow to the heart. However, a heart attack can increase the risk for SCA.

Watch for Warning Signs

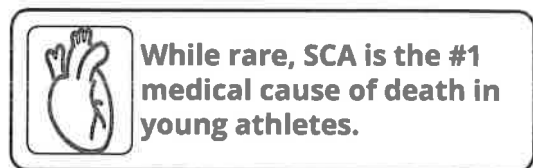
SCA usually happens without warning. SCA can happen in young people who don't know they have a heart problem, and it may be the first sign of a heart problem. When there are warning signs, the person may experience:



If any of these warning signs are present, it's important to talk with a health care provider. There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops due to SCA, blood stops flowing to the brain and other body organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in minutes.

Electrocardiogram (EKG) Testing

EKG is a noninvasive, quick, and painless test that looks at the heart's electrical activity. Small electrodes attached to the skin of the arms, legs, and chest capture the heartbeat as it moves through the heart. An EKG can detect some heart problems that may lead to an increased risk of SCA. Routine EKG testing is not currently recommended by national medical organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Cardiology, unless the pre-participation physical exam reveals an indication for this test. The student or parent may request, from the student's health care provider, an EKG be administered in addition to the student's pre-participation physical exam, at a cost to be incurred by the student or the student's parent.



Limitations of EKG Testing

- An EKG may be expensive and cannot detect all conditions that predispose an individual to SCA.

- False positives (abnormalities identified during EKG testing that turn out to have no medical significance) may lead to unnecessary stress, additional testing, and unnecessary restriction from athletic participation.
- Accurate EKG interpretation requires adequate training.

I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of SCA.

Signature of Student-Athlete

Print Student-Athlete's Name

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Print Parent/Guardian's Name

Date

Student-athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Statement

Must be **signed and returned** to school or community youth athletic activity prior to participation in practice or play.

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Name(s): _____

After reading the information sheet, I am aware of the following information:

Student-Athlete initials		Parent/Legal Guardian initials
	A concussion is a brain injury which should be reported to my parents, my coach(es) or a medical professional if one is available.	
	A concussion cannot be "seen." Some symptoms might be present right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after an injury.	
	I will tell my parents, my coach and/or a medical professional about my injuries and illnesses.	N/A
	I will not return to play in a game or practice if a hit to my head or body causes any concussion-related symptoms.	N/A
	I will/my child will need written permission from a <i>health care provider*</i> to return to play or practice after a concussion.	
	Most concussions take days or weeks to get better. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.	
	After a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body an athlete should receive immediate medical attention if there are any danger signs such as loss of consciousness, repeated vomiting or a headache that gets worse.	
	After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that I am/my child is much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before the concussion symptoms go away.	
	Sometimes repeat concussion can cause serious and long-lasting problems and even death.	
	I have read the concussion symptoms on the Concussion Information Sheet.	

** Health care provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training*

Signature of Student-Athlete

Date

Signature of Parent/Legal guardian

Date

CONSENT FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION & MEDICAL CARE

*Entire Page Completed By Patient

Athlete Information

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female Grade _____ Age _____ DOB ____/____/____

Allergies _____

Medications _____

Insurance _____ Policy Number _____

Group Number _____ Insurance Phone Number _____

Emergency Contact Information

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Mother's Cell _____ Father's Cell _____

Mother's Name _____ Work Phone _____

Father's Name _____ Work Phone _____

Another Person to Contact _____

Phone Number _____ Relationship _____

Legal/Parent Consent

I/We hereby give consent for (athlete's name) _____ to represent (name of school) _____ in athletics realizing that such activity involves potential for injury. I/We acknowledge that even with the best coaching, the most advanced equipment, and strict observation of the rules, injuries are still possible. ***On rare occasions these injuries are severe and result in disability, paralysis, and even death. I/We further grant permission to the school and TSSAA, its physicians, athletic trainers, and/or EMT to render aid, treatment, medical, or surgical care deemed reasonably necessary to the health and well being of the student athlete named above during or resulting from participation in athletics.*** By the execution of this consent, the student athlete named above and his/her parent/guardian(s) do hereby consent to screening, examination, and testing of the student athlete during the course of the pre-participation examination by those performing the evaluation, and to the taking of medical history information and the recording of that history and the findings and comments pertaining to the student athlete on the forms attached hereto by those practitioners performing the examination. As parent or legal Guardian, ***I/We remain fully responsible for any legal responsibility which may result from any personal actions taken by the above named student athlete.***

Signature of Athlete

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

10. Team Meals & Nutrition

Proper fueling is a critical component of athletic performance. The program coordinates team meals to ensure our athletes are prepared for the physical demands of gameday.

- **Varsity Pre-Game Meals:** Team meals are provided every Friday afternoon for all Varsity players. These meals are designed to provide the optimal balance of carbohydrates and proteins for peak performance.
- **Freshman Pre-Game Meals:** Team meals are provided every Monday afternoon for all Freshman players prior to their home or away contests.
- **The Hydration Standard:** Proper hydration is a 24-hour responsibility. All athletes are required to carry a **water bottle** with them daily to school and practice. Coaches will monitor for hydration compliance during the "Tuesday Rule" checks.
- **Nutrition Education:** For specific guidance on what to eat outside of team meals, please refer to the at the end of this handbook.

11. Program Contact Directory

Administration & Athletics Leadership

- **Hallie Ross** – Principal
- **Marvis Davis** – Athletic Director
- **David Wolff** – Assistant Athletic Director

Varsity Coaching Staff

- **James Thomas** – Head Coach | Offensive Line
- **Tom Kliman** – Defensive Coordinator | Defensive Line
- **Ronnie Thompson** – Offensive Coordinator | Quarterbacks
- **Keith Gibbs** – Strength & Conditioning | JV HC | Linebackers
- **Bobby Armbruster** – Special Teams | Outside Linebackers
- **Brian Field** – Running Backs | Max Preps
- **Dustin Bauman** – Wide Receivers | X Recruiting
- **Charlie White** – Defensive Backs

Freshmen & Developmental Staff

- **Karlos Mungen** – Freshmen HC
- **Ben Bennett** – Freshman Assistant | Varsity Sideline Support

Equipment and Facilities Operations

- **Tim Fox**

Sports Medicine & Performance

- **Haley Vance** – Athletic Trainer
- **Coach Harden** – GMSD Strength & Conditioning

Player and Parent Support

Haley Thomas- HHS teacher, Academics, Coach Thomas' wife

12. Player Fees & Financial Obligations

To provide the high-quality experience expected of a championship-level program, we require an annual player fee. These funds are deposited in to the school football account to directly support the players and program by funding team meals, apparel, specialized equipment, travel costs, and referees.

- **Annual Player Fee: \$350.00**
- **Payment Window:** Fees become active after school starts in August.
- **Final Deadline:** All payments must be completed by **Friday, October 9, 2026**.
- **Payment Methods:**
 - **SchoolCash Online:** The preferred method for secure digital payment.
 - **In-Person:** Check or cash may be submitted directly to **Mrs. Thomas** at the fieldhouse during practice hours. Checks should be made out to Houston High School
- **Policy Note:** Please note that no payments will be accepted during games.

13. Player & Parent Contract

By signing below, we acknowledge that we have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policies and expectations outlined in the 2026–2027 Houston Mustang Football Player & Parent Expectations Handbook.

Athlete Commitment

I, the student-athlete, commit to the Mustang Standard. I understand that my participation in this program is a privilege, not a right. I agree to:

- Prioritize my academics and adhere to the "Tuesday Rule."
- Maintain the Presence Standard and communicate absences directly to my coaches.
- Respect my teammates, staff, and equipment, including the daily maintenance of my laundry bag.
- Represent Houston High School with integrity on the field, in the classroom, and on social media.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

I, the parent/guardian, commit to supporting the program's mission and culture. I agree to:

- Honor the 24-Hour Rule and follow the formal Chain of Command for all communications.
- Support my child's growth in self-advocacy by encouraging him to speak with coaches directly first.
- Ensure all medical paperwork is uploaded to Sportsware by the June 1st deadline.
- Model positive sportsmanship as a spectator and as a member of the H Club.

Player Name (Print): _____

Player Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (Print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

14. ADDENDUM: DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Event / Deadline
April 15	Earliest date allowed for 2026–2027 Physicals
April 27-May 14	Spring Practice
May 25- May 29	Players OFF
June 1	Summer Workouts Begin 7-9 AM FINAL DEADLINE for physicals and required paperwork
June 17	8:00 AM U of M 7v7 10:00 AM Big Man Competition
June 18 – July 5	TSSAA Dead Period (No workouts/coaching contact)
July 6th	2026-27 Back from Dead Period Mon-Thur 5:00PM-8:00PM
July 8th	9:00 AM-12:00 PM Media Day Team and Individual Photos Senior Banner Pictures
July 13-July 16	All Sports, All Games Camp 8:00 AM-12:00 PM Juniors and Seniors Counselors
July 29-July 30	Team Camp Overnight- Fieldhouse
July 30	3:00- 6:00 PM Meals to Missions Packaging Event 6:30 PM Family Night
July 31	6:00 PM Scrimmage vs Lausanne @ HHS
October 9, 2026	Final Deadline for Player Fees (\$350)

APR 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
			Parent Meeting 6pm Auditorium		OFF	
26	27	28	29	30		
SP 3-5pm	SP 3-5pm	SP 3-5pm	SP 3-5pm			

MAY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					01 OFF	02
03 SP 3-5pm	04 Lift 3-4:15pm	05 SP 3-5pm	06 SP 3-5pm	07 OFF	08	09
10 SP 3-5pm	11 Lift 3-4:15pm	12 SP 3-5pm	13 SP 3-5pm	14 OFF	15	16
17 Lift 3-4:15pm	18 Lift 3-4:15pm	19 Lift 3-4:15pm	20 Lift 3-4:15pm	21 OFF	22	23
24 OFF	25 OFF	26 OFF	27 OFF	28 OFF	29	30
31						

JUN 2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

Practice and lift
7-9am

02

7-9am

03

7-9am

7-9am

04

OFF

05

06

07

7-9am

08

7-9am

09

7-9am

10

7-9am

11

OFF

12

13

14

7-9am

15

7-9am

16

U of M 7v7
Big Man
8am

17

OFF

18

OFF

19

DEAD period

20

21

DP

22

DP

23

DP

24

DP

25

DP

26

DP

27

28

DP

29

DP

30

JUL 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01 DP	02 DP	03 DP	04 DP
05 DP	06 Practice 5-8pm	07 Practice 5-8pm	08 7/8 Pictures 9am-12pm Prac 5-8pm	09 Practice 5-8pm	10 OFF	11 OFF
12 OFF	13 Prac 5-8pm	14 5-8pm	15 5-8pm	16 5-8pm	17 OFF	18 OFF
19 OFF	20 Prac 5-8pm	21 5-8pm	22 5-8pm	23 5-8pm	24 OFF	25 OFF
26 OFF	27 Prac 5-8pm	28 5-8pm	29 5-8pm	30 Team Camp 12pm- Overnight M2M Fundraiser Finale	31 Team Camp Scrimmage vs Lausanne 6pm @ HHS	OFF
				Family Night 6:30pm		

2026 Houston Varsity Schedule

7/31 Scrimmage vs Lausanne 6pm at Houston HS

8/21 vs Germantown

8/28 @ Whitehaven

9/4 vs Southwind

9/11 vs Tupelo

9/18 vs Bartlett*

9/25 vs Cordova* HC

10/2 vs Oak Grove *6pm start

10/8 @ Arlington* Thurs

10/29 @ Collierville* Thurs

11/6 Playoffs start

2026 FR/JV Schedule

8/10 vs Whitehaven 5:30pm FR, 7:00pm JV

8/17 @ Bartlett

8/24 vs Collierville

8/31 @ Germantown

9/14 vs Munford

9/21 @ Southwind

9/28 vs Arlington

15. ADDENDUM: NUTRITION CHEAT SHEET

To play like a Mustang, you must fuel like a Mustang. Use this guide to ensure you have the energy to finish the 4th quarter and the nutrients to recover for the next day.

The "Performance Plate" Breakdown

- **50% Carbohydrates (The Fuel):** Whole grain bread, pasta, brown rice, potatoes, oatmeal, and fruit.
- **25% Protein (The Repair):** Chicken, turkey, lean beef, eggs, Greek yogurt, or beans.
- **25% Color (The Protection):** Broccoli, spinach, carrots, peppers, and berries.

Timing Your Fuel

Timing	Goal	Mustang-Approved Examples
Breakfast (Non-Negotiable)	Kickstart your metabolism	Overnight oats with berries; Eggs and whole-wheat toast; Peanut butter and banana on a bagel.
Pre-Practice Snack (30-60 min before)	Quick energy boost	Apple or banana; Low-fat granola bar; Handful of pretzels.
Post-Workout (Within 45 min)	Muscle recovery	Chocolate milk (the gold standard); Protein shake; Turkey wrap.
Dinner (Night Before Game)	Carb-loading	Large portion of pasta with marinara and lean ground beef; Grilled chicken with a large sweet potato.

The "Avoid" List (Gameday Trash)

- **Energy Drinks:** These cause heart rate spikes and subsequent "crashes." Stick to water and Gatorade.
- **Fried/Greasy Foods:** These sit heavy in the stomach and slow you down. Avoid fast-food fries or heavy cream sauces on gamedays.
- **High-Sugar Sodas:** These lead to dehydration and "heavy legs" in the second half.

Hydration Pro-Tips

- **The "Pee Test":** Your urine should be pale yellow (like lemonade). If it's dark (like apple juice), you are already dehydrated.
- **Salt Matters:** If you are a "heavy sweater," add a pinch of salt to your meals or drink a sports drink to replace electrolytes