2026 ALEXANDRIA CARDINALS BASEBALL

PARENTS, PLAYERS, FAMILIES:
The Coaching staff is very excited to welcome you to another season of Alexandria Cardinal Baseball. There are a few key items that we would like you to review prior to the season. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Communication is essential to any successful relationship and our desire is to keep you informed regarding important information as well as any changes that may take place during the season. Our number one goal is for your son to become a better person and ball player.

Cardinal Baseball Coaching Staff

Jake Munsch	Head Varsity	jmunsch@alexschools.org	651-332-0723
Chris Koep	Asst. Varsity		
Greg Toivononen	Asst. Varsity		
Lee Backhaus	JV Head	leebackhaus@wisper-wireless.com	320-766-8784
Erik Waage	Asst. JV		
Shayne Simon	9th Head	ssimon@alexschools.org	320-237-5197
Joe Korkowski	Asst. 9th		

Communication/Notifications

Teamreach app (players) Code: Cardsbaseball2026
Teamreach app (parents) Code: Cardsparents2026

(Download the Teamreach app on your phone, and then simply put in code)
I would like this to be one way messaging so please do not respond in the teamreach app. Communicate to coaches through text messaging when asking individual questions)

Twitter (X) follow @cardsdiamond
AYBA Website www.alexyouthbaseball.org
Cardinal Connection

Goals and Objectives
- Promote the development of students/athletes.
- Aid in character development and teach lifelong skills.
- Improve as a baseball player and as a teammate.

Leadership:

The coaching staff expects that all members of the team will demonstrate and develop their leadership skills throughout the season. We believe strongly that becoming, and being recognized as a leader, is something that is earned by your teammates through hard work, dedication, determination, and desire. We will count heavily on all of our ball players to demonstrate all those characteristics throughout the season. Team captains are selected prior to the season. Current players, coaching staff, and teachers and administrators from ISD 206 are/could be involved in the captain selection process.

Expectations for School Behavior/Academic Achievement:

As a member of the CARDINAL BASEBALL FAMILY, we expect our players to live up to the Code of Conduct as established by District 206. We also expect our players to maintain satisfactory attendance and maintain progress toward graduation. If your son is in need of extra academic support throughout the season, it is permissible and expected that he may need to miss practice or a game. We expect that your son/parent will communicate this need to the coaching staff prior to being absent.

- The coaching staff expects your son to be in class during the school day unless he is excused by a parent or is participating in a school activity. It is within the coaching staff's discretion to withhold playing time if attendance (detention hours, unexcused absences) are a continuing problem.

CARDINAL BASEBALL Policy/Principles

In previous years we outlined specific consequences for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd offences but that each incident should be looked at case by case. We are working to establish a strong culture and with that it eliminates the need for specific rules.

The Cardinal Way

1. Be on Time
2. Be Respectful to All
3. Put forward Best Effort

"Rules are for those who cannot follow directions. Standards are for those who aspire to do special things." – Tim Corbin, Vanderbilt University Baseball

"What you permit, you promote." – Anonymous

Attendance:

It is essential that players attend all scheduled practices. If your son needs to be gone, it is very important that he communicates with the coaching staff prior to his absence. Being gone may result in loss of playing time determined by coaching staff.

Participation in Other Activities:

It is an expectation that your son be committed to the Alexandria Cardinal Baseball Program during our season. Missing practice or games to be part of clinics, travel teams, or other organizations is not an acceptable absence and will result in a consequence.

MSHSL Rules:

Cardinal Baseball promotes and believes strongly in the rules and policies developed by the Minnesota State High School League regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and chemicals. These rules and policies are very specific in nature regarding suspensions and violations. Disciplinary actions that take place in this category are handled by AAHS administration, but we will request that a meeting with parents and player, or a phone call, will occur. A mistake in judgment may take place throughout the season and the coaching staff will be here to encourage, listen, and help in any way that is reasonable.

If your son is suspended for any reason throughout the season, it is a CARDINAL BASEBALL policy that he continues to be a part of the team. That includes attending all practices and games, unless otherwise agreed to by the coaching staff. Any athlete who has received a violation in the last calendar year in accordance with the Minnesota State High School League rules is not eligible to hold a leadership position.

Responsibilities during Road Trips

We expect our athletes to abide by the Code of Conduct while using District 206 transportation and when representing the team/community while outside of Alexandria.

- Getting home late on a road trip is not an excuse to sleep in on a school day. If you feel that this will be an issue please let us know. We can make arrangements for that athlete to stay back to assure he is in school on time the next day.

Equipment/Attire

Helmets

If players want to purchase their own helmet it needs to be matte black (preferable with no white markings on front.

Pants
Players for the past years have choosen to purchase their own pants instead of the ones we provide. We are no longer purchasing pants. We have plenty of used pants to give away if needed.

Pants need to be white pants with red piping. Brand does not matter.

Hats
Each player at each level will purchase their hat for $20. New for 2026, 9th and JV hats will be the same. Varsity will have a stand alone hat. Hats will be given out to players at practice.

Weight Room:

It is the expectation that all players attend all weight room sessions. We do understand that our springs are very unpredictable, and consistency in the weight room can be difficult when managing time off, games per week, and other factors that come up.

Players missing weight room or demonstrating little effort or interest will be considered an unexcused absence and will result in consequences determined by the coaching staff.

Tentative weight room schedule:
Varisty/JV Mondays 3:20/3:40 Wednesdays 7:00 a.m. Fridays 3:20/3:40
9th Wednesdays 3:20 They will utilize open lift times when possible on Monday/Friday.

Locker Room:

The locker room is an extension of the classroom and team. Behavior is expected to be in line with code of conduct and values that fall in line with the baseball program. Hanging out in the locker room prior to or after practice or games is not allowed. Inappropriate behavior will result in immediate notification to administration.

Issue/Resolution:
A specific process is in place for all Cardinal Athletic teams regarding other issues that may occur during the baseball season. I want to encourage you to remind your son throughout the season that if he has any concerns regarding his role on the team he should approach a coach. If you as a parent feel the need to gain clarification regarding a coaching decision following a game, playing time, etc; please understand that we will request a 24 hour "cooling down" period prior to meeting with the coaching staff. If a coach is approached after a game to discuss an issue, the response from the coach will be, "We can have this conversation in 24 hours."

Process:
1. Concerns will be put in writing and emailed or hand delivered to the coach.
2. Two coaches, player, and parent/guardian must be present during conversation.
3. Any emails sent to the coach will be replied to and cc'd to the player involved (your son).
4. No conversation takes place without the player involved (your son).

The conversation will need to be about your son only. Conversations about other players will not be addressed.

2026 Season/Pratice Schedule/Team Selection

The MSHSL allows us one week prior to the official start date to have an arm conditioning week. This will be for grades 10-12 only.

Arm Conditioning Week (March 9th - March 12th) 6:00 a.m. DMS (New Gym)

(*subject to change pending weather conditions)*

Beginning of Season 9-12 (March 16th)

Practice Schedule
The practice schedule for the first few weeks of the season will need to be fluid given the weather conditions and the facilities we have to use. The schedule is subject to change and will be communicated daily to players through our communication apps. Once the evaluation and indoor portion of our season is complete the scheduled times of practice will be much more consistent. When the teams are able to get outside consistently, each team will have designated practice times that are consistent.

2026 Practice Schedule

Team Selection:

Varisty Roster	(15-20)	Roster Reductions
J.V. Roster	(Max of 20)	Roster Reductions
9th	(No limit)	No Roster Reductions per APS policy.

The varsity and junior varsity evaluations will take place during the first week of practice. Following the evaluation period, the coaching staff will meet with players and let them know if they have made a team and which team they will start the season with .It is the goal of the coaching staff to give every athlete who signs up to participate an equal and fair opportunity to be a part of the team. After evaluations a meeting will take place with each 10-12 athlete letting him know if he made a team (J.V. or Varsity). This meeting date will be determined by the coaching staff and communicated with the players.

- If players are unable to attend evaluations because they are currently in another sport they will be given the same evaluation opportunity when they return to practice. The amount of days for the evaluation will be determined by the coaching staff.
- The above also applies to players missing for school related activities or illness.

Given that the start date for baseball is posted at the beginning of the school year, please refrain from taking vacations once actual practice has started. With roster reductions, missing the evaluation portion of practice presents challenges for the coaching staff to establish their teams. Vacation is considered an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences may impact roster selection or playing time at the discretion of the coaching staff.

The coaching staff will work together when determining the roster for each level. Multiple factors play into selecting our team and decisions once communicated with players are final.

Coaching staff reserves the right to make changes to roster prior to or during any time of the season.

Prior to the playoffs, a 20-man roster will be submitted.

Playing time at any level is not equal

Events 2026 Season

Senior Night Tuesday, May 5th, 2026 vs. Detroit Lakes

(Greg Toivonen will be the go to person regarding this event. He will meet with senior parents to get the process started.)

Youth Baseball Night Tuesday, May 12th, 2026 vs. Sauk Rapids

Family Night Tuesday, May 19th (JV/Varsity)
JV and Varsity will be practicing at Knute this day. JV will practice from 3:30 - 5:00 and Varsity will practice 5:30 - 7:00. Pictures will begin at approximately 5:00 with players in full uniform. During this time you will have an opportunity to take pictures with your son and his teammates on the field. We encourage you to bring the entire family as well as your cameras.

Lettering Criteria/Awards:

Every player who is a part of the VARSITY roster and successfully completes the season will be awarded a letter at the conclusion of the baseball season. Awards will be presented to those athletes selected by their teammates at the end of the season. If necessary, final determination of awards and lettering will be made by the varsity staff. Certain circumstances can change this policy. At that time it will be the coaches discretion if a letter is awarded.

Stats (not public)

- Promotes a you against other players comparison - catostrophic for team chemistry
- The coaching staff collaborates together on personnel decisions when determining playing time. We put forth our best effort in ensuring we have our best players on the field. Stats are only a part of the decision.
- Can be extremely misleading
- Players requesting stats to be given to college recruiting opportunities are always granted.

Fundraising

We will have multiple fundraising events in combination with summer baseball. Listed below are dates for fundraising events in 2026

- Leading Edge Fundraising Event
    - March 28th 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
    - DMS Media Center
    - Grades 9 - 12
- Grocery Bagging Events
    - April 4th (Varsity) Eldens
    - May 23rd (Junior Varsity) Cub
    - July 3rd (9th grade/Red Team) Cub
- Angelina's Pasta Feed
    - April 7th

Pictures

Mark Ripley will be our supplier for photographs. Mark will take team and individual pictures, along with the senior banners. More information to come.

End of Year Banquet

Our Baseball Banquet will be held at the conclusion of the summer baseball season. The date for the banquet this year will be August 6th and will be held at Broadway Ballroom.

SENIOR FAMILIES:
Please take note of the possible practices and games scheduled on Saturdays at the end of the season. We may have to practice early in the morning and we want to give you a heads up for when you are planning your graduation parties. If you have any concerns please visit with us about them. You will always be safe scheduling your graduation parties on Sunday as we cannot play or practice those days.

Section Tournament Dates: High Seed (5/26, 5/28, 6/2), Cold Spring (6/3 and 6/4)

CARDINAL BASEBALL FAMILY:
We are extremely appreciative of the opportunity and privilege that you have given us to work with your son. We are confident and excited about the upcoming season. We encourage you to communicate with us regarding any concerns or suggestions you may have. It is important that any concern you have along the way be discussed in a positive manner.

Varsity Schedule JV Schedule 9th Schedule