

**GAHANNA-JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOLS  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

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**614-479-1631**

Dear Athletes and Parents:

Welcome to interscholastic athletics at the Gahanna Middle Schools. The coaches and administration, which created this document, are committed to making your experience a positive one. In order to accomplish this goal, we intend to conduct our athletic programs following these principles:

1. All students are invited and encouraged to tryout for every activity in which they have an interest.
2. All decisions regarding team selection, playing time, and position are made based on objective criteria.
3. Team rules are enforced consistently with all team members.
4. Coaches are available to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.
5. Everyone is expected to operate under the concept that "team goals come first." Quality athletic experiences emphasize cooperation, discipline, and team collaboration to achieve success. Individual accomplishments and recognition are side benefits of successful team performances.
6. Everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity while participating in an athletic program and when attending athletic events. Teammates and opponents should be treated with respect.

We hope to see you at our athletic contest to provide positive support for all of our athletes and coaches. Good sportsmanship is a tradition at the Gahanna Middle Schools.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

As an athlete, you are not eligible to participate in any sport until the following items have been completed:

1. Parent/Athlete acknowledgement of Athletic Code of Conduct, signed by parent and athlete, and on file in the Athletic Office.
2. Parent/Athlete acknowledgement of Ohio Department of Health Concussion Information Sheet, signed by parent and athlete, and on file in the Athletic Office.
3. Physical examination completed and on file in the Athletic Office. A physical exam is needed no less than once each calendar year.
4. Emergency Medical Form completed and returned to your coach.
5. All scholastic eligibility requirements have been met.
7. All other Ohio High School Athletic Association requirements must be met.
6. All instructional fees and/or participation fees need to be paid before participating in the first contest.

## **PARENTAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ATHLETIC POLICIES**

At the time a student athlete expresses an interest in athletics at any of the Gahanna Middle Schools, he/she will be issued this handbook and all the necessary forms for participation. Each student athlete and parent/guardian will read all materials and certify that they understand and will abide by these rules. This signed document must be filed in the Athletic Director's office prior to game participation.

## **RISK OF PARTICIPATION**

Participation in interscholastic athletics can lead to possible injury to student athletes. Although most injuries are minor in nature, it is possible that an injury could occur that is severe enough to cause a person to become paraplegic or quadriplegic or result in death. The Gahanna Middle Schools and staff take every precaution to prevent such injuries, but such risk does exist.

## **INSURANCE**

The Gahanna Middle Schools do not provide accident insurance for the student athlete. Information about a policy that parents can purchase to cover student athletes can be obtained from your coach or the athletic department.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association provides Lifetime Catastrophic Accident Insurance covering injuries exceeding \$25,000. Information pertaining to this coverage is available from the administrator at: American Specialty Insurance Services, Inc., 142 N. Main Street, Roanoke, Indiana 46783, 1-800-566-7941.

## **5805 ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Together with the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the Gahanna Jefferson Board of Education recognizes that the use and abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs has a negative effect on behavior, learning, and athletic development and performance. In addition, the use and abuse by a student athlete affects teammates, family members, and other significant members in his/her life. The Board further recognizes that representing the Gahanna schools in any athletic contest is a privilege that calls upon its student athletes to demonstrate the highest qualities of citizenship and leadership throughout the entire year. Student athletes shall not attend or remain in attendance at functions in which peer group/underage alcohol or illegal drug use takes place. It should be recognized that this type of activity may create a negative reflection on both the individual and the athletic program. Therefore, a year-round Athletic Code of Conduct is established for student athletes.

A student athlete is a student who is or has participated in middle or high school interscholastic athletics or related activities such as cheerleader, drill team, manager or statistician.

The District Athletic Code of Conduct Committee is responsible for corrections, revisions, and changes to this document. The committee consists of the high school Athletic Director and assistant Athletic Director, the three middle school Athletic Directors, a high school Administrator, the District Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools and at least two high school head coaches.

Guideline 5600B, Drug and Alcohol Policy, shall also apply to athletes. The Athletic Code of Conduct is a Board of Education approved document.

### **POLICY: TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND OTHER DRUGS**

Student athletes of the Gahanna-Jefferson School District shall not use, possess, give, sell, or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, or counterfeit drug, the possession or use of which is prohibited by law. This includes narcotic, inhalants, hallucinogenic drugs, alcohol, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, cocaine, intoxicants or other controlled substances of any kind. The use or possession of any kind of tobacco products is also prohibited. The use of any legitimately possessed substance for an illegal or abusive purpose falls within the prohibition of this paragraph.

This policy will be subject to enforcement and/or disciplinary action by the athletic department and administration for twelve (12) months of the year. Additionally, offenses in violation of this policy are accumulative:

- A. During a student's participation in athletics at the middle school level
- B. During a student's participation in athletics at the high school level

Middle school accumulation ends and high school accumulation begins with eighth grade graduation.

## **Terms**

Athletic participation percentages apply to regular season contest only, and students remain ineligible for post-season competition as long as any carryover consequences exist.

Season is considered to run through the awards banquet. Failure to attend the banquet may result in forfeiture of awards earned.

Notwithstanding the consequences for violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct which follow, the Athletic Director or other person designated by the Principal, may exclude the student athlete from all athletic participation for one (1) calendar year for a violation which involves the selling or distributing of any quantity of illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or controlled substances.

## **Violations and Consequences**

### First Violation – In Season

- A. Immediate exclusion from the team unless family education and/or assessment is completed, then the consequences would be a 50% loss of the next playable season. If less than 50% of contests remain, there will be a carryover into the start of the next sport season.
- B. Student athletes will remain a team member and may practice, but will not be permitted to play in a contest or dress in uniform.
- C. Failure to attend family education and/or assessment will result in the student athlete being removed from athletic participation for one (1) calendar year.
- D. Education and/or assessment must be completed within one (1) month unless a waiver is granted by the Athletic Director.

### First Violation – Out of Season

- A. If family education and/or assessment are completed, then the consequence would be a 20% loss of the next season starting with the next playable contest.
- B. Student athletes will remain a team member and may practice, but will not be permitted to play in a contest or dress in uniform.
- C. Failure to attend family education and/or assessment will result in the student athlete being removed from athletic participation for one (1) calendar year.
- D. Education and/or assessment must be completed within one (1) month unless a waiver is granted by the Athletic Director.

### Second Violation – Accumulative

- A. Exclusion from all athletic participation for one (1) calendar year from the date of the second violation.

### Third Violation – Accumulative

- A. Banned from the athletic program for the remainder of the student's athletic eligibility.

### **Attendance at Social Functions/Situations**

Student athletes, who remain in attendance and do not make an attempt to leave in a reasonable amount of time at functions/situations in which peer group underage alcohol or illegal drug use takes place, will be subject to disciplinary action by the Athletic Department ranging from notification of parents to removal from team.

#### In Season

1st violation--20% loss of season  
2nd violation--50% loss of season  
3rd violation--removal from team

#### Out of Season

1st--0% notify parents  
2nd--20% loss of season  
3rd--50% loss of season  
4th--removal from team

### **Self-Referral/Peer-Referral by Student Athletes**

Student athletes may take advantage of a self-referral or peer-referral procedure to seek information, guidance counseling, and assessment with regard to the student athlete's use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. Voluntary referrals do not carry any loss of the current season, but the athlete will be required to attend a family education program within one (1) month unless a waiver is granted by the Athletic Director and prior to receiving awards. These referrals will be kept on file in the Athletic Department. Self-referrals are subject to the following guidelines:

- A. Allowed one (1) time in a student's four-year high school career (two-year middle school) either as an athletic participant or participant in any program covered by an Athletic Code of Conduct.
- B. Must be made by the student athlete, team member, or a member of the immediate family.
- C. Cannot be used by student athletes as a method to avoid consequences once an Athletic Code of Conduct rule is violated and a student athlete has been identified as having violated one of the Athletic Code of Conduct rules.
- D. Must be made to the Athletic Director, coach, teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor prior to any type of official report or ongoing investigation into the matter.
- E. Self-referrals cannot be made if the student athlete has been previously disciplined under this policy.
- F. Failure to attend family education and/or assessment will result in the student athlete being removed from athletic participation for one (1) calendar year.

### **POLICY: CITIZENSHIP**

Student athletes shall abide by a code of ethics, which reflects the honor and respect that participation in the interscholastic program affords. Any conduct that results in dishonor to the athlete, the team, or the school will not be tolerated.

- A. The appearance of the student athlete should not be such as to cause undue attention to be drawn away from the team and to that individual. Hair should be worn in a way so

as to not interfere with the athletic activity and to not cause possible harm to the student athlete or the opponent(s). Jewelry (rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc.) may not be worn during practices or competition unless permitted by the sport's governing body.

- B. The wearing of clothing, costumes, or uniforms will be in accordance with the rules established by the director of the sport or activity. No student athlete shall wear any garment belonging to the athletic program for any reason other than practice or competition, except with the approval of the Athletic Director.
- C. Acts of unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to, the following: theft, vandalism, disrespect, and violations of the law.
- D. Posting of inappropriate materials (pictures, language, messages, etc.) on web pages that clearly identify the student athlete is not acceptable. Any and all such material must be monitored and maintained by the student athlete.
- E. Good citizenship is expected of each individual who has chosen to participate in the athletic program. Inappropriate behavior in school may result in a student athlete losing his/her opportunity to participate in future contests during that season. Disrespect toward other students and school officials, disruptive behavior in school, violations of school rules or violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct are some, but not all the examples of behavior that will not be tolerated.
- F. Student athletes who receive a Saturday School Suspension or In-School Restriction may not be eligible for the next contest following notification of the Saturday School Suspension and/or In-School Restriction session.
- G. Student athletes who are suspended from school may not be eligible for the next contest following notification of the suspension. Student athletes will not participate in the sports' program during the suspension. Additional Saturday School Suspensions, In-School Restrictions, or Out-of-School Suspensions may result in removal from the team.

### **Violation and Consequences**

The coach and/or the Athletic Director will review any violation. Penalty may be partial exclusion and/or removal from the team or athletic programs for up to one (1) calendar year.

### **Due Process Procedures**

Student athletes and their parent/guardian are to be advised of the Athletic Code of Conduct at the beginning of their first season or activity of that year or at the time of entry into a program. The Athletic Code of Conduct is to be explained to student athletes by the Athletic Director, head coach, advisor, or assistant coach.

### **Exclusion from Participation Procedures**

- A. The student athlete shall be given written notice of the intention to exclude from participation, which shall include the reason(s) for exclusion from participation, notification of the right to be heard informally regarding the reason(s), and the right to appeal any action to the Principal or his/her designee.

- B. The Athletic Director or other person designated by the Principal shall conduct the informal hearing if such is requested. If the reasons for exclusion from participation are upheld, the Athletic Director in accordance with Board Policies shall exclude the student athlete from participation.
- C. The parent/guardian shall be contacted by telephone, when possible of the exclusion from participation. Within 24 hours following exclusion, a letter of notification will be sent to the parent or guardian specifying the reason(s) for the student athlete's exclusion from participation, the period of time for the exclusion, and options, if any.
- D. The student athlete and/or the parent/guardian may appeal exclusion from participation by the Athletic Director to the Principal or his/her designee. A written request for appeal must be made no later than seven (7) days following receipt of the written notification by the parent/guardian required in paragraph "c" above.
- E. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

## **SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- A. A student athlete enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student athlete in grade 7 or 8 must have received passing grades in 5 subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled. In addition, a student athlete must receive a 1.5 grade point average in those subjects carried in the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled. If a student athlete falls below a 1.5 GPA or does not pass 5 subjects in the preceding grading period, he/she is ineligible for the entire 9 weeks. (There are not any waivers or any appeal process to this policy.)
- B. If a student athlete's GPA for the preceding grading period is between a 1.5 and a 1.99, he/she will be required to attend study tables in order to remain eligible. Failure to attend will cause a student athlete to be ineligible for the following week. A letter detailing when and where the study tables will be held will be given to those student athletes that must attend the study tables.
- C. Student athlete grades will be checked every 2 weeks during the season. Student athletes with one "F" in any subject will be ineligible for one contest. Student athletes with two or more "Fs" will be ineligible for competition until the next report is issued, unless the student athlete can improve his/her grades by the end of the first week. In order to be eligible the second week, the student athlete must bring documentation of the improved grade (60% or better) to the Athletic Director.
- D. Summer school grades do not count towards OHSAA eligibility. Fourth quarter grades determine the eligibility status of a fall athlete.

## **OHSAA TRANSFER RULE**

A student athlete's eligibility shall be established by one of two situations: 1) participating in a contest (scrimmage, preview, or regular season contest) prior to the opening day of school or 2) attending the first day of school. Once eligibility has been established at a member school, the student athlete will be ineligible for athletic purposes for one year should he or she transfer to another school unless one of the exceptions to the transfer bylaw is met. Exceptions are the

following: 1) if the parents or legal guardian change residence from one public school district to another; 2) if the superintendents of both districts enter into a written agreement in order to protect the student's physical and mental well-being and the agreement is approved by the OHSAA Commissioner; 3) if a school closes; and 4) if a student transfers to the state schools for the blind and deaf.

## **PAY-TO-PARTICIPATE/FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS AND USE OF EQUIPMENT**

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, student athletes will be assessed a Pay-To-Participate (PTP) Fee.

### The Middle School PTP Fee Schedule

- **\$100** PTP fee for all student athletes' first sport of participation during the said school year.
- **\$50** PTP fee for the second sport of participation during the same school year.
- Any student athlete that participates in a third sport and has paid for the previous two sports will not be charged a third fee.
- All PTP fees must be paid prior to the first contest of the participating season. Failure to pay prior to the first contest will result in holding that participant out of ALL contests until payment is rendered.

### Exceptions and PTP Fee Caps

- Any student athlete that qualifies for the Free & Reduced Lunch program will not be assessed a PTP Fee.
- A **\$250 Family Cap** will be in place for any family where multiple children participate in athletics at the middle school level. This does not include children that play at the High School during the same given school year.
- Refunds for PTP Fees will only be granted retroactively to a student athlete that suffers a season-ending injury. Student athletes that either quit the team or are removed from the team for eligibility or disciplinary purposes will not be refunded.

Student athletes are responsible for the care and security of all uniforms and equipment issued to them. The uniforms and equipment remain the property of the Gahanna Middle Schools' Athletic Department. Equipment and uniforms not returned or damaged will result in a financial penalty. School issued uniforms and equipment are only to be worn and used during practices and contests.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Student athletes are expected to be in school all day. Student athletes missing school for illness must be in attendance for a ½ day (at least 4 periods) to be eligible to participate in practice or a contest on that day. Student athletes missing school for other reasons must be excused by the Attendance Office in order to participate that day.

Student athletes missing school on the day prior to a day with no school are eligible that day as

long as the Attendance Office excused the absence.

## **VACATION POLICY**

Vacations by team members during the season are discouraged. In the event that a family vacation cannot be avoided, a student athlete must:

1. Notify the head coach in advance of the trip.
2. Be accompanied by his/her parents.
3. Be willing to accept change in team status (2nd team, 3rd team, etc.) when returning to the team.

## **DROPPING A SPORT**

Once a student athlete starts a sport, he/she is expected to finish the season. A student athlete, who quits a sport and has participated in a sport for more than 5 days of practice or was selected for a team after final cuts have been made, will not be permitted to participate in off season conditioning for another sport unless approved by the Athletic Director. A student athlete will not be released from the sport started until the end of the regular season of that sport. A student athlete in season has made a commitment to that team for that season. While in season, a student athlete will not participate in another sport, in or out of school.

## **OHSAA EJECTION POLICY FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Any student athlete ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant foul shall be ineligible for all contests for the remainder of that day. In addition, the athlete shall be ineligible for all contests at all levels in that sport until two regular season/tournament contests (one for football) are played at the same level as the ejection. When ejection of a student athlete results from illegal substitution in baseball, fast pitch softball, or basketball, the two-contest suspension does not apply. If the ejection occurs in the last contest of the season, the student athlete shall be ineligible for the same period of time as stated above in the next sport in which the student athlete participates. A student athlete under suspension may not sit on the team bench, enter the locker room, or be affiliated with the team in any way traveling to, during, or after the contest(s). A student athlete who is ejected for a second time shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport.

## **GAHANNA MIDDLE SCHOOLS ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT /SPORTSMANSHIP AGREEMENT**

I have read the Athletic Department Handbook, including the Athletic Code of Conduct, and agree to abide by these rules and regulations. As a student athlete, I know I am a role model. I understand the spirit of fair play while playing hard. I will refrain from engaging in all types of disrespectful behavior, including inappropriate language, taunting, trash talking, and unnecessary physical contact. I know the behavior expectations of the Gahanna Middle Schools, the OCC, and the OHSAA, and I hereby accept the responsibility and privilege of representing any of the Gahanna Middle Schools and the community as a student athlete.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PRINT NAME**

Sport \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, the parent/guardian, have read the Athletic Department Handbook, including the Athletic Code of Conduct, and I am willing to let my son/daughter participate according to the rules as set forth by the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education. As a parent, I acknowledge that I am a role model. I will remember that school athletics are an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for the students. I must show respect for all players, coaches, spectators, officials, and support groups. I will participate in cheers that support, encourage, and uplift the teams involved. I understand the spirit of fair play and that good sportsmanship is expected by the Gahanna Middle Schools, the OCC, and the OHSAA. I hereby accept my responsibility to be a model of good sportsmanship that comes with being the parent of a student athlete.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**TEAR THIS COMPLETED PAGE OUT AND RETURN TO YOUR  
COACH.**