Safety Pillar:
Our first Pillar in TIS Athletics



This article is by Athletics Director, John Powell. For any further discussions, please feel free to contact him at john.powell@tis.edu.mo or stop by the Athletics Office at SW 1040 if you're on campus! Thank you for taking an interest in our TIS Tigers Athletics program!

In our TIS Athletics program we are about much more than winning games or developing physical skills. It is an opportunity for students to build confidence, develop teamwork, demonstrate sportsmanship, and learn lessons that extend far beyond the playing field. At the heart of this experience is a commitment to creating a caring, supportive, and positive environment where student-athletes can grow and thrive. In my first year as the Athletics Director, I'm unveiling our five pillars and will communicate how each pillar helps build our athletics program and student-athletes.

A successful athletic program begins with the well-being of its participants. Whether students are attending a training session, preparing for a competition, or cheering on their teammates, everyone contributes to a safe sporting environment. We want our student athletes to grow physically, but also form friendships, bonds, and social connections. This takes care of our safety and well-being perspective.

For student-athletes, this responsibility towards safely participating starts with everyday decisions: listening carefully to coaches, following instructions, using equipment appropriately, respecting teammates and opponents, and communicating when something does not feel right. Reporting an injury, feeling unwell, or recognizing a potential hazard is not a sign of weakness.

In this article we will expand further on certain details and aspects of the Athletics program specifically around our elements of the Safety pillar.

Supervision, proper Coaching, and Facilities

Supervision before and after a session is important. It shows there's a safe environment set up for our students when they arrive and after they depart. In the athletic vocabulary world, we could call a space that is vacant without adult supervision an “attractive nuisance.” When unsupervised, students may not follow the instructions. Thus, this could create a safety issue. Therefore, we always want our students and athletes to be enjoying the facilities around campus under the presence of an adult. Abiding by the times campus is open and closed is key for our community members to follow. As a reminder, we have our head of school announcement that the school is closed, with warnings prior to 5:00pm.

Specifics in the technical coaching the warm up ensures that students perform proper warm-up exercises before activities and cool-down exercises afterward. Teaching students the correct techniques in contact or non-contact can minimize the risk of injuries. We as coaches constantly monitor student athletes for signs of fatigue, dehydration, and overexertion.

Providing the upkeep of sports facilities through routine walks through, risk-assessing areas, and designing practices in a safe setting all contribute towards the well-being of our teams. There is not a current inventory in TIS Athletics, so as one of my goals for the year, I'm developing an inventory to ensure our equipment is up to date, regularly inspected, and it is turned over in an appropriate amount of time.

While using the facilities, moving dangerous or protruding objects from any field of play or court is something that always needs to be reviewed before practice begins. An upcoming addition to our TIS facilities will be a new volleyball net system for MPR2. Other future projects are being looked at to improve this facility as well.

Injuries and follow up

When there is an unfortunate injury or sickness that requires medical attention, the need to provide a doctor’s note and clearance has been sought to ensure our student-athletes return to play in the correct manner and timeframe. Coaches and myself speak about these injuries to create a proper communication line including the school nurse. Our school incident form is completed, and insurance is followed up on if needed. We rely on parent communication for these injuries and sicknesses, just as if they were to miss the school day. We also encourage students to take this under their control and learn the life skill of communicating, which is a work in progress from our middle school into our high school. Relaying this information to their coach or the Athletics Department is important too in the planning of the sessions for adequate numbers.

Coach trainings, certifications, equipment

Coaches play an important role in safety by guiding skill development, reinforcing expectations, advancing training certifications for best practices, and helping students understand how to execute gameplay. All of our TIS coaching staff has completed the NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest online training that advises an adult what to do in the state of an emergency with a student athlete that may have sudden cardiac arrest. ***Sudden cardiac arrest is caused by a structural or electrical problem associated with the heart. Basically, the heart unexpectedly stops beating and pumping blood.*** The NFHS course has helped prepare or refresh our staff on the warning signs and symptoms to be prepared in an unfortunate situation.

It goes without saying that having proper training and knowledge of what to do in these events is vital. The Athletics Department has also purchased a portable AED device for those that go off campus for training or have an away game. Coaches are instructed to obtain a first aid kit from the nurse's office for every away game in case of a minor injury.

In partnership with MUST, we have begun to arrange First Aid and CPR training certifications for our staff that will give all of us the resources to act in the event of an emergency.

Child Safeguarding and Protection

All TIS faculty/staff complete the assigned Child Safeguarding training while our external coaches must complete a training from TES. This training and certificates are followed up on by our school-wide safeguarding leads and housed for future documentation and reference when needed. We know the importance not only during the school day for children to feel safe, but also after the school day, as well as on trips.

Family involvement

Families support a safe culture in Athletics by staying informed about equipment requirements and encouraging their children to understand the communication when there are injuries. We continue to promote the need to have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), like shin guards, knee pads, athletic glasses/goggles, specific sport shoes, and other PPE that allows students to participate fully.

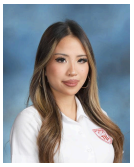
When safety becomes a shared responsibility, students are better positioned to learn, improve, and enjoy their sporting experiences. If a student develops a diagnosis or condition, communication and updates from families is needed, not only to our nurse, but also to the athletic department if the student is physically active. Parents and guardians supporting this initiative goes a long way.

Student testimonials



"The Athletics program, coaches, and team foster a safe environment for us to compete in by making sure we have all the necessary equipment to protect ourselves during sports."

- Grade 12 Student-Athlete
Marco



" The coaches encourage positive sportsmanship and make sure every team member feels included, supported, and respected on and off the field."

- Grade 12 Student-Athlete
Bernice



"The Athletics Department fosters a safe environment through wearing protective gear and staying clear boundaries to prevent injuries. Furthermore the coaches serve as supportive individuals that allow students to comfortably participate in their sport."

- Grade 12 Student-Athlete
Lucas



"Coaches understand that I am a multi-sport student-athlete and give me opportunities to recover and rest to prevent injuries."

- Grade 12 Student-Athlete
John



"Injuries do happen as sports are sports and the coaches ensure that you are properly recovered before allowing you to continue playing. Athletes on the sidelines are also always included, and are very welcome to continue participating in other things like coaching or tracking stats."

- Grade 12 Student-Athlete
Lukas

Coach testimonials



"I attended the FIFA women's training. We always ensure two members are present at training and events. We had to complete a workshop on safeguarding as well."

- Middle School Girls Football Coach
Claire-Ann Kenney



"We have better access to safety equipment such as first aid kits. Ensuring staff members are aware of the location of AED's makes everyone better prepared and is something that was missing previously. This should be a yearly procedure for all staff, not just coaches. Offering first aid training is important. Having options to recertification embedded into the program helps ensure a higher standard."

- Elementary Cross Country Coach
Eddie Polawski



"I appreciated the CPR & First Aid training. We are aware of the AFibs (Atrial fibrillation) are. There are supervisors and coaches to ensure safety for all students and staff."

- Middle School Girls Volleyball Coach
Bethany Wonch

TIS Athletics looks forward to continuing practicing, competing, and participating safely in all sports we offer on and off campus. Thanks for reading, and please review any of the other 5 Pillars in TIS Athletics for more information towards our Tigers!



- TIS Athletics Director
John Powell