

Struthers City Schools Mission Statement for Athletics

The Struthers City Schools support the philosophy that a quality interscholastic athletic program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students. The interscholastic athletic program enhances and supports the academic mission of the school system. We are committed to promoting the proper ideal of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all athletic contests. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others. Furthermore, we support diversification over specialization regarding interscholastic participation by student-athletes.

For the purpose of this handbook, interscholastic activities/athletic program shall include the following:

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|------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Baseball | Cheerleading | Golf | Tennis |
| Basketball | Cross Country | Soccer | Track |
| Bowling | Football | Softball | Volleyball |

The Athletic Administration, coaches, and players will perpetually work together on a plan of continual improvement for playing excellence that will produce winning teams within the bounds of good sportsmanship.

Participation in interscholastic sports is a voluntary privilege. Such participation will always be based on healthy competition between team members for starting positions and playing time. An attitude of entitlement, on the part of any team member or parent, has absolutely no place in any of our athletic programs.

All interscholastic sports in the Struthers City Schools are team sports. Consequently, while our various programs will continually stress individual development, it will always be within the framework and emphasis on the **Team**. Each time participants step into a school or onto the practice field and anytime they participate in a contest they are expected to represent themselves, family, team, school, and community in a responsible, sportsmanlike manner.

Interscholastic sports in the Struthers City Schools are meant to develop character, sportsmanship, self-confidence, team work, unselfishness, responsibility, leadership, competitive spirit, decision-making, and physical skills through the processes of hard work, commitment, and loyalty. Below is a brief synopsis of each of the aforementioned qualities:

Character: strong-minded, ability to deal with adversity, disciplined, a strong work ethic; portrays moral and ethical strength

Sportsmanship: being graceful in both victory and defeat, constantly mindful of team, school, and community representation

Self-Confidence: the side-effect of hard work, attentiveness, and learning; competence

Teamwork: the sense of togetherness, unity, acceptance, and trust

Unselfishness: to give of oneself, to sacrifice in an attempt to come to the aid of others

Responsibility: taking care of business; fulfilling one's duties and obligations while accepting the consequences of individual mistakes without blaming others; finishing what one starts

Leadership: being self-aware and acknowledging the fact that the very nature of interscholastic competition draws attention to oneself; the ability to set a positive example for others to follow

Competitive Spirit: relentlessness, resilience, faith, and a positive attitude; the drive to succeed

Decision Making: thinking before acting; weighing the consequences of actions before taking action; the awareness of right and wrong

Physical Skills: strength, power, agility, coordination, balance, speed, and endurance

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. SCHOLARSHIP/ELIGIBILITY

High school students and middle school students (grades 7-12) must be currently enrolled in a member school and have received passing grades in a minimum of five (5) one credit courses, or the equivalent, in the immediately preceding grading period. Seventh grade students are eligible upon entering seventh grade. (NOTE: Students taking post-secondary options must comply with these standards)

- You may not use summer school grades for failing grades received or lack of courses taken in the final grading period.
- Your semester and yearly grades have no effect on eligibility.
- Those taking postsecondary school courses must comply with OHSAA scholarship regulations.
- The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective.

Age Limitation: OHSAA Bylaw 4-2-1 states—once a student attains the age of 20, the student will no longer be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition notwithstanding where that 20th birthday falls in relation to the sports season. Also, OHSAA Bylaw 4-2-2 states if a student enrolled in grade 7 or 8 attains the age of 15 before August 1, they shall be ineligible to participate in 7th and 8th grade interscholastic athletics for the school year commencing in that calendar year.

2. RESIDENCE AND TRANSFER OF SCHOOLS (Bylaw 4-7 Exceptions 1-11)

You may attend any public or non-public high school in which you are accepted when you enter high school (grade 9) from a 7th – 8th grade school. Eligibility at that school is established by:

1. Participating in a contest (scrimmage, preview or regular season game) prior to the first day of school
2. Attending the first day of school at any high school in grades 10, 11 or 12
3. If a student transfers after the fifth day of the student's 9th grade year or having established eligibility prior to the start of school by playing in a contest as described in #1 above

Once you establish eligibility at a high school, a transfer to a different high school can mean you will be ineligible for athletics for 50% of each previously participated sport from the date of enrollment in the new school.

- There are exceptions to this regulation. To see if you qualify for an exception, you and your parents should arrange a meeting with your principal or athletic administrator and review the document entitled "*The OHSAA Transfer Bylaw,*" which is found online at www.ohsaa.org, prior to transferring to another school.
- If your parent or legal guardian lives outside Ohio, you are ineligible unless one of the six (6) exceptions to the regulation is met. These exceptions to the out-of-state residency rules are found in Bylaw 4-6 at www.ohsaa.org. Note: a biological parent with custodial rights or adoptive parent must reside in Ohio.

- **If additional questions concerning these regulations remain, school principals or athletic administrators should contact the OHSAA.**
- **IMPORTANT NOTE: If, for any reason, you are planning on transferring to another school district, it is important that you only speak to the building principal concerning enrollment, attendance or the school's athletic program (Bylaw 4-9-6). Also, if a parent or student athlete chooses to speak to a coach in the transferring district before enrollment into that school district or accept any type of courtesy from the school, you may jeopardize your eligibility for one (1) school year (Bylaw 4-9-7)**

3. SEMESTERS OF ENROLLMENT

After establishing ninth-grade eligibility, you are permitted eight (8) semesters of athletic eligibility.

- The semesters are taken in order of attendance once ninth-grade eligibility has been established. Also, semesters during which a student simply does not attend a high school due to withdrawal will be counted in the total of the eight (8) semesters that are permitted.
- Semesters are counted toward eligibility whether you participate in interscholastic athletics or not.
- Those with a disability may qualify for an exception to this regulation and should arrange a meeting with the principal or athletic administrator to review the exception.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Students are expected to attend school in order to participate in all practices and contests. Consequently, students must adhere to **each** of the following guidelines:

1. A student must arrive at school no later than 11:00 a.m.
2. A student must be present at the time of dismissal from school.
3. The above guidelines apply in reference to the final weekday when practices/contests are scheduled over the weekend.
4. Students who receive *advanced administrative approval* may not be subject to the above guidelines. (i.e. fieldtrips, funerals, college visits, etc.)
5. A student serving In School Restriction will be eligible at 3:00PM the day the restriction ends.
6. A student serving Out of School Suspension will be eligible the day after the suspension ends.

ATHLETIC CHAIN OF COMMAND

Within the Struthers City Schools, the following chain of command is in effect:



If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he/she would then go to the head coach, etc.

PRE-SEASON PARENT / ATHLETE MEETINGS

There will be a **state mandated** parent/athlete meeting prior to each athletic season. **Every attempt should be made to attend by both parents and athletes.**

During such meetings, the following will be addressed by our coaches:

1. Struthers City Schools Student & Parent Athletic Handbook
2. The criteria by which teams may be selected and team rules
3. The forms which must be completed in order for students to participate
4. Practice and contest schedules
5. Drug Testing
6. Optional Student Insurance
7. Questions from parents

STRUTHERS CITY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT INTERSCHOLASTIC CODE OF CONDUCT GRADES 7-12

The most important goal of the Struthers City Schools' interscholastic athletic program is to provide every participant the opportunity to grow mentally, morally, physically and emotionally. To assure that the program can provide these opportunities, a degree of self-discipline is required of each participant. Self-discipline involves compliance with rules and regulations concerning personal behavior. Rules promote order and safety, and assist participants to reach maximum performance potential.

The Struthers Athletic Department believes that, due to their high visibility, the student athletes have a strong influence on members of the student body as well as the community. Their conduct, while representing a team, traveling to or from an event, as well as in the community, is seen as a direct reflection upon the athletic program and the standards of the school.

With this belief, we set the following policy as a minimum standard for the Athletic Department of Struthers

City Schools fitting within the rules and regulations of the Board of Education and The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). **It must also be remembered that participation in athletics is not a right but a privilege that will be regulated.**

All students must maintain scholastic eligibility in accordance with the OHSAA and the Struthers City School Board of Education policy. During the preceding grading period, the student-athlete must have received passing grades in a minimum of five one-credit courses or the equivalent, which count toward graduation.

No student may participate in any pre-season workout, practice, scrimmage or contest until all of the proper paperwork is collected by their respective head coach.

Any student suspended from school shall be denied participation from sports for the period of the suspension. A suspension that carries over a weekend or school holiday will result in a denial of participation until the days of restriction are served. Suspended students will be denied participation in practices and competitions until the student returns to regular classes. **Also, any student suspended from athletic competition due to Athletic Code violation is NOT permitted to attend the game.**

While a student is denied participation as a result of academic ineligibility, he/she may attend practices and be involved with the sport as long as study table options (as per the head coach) are taken advantage of, however, no competitions including scrimmages are permitted (refer to Ineligible Student-Athletes on pg 16) The extent of practice participation will be left to the discretion of the head coach.

This code is enforced during the entire year, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days a week, while a participant is enrolled in grades 7-12.

The following infractions will also result in disciplinary action:

1. The theft or willful destruction or defacing of athletic or personal property
2. The chronic violation of school rules and regulations
3. Violation of hazing and/or sexual harassment policies. Hazing is defined as an act, including physical, mental, or psychological, which subjects another person, voluntarily or involuntarily, to anything that may abuse, mistreat, degrade, humiliate, harass, or intimidate him/her, or which may, in any fashion, compromise his/her inherent dignity as a person. Hazing can also be a form of initiation into a particular club or activity. (See Board of Education Policy #5516.)
4. Any act or gesture which is considered by the administration or board of education to be rude, obscene or immoral and/or reflects poorly on the Struthers City Schools.
5. The student-athlete's use of, consumption, possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription (not assigned to the athlete) and non-prescription drugs and/or performance enhancing drugs or supplements and tobacco products.(See Board of education Policy #5530 and #5512)
The hosting of a party where any of the above items are present.

I. VIOLATIONS OF THE ABOVE OFFENSES WILL RESULT IN THE FOLLOWING DISCIPLINE:

First Offense

1. A first violation of the code of conduct will result in denial of privileges of athletic participation for a minimum of 10%.
 - a. The 10% is determined by the **total** number of contests scheduled for the season.
 - b. If the violation occurs at a time when the student is not participating in athletics, the 10% applies to the next athletic season in which the student has previously participated.
 - c. During the suspension, the student-athlete **will not be present** at the team's regularly scheduled competitive contest/events, including all post-season tournaments and games. (Post season contests are considered an extension of the regular season.)
2. If a drug or alcohol offense, the student shall be required to have a professional assessment and follow the recommendation of the assessment. Any cost of the program incurred is the responsibility of the athlete/parent.
 - a. The student cannot participate in scheduled contests until the assessment is complete.
 - b. Failure to comply with the recommendation of the assessment will result in dismissal from the team.
3. Students may participate in scheduled practice sessions during the denial of participation period at the discretion of the head coach.

Second Offense

1. A second violation of the code of conduct will result in denial of privileges of athletic participation for a minimum of 50%.
 - a. The 50% is determined by the **total** number of contests scheduled for the season.
 - b. If the violation occurs at a time when the student is not participating in athletics, the 50% applies to the next athletic season in which the student has previously participated.
 - c. During the suspension, the student-athlete **will not be present** at the team's regularly scheduled competitive contest/events, including all post-season tournaments and games. (Post season contests are considered an extension of the regular season.)
2. The student shall be required to have a professional assessment and follow the recommendation of the assessment. Any cost of the program incurred is the responsibility of the athlete/parent.
 - a. The student cannot participate in scheduled contests until the assessment is complete.
 - b. Failure to comply with the recommendation of the assessment will result in dismissal from the team.
3. Students may participate in scheduled practice sessions during the denial of participation period at the discretion of the head coach.

Third Offense

The student-athlete will be denied participation in all athletic participation for one calendar year from the infraction/suspension date. The student must participate and complete a professional education program to correct the abuse problem before reinstatement to any athletic team. When the student-athlete completes the educational program, he/she may then return to the team as a practice player only until his/her imposed suspension is complete. Any cost of the program incurred is the responsibility of the athlete/parent.

Fourth Offense

The student shall forfeit the remaining eligibility to participate in all Struthers Schools athletic programs for the remainder of their high school career.

NOTE: For any offense listed above, the student-athlete may be eligible for reduction in consequence (up to 50%) by completing community service hours as an absolution.

IMPORTANT:

- 1. Any participant excluded for the remainder of any sport's season forfeits his/her right to any athletic award and awards' program.**
- 2. With any suspension from athletic participation, the student-athlete must maintain membership on the team through the last regular season contest or the penalty/suspension will be assessed during the next sport season.**
- 3. The High School Principal will conduct an investigation and an informal hearing for the student prior to any disciplinary actions.**

II. SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL/CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES:

Any athlete involved in the sale and/or distribution of any drug, alcohol, or chemical substance will be immediately removed from the particular sport(s) and will be permanently denied athletic participation for the duration of the athlete's high school career. (An athlete may, after one calendar year, appeal to the Administration for re-consideration of the policy.)

III. STUDENT IS IN ATTENDANCE BUT NOT USING:

Athletes attending a party or other gathering where alcohol or other illegal controlled substances are being unlawfully consumed shall be considered in violation. An athlete is encouraged to leave the party or gathering immediately. Any violation occurring which involves law enforcement officials and have pending legal action, the administration shall issue the following disciplinary actions.

First Offense

Written Warning

Second Offense

See 1st offense under Section I of the Student & Parent Athletic Handbook

Third Offense

Will result in denial of privileges of athletic participation for a minimum of 20% of the **total** number of contests scheduled for the season

Fourth Offense

See 2nd offense under Section I of the Student & Parent Athletic Handbook

IV. SELF-REFERRAL POLICY

This self-referral policy is only available to student-athletes if used prior to any known violation/offense of the Student & Parent Athletic Handbook. An athlete may give a self-referral once per year, which may be done a maximum of twice in a student's four year athletic career. **Self-referrals must happen prior to the day of drug testing.** The option will be considered if a student first seeks assistance in dealing with the alcohol/drug and any other problem by self-referral to their coach, guidance counselor, school administrator, or Athletic Director. The athlete must also agree to participate in an assessment as described by school and follow all recommendations of the assessment. The assessment must be scheduled and completed within fourteen (14) days of the self-referral. Refusal or failure to complete the assessment will result in the full first offense penalty as provided in this policy (See Section I). The athlete is immediately ineligible upon utilizing this option until the High School Administration and Athletic Director declares all the requirements of the self-referral option fulfilled. Any cost of the program incurred is the responsibility of the athlete/parent. In the case of a second self-referral, the athlete will be required to accept a first offense penalty as provided in this policy (See Section I). **A self-referral cannot be used by a participant as a method to avoid consequences once the policy has been violated and a student has been identified as having violated such policy.**

V. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The High School Principal will conduct an investigation and an informal hearing for the student will be held prior to any disciplinary action. Also, the Ohio Revised Code 3313.664 does not mandate any form of due process in connection with the removal of students from extracurricular activities. Rather, it requires only that a policy be adopted which authorizes the superintendent, other administrators, coaches, or pupil activity supervisors to prohibit a student from participating in any or all extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the removal may be imposed for any period of time specified in the policy.

VI. INDIVIDUAL SPORT RULE

Coaches may establish additional rules and regulations for their respective sports. Penalties will be designated/handled by their respective coach(es). Participants and parents will be informed in writing before the season. These rules will be discussed at the mandatory preseason meeting and will be on file in the High School Principal's or Athletic Director's office and available online.

VII. OHSAA--EJECTION FOR UNSPORTING CONDUCT (DISQUALIFICATION FOR UNSPORTING CONDUCT OR FLAGRANT VIOLATION)

Any player ejected or disqualified for unsporting conduct or flagrant foul shall be ineligible for all contests for the **remainder of the day**. In addition, the player shall be ineligible for all contests at all levels in that sport until two (2) regular season/tournament contests (one (1) in football) are played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification. When an ejection or disqualification of a player results from an illegal substitution in baseball, softball, or basketball, the two (2) game suspension does not apply. (See Section I)

If the ejection or disqualification occurs in the last contest of the season, the student shall be ineligible for the same period of the time as stated above in the next sport in which the student participates. A student 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 traveling after the contest(s).

A student who is ejected or disqualified a second time shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport.

A student who has been ejected or disqualified for unsporting conduct for the second time in the season during the last contest shall be ineligible for a period of time/number of contests subject to the discretion of the Commissioner. The period of ineligibility shall commence during the next sport in which the student participates.

It is the responsibility of the local school authorities to ensure this regulation is enforced. When an ineligible student is allowed to participate, forfeiture of the contest is mandatory. This regulation shall apply to all regular season and tournament contests and shall in no way limit the discretionary authority of the Commissioner as specified in the OHSAA tournament regulations. In accordance with Bylaw 83-1, the **decisions of contest officials are final**.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It is imperative that student-athletes and parent/guardian(s) understand that participants in interscholastic activities, within the Struthers City School District, will adhere to following jurisdictions when infractions of any kind occur.

- Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA)
- Student & Parent Athletic Handbook
- Struthers High School Student Handbook

NOTE: Any infraction occurring during school hours or school-sponsored activities and the action/offense warrants a police report, the student-athlete may be subject to both disciplinary action from Struthers High School Student Handbook and the Student & Parent Athletic Handbook.

NOTE: Out of school suspension takes precedence over any athletic suspension. If suspended athletically, the suspension will not be enforced until after the school consequence is completed. Depending on when the infraction occurs, a student-athlete may exceed the athletic suspension rule.

PLAYER'S PLEDGE

The Player's Pledge extends beyond mere participation in an athletic endeavor. It requires a full commitment from the participant as an athlete, student, and school citizen. Mutual respect and team membership are to be expected equally of player and coach and, for the player, involve the following promises:

As a player in my school, I promise:

1. To be a model of appropriate language and behavior as an ambassador of good sportsmanship.
2. To be accountable and responsible in a trustworthy manner.
3. To respect and dignify each of my teammates and coaches as an individual.
4. To place the team's goals, welfare, and success above my own.
5. To consistently attend all practices.
6. To play and practice safely and to ask of myself as much as I ask of my teammates in practices and games.
7. To be coachable and to push myself in an attempt to reach my full potential.
8. To be receptive to constructive criticism from my coaches.
9. To accept time demands with respect to my academic, athletic, and family responsibilities.
10. To promote among all my teammates and coaches a solid sense of team membership.
11. To demonstrate a genuine concern and respect for my sport, my teammates and coaches, the opposing teams, coaches, and officials.
12. To hold myself in high regard.
13. To demonstrate honesty, loyalty, integrity, and respect on a consistent basis.
14. To keep my focus and composure at all times.
15. To work, whenever appropriate, as a role model of citizenship, sportsmanship, and scholarship with younger students in our school system.
16. To communicate openly and honestly with my parents and coaches regarding my status on the team.
17. To adhere to all team and school rules.
18. To refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs of any kind.

PARENT'S PLEDGE

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial. A positive parent/coach relationship will require the following promises:

As a parent of an athlete, I promise:

1. To emphasize that "team" must take precedence over the individual.
2. To make sure my children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, I love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them.
3. To try my best to be completely honest about my child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
4. To be helpful but don't coach them. i.e. A parent should not compete with the coach.
5. To teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes.
6. To emphasize the importance of academics and understand the academic requirements necessary for participation in interscholastic athletic activities.
7. To not compare the skill, courage or attitude of my child with other members of the team.
8. To make every effort to communicate honestly, openly and objectively with coaches *within the guidelines established in this handbook*.
9. To remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and criticized.
10. To remember that most student athletes do not receive athletic scholarships. Their future as an active, contributing citizen is determined by their *academic* abilities, not their high school athletic abilities.
11. To remember that a ticket to an interscholastic athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or enter the playing area at any time.
12. **To encourage and support your student athlete's efforts to follow the team rules and athletic code. Remember that you sign a parent athletic pledge stating your support of the athletic code, its enforcement and penalties. This is a year-round responsibility and not limited to the athletic season.**

COACH'S PLEDGE

The Coach's Pledge extends beyond knowledge of athletics and reaches into the life of each of his/her players. It is one of the most important responsibilities in the school and involves at least the same level of commitment that coaches expect of their players. Mutual respect and team membership is to be expected equally of player and coach and, for the coach, involve the following promises:

As a coach in my school, I promise:

1. To uphold the dignity, honor, and integrity of the coaching profession.
2. To be a model of appropriate language and behavior.
3. To be accountable and responsible in a trustworthy manner.
4. To respect and dignify each of my athletes as an individual.
5. To be totally honest and objective in determining roles for team members.
6. To help my athletes develop the 10 Qualities as defined in the Struthers City Schools Mission Statement for Athletics.
7. To promote the safety of each athlete and to ask no more in practice or competition than each is capable of delivering.
8. To promote the conditions and circumstances that encourages each athlete to realize his/her full potential.
9. To enlighten my athletes about the primary importance of each athlete's family and academic responsibilities while imposing time demands that acknowledge these priorities.
10. To promote among all athletes and coaches a sense of team membership.
11. To encourage and promote sportsmanship among both the home and visiting teams, the coaching staff, officials, and spectators.
12. To reflect in my coaching the best and most recent thinking/strategy in my sport.
13. To develop goals and the strategies necessary to achieve said goals.
14. To work, whenever appropriate, with school personnel to guarantee the best interests of each of my student athletes.
15. To aid all athletes in their interests following high school.
16. To take an active role in the prevention and use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
17. To be available to parents at times that are mutually convenient to discuss appropriate topics.
18. To be knowledgeable and adhere to the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Rules and Bylaws.

19. To acquire, maintain, and apply the necessary certifications and requirements set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and Struthers Board of Education.

SELECTING THE TEAM

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at all levels of Struthers City Schools' athletics, it may be necessary in some sports to reduce the amount of participants in any given sport. This may occur due to any number of reasons, but usually the nature and limitations specific to some sports.

Every coach has the ultimate responsibility and authority for selecting his/her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's team, for example, do not automatically make the upcoming team, nor does being a senior ensure that an athlete will make the squad.

Both parents and prospective team members should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every opportunity and consideration. Coaches will be sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, the possibility of not making a team should be understood at all levels of competition. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

PROCEDURES RELATIVE TO TEAM CUTS

When the Board of Education sets policy for the high school and middle school athletic program, the Principal and Athletic Director are responsible for the administration of the school's athletic programs. The following procedures have been developed to allow for the best program for all students:

1. The number of participants in some athletic programs is limited. This requires that some prospective participants be cut from the squad, based upon determination of the head coach and his/her staff. The head coach makes the final decision in such cases. Players will be kept on teams based on playing ability, not grade level or program loyalty. The sport and the number of coaches, the number of levels, and the facilities available may determine team size.
2. Objective ratings must be done by qualified individuals on players who are trying out for a team. Explanation of criteria will take place at a pre-season player/parent meeting.
3. Head coaches must make difficult decisions regarding which athletes play when and how much. We ask parents and students to respect the decisions of the head coach. It would be virtually impossible for an athletic program to function if a coach were unable to make decisions regarding the amount of playing time and which athletes play during the contests. Any student and/or student's parent may discuss these decisions with the coach following appropriate protocol. If the student and/or student's parents are not satisfied at that time, they may then contact the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director, at his/her

discretion, discusses the concern with the coach, student or the student's parents, but in no case shall the Athletic Director or Administration have the authority to compel the coach to alter these discretionary decisions.

4. Freshman are permitted to participate at the varsity level. It is strongly recommended by the Administration and Athletic Department that a meeting takes place with the player, coach, and parent to explain expectations, ramifications, and impact of such a decision.
5. Student athletes will not be permitted to try out for a team after the final roster is submitted and the first game/scrimmage has been completed. Athletes cut from a team may try out for another sport if roster spots are available. In special circumstances, Administrative discretion may be applicable.

QUITTING A TEAM

An athlete who quits a team may not join another athletic team during the same season. If an athlete quits or is removed from a team, the parent/guardian shall be informed by the athletic department and/or head coach.

Note: A student may only participate in a second sport if he/she quits a sport when he/she has declared a second sport prior to the beginning of the sport season. Participation in pre-season workouts with an upcoming sport team must be agreed upon by both head coaches.

EXPRESSING PARENTAL CONCERNS

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, parents are asked to refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Always follow the proper athletic chain of command.
2. Never approach a coach at practice nor before or immediately after a contest. Neither is the proper time nor place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
3. Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches include the treatment of your child mentally and physically, ways to help your child improve, and concerns about your child's behavior.
4. Inappropriate concerns to discuss with coaches include playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other student-athletes.
5. Call the school the following day and make an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet. When a parent/coach meeting is necessary, the athlete involved should be present.
6. Raise your concerns in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable and will bring an immediate end to the meeting.
7. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation which is given.

SUB-VARSITY ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

We regard athletic participation at the sub-varsity levels (junior varsity, freshman, and middle school) as integral to the success of our varsity programs. These teams exist to provide athletes an introduction to the ten key qualities, and the processes necessary to acquire them (*see Mission Statement*), which are at the heart of our athletic programs.

While we will always strive to be successful in all of our athletic programs, participation at these levels, in particular, is a key to maintaining student interest, fostering growth, and providing the foundation for future successes.

Invariably, student involvement at these levels may be limited due to the nature of the sport and the varying skill levels of its participants. However, coaches will put forth a concerted effort in trying to put aside short term goals in lieu of the long-term progress of his/her team members.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a sub-varsity team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically be a member of successive teams nor will his/her role at one level be guaranteed at the next level. The athletes best suited for competition at each level of participation will make the squad each year.

CO-PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

All students are encouraged to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as they desire. Some may wish to participate in sports simultaneously within a single season. While such situations will automatically create conflicts, every effort, on the part of the student athlete and his/her coaches, will be made to accommodate the student's wishes. Below are suggested guidelines to follow:

- The student will inform coaches of his/her desires prior to the start of the seasons in question.
- The student and his/her coaches will work out a plan regarding practices/contests to accommodate the requirements of co-participation. As a part of said plan, the student shall declare which sport shall be primary when conflicts arise regarding actual contests. All participants in the formulation of the **Co-Participation Plan** will sign said plan and a copy will be sent to the student's parent(s) guardian(s).
- Any conflicts arising from the **Co-Participation Plan** will be brought to the attention of the Athletic Director or High School Administrator who will act as a mediator.
- When conflicts arise as a result of membership/participation in non-athletic extracurricular activities, students are required to inform their coaches in advance.

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION ATHLETES INVOLVED IN UNSPORTING BEHAVIOR WITH FANS

Given the recent incidents of irresponsible fan and player behavior in professional, collegiate and high school contests that have drawn national headlines, the Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Control adopted the following policies on December 9, 2004.

No member of any school-sponsored interscholastic athletics squad shall leave the 'playing area' in which a contest is being conducted and enter the spectator area of the facility to engage in any type of conflict – verbal or physical. If a student-athlete leaves the 'playing area' and enters the spectator area of a facility to so engage a person, the *minimum* penalties shall be:

1. The student-athlete's privileges to participate in interscholastic athletics shall be revoked and the student-athlete shall be ineligible for the remainder of the school year.
2. The school shall be immediately placed on probation pending an investigation (and report) into what happened, what caused it to happen, what was done by the school to diffuse what happened and what

‘safeguards’ have been implemented by the school to prevent future happenings.

STRUTHERS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY – 9160

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL EVENTS

The Board of Education welcomes the attendance of members of the community at athletic and other public events held by the schools in the District, but the Board also acknowledges its duty to maintain order and preserve the facilities of the District during the conduct of such events.

The Board holds the legal authority to bar the attendance of or remove any person whose conduct may constitute a disruption at a school event. School administrators have the authority to call law enforcement officials if a person violates posted regulations or does not leave school property when requested. They are also authorized to use security devices to better ensure the safety and well-being of participants and visitors.

OFF/PRE-SEASON PROGRAMS (open gym, jump stretch, wellness center, and conditioning)

1. Participants must have a physical on file as well as a completed Student Athletic Handbook Sign-off Form, Waiver Form/Insurance, HIPPA Form, and ~~two~~ Emergency Medical Authorization Forms also on file.
2. Participants must adhere to all established OHSAA policies.
3. Participants must adhere to all guidelines established by sponsoring coach(es) with regards to behavior, dress, care of facilities, and equipment.
4. Participants must adhere to adopted school policies with regards to school attendance and eligibility.
5. While quitting is an unacceptable habit, it is a common occurrence. Those student athletes who quit an in-season sport and wish to participate in a pre-season activity of an upcoming sport, must adhere to the following procedures:
 - Consult immediately with in-season head coach.
 - In-season head coach will report situation to the Athletic Director who will set up a meeting between the student-athlete and the coaches involved.
 - Return all equipment to in-season coach
 - Complete all necessary paperwork regarding pre-season activity.

Student-athletes who wish to participate in a pre-season activity of an upcoming sport (open gym, wellness center, jump stretch, etc.) while currently a participant of an in-season sport, should communicate with his/her in-season coach to established guidelines for that participation.

PRACTICE SESSIONS

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher’s classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete’s concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

It is the coach and Athletic Director who are responsible for scheduling practice time. Between the two, every effort will be made to ensure that student athletes are provided ample opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful within the framework of common sense.

In the event that school is cancelled due to weather conditions, athletic practices may occur after 3:00 p.m. for Varsity and JV teams only provided that the Superintendent or his/her designee has approved the practice based on the fact that weather and/or road conditions are safe.

TRAVEL

1. All student-athletes must travel to and from all scheduled scrimmages and contests in transportation provided by the athletic department unless the parent(s) make previous written arrangements for an exceptional situation with the head coach.
2. Student-athletes must adhere to all transportation guidelines as established by the Board of Education.
3. A student-athlete who misses a scheduled bus trip to an out-of-town scrimmage or contest will not be permitted to participate in said contest unless there are extenuating circumstances.
4. Student-athletes must adhere to all behavioral expectations set forth in the Student Handbook.

EQUIPMENT ISSUE AND RETURN

Students who are issued equipment/uniforms for the purpose of interscholastic participation will have that equipment recorded on a standard sport specific **Equipment Issue Form**. Each student will sign said form at the time of equipment issue. From that moment on, responsibility for the care, safeguarding, and return of any issued equipment falls on the shoulders of the student. Should the student fail to return any issued equipment at the conclusion of participation in any sport; the student is financially responsible for the replacement of any missing equipment. Should such a situation arise, the student in question shall be reported to the Director of Athletics and will have his/her name placed on the Debt List until the situation is rectified.

Students who wish to borrow equipment/uniforms for the purpose of Senior Pictures shall contact the Athletic Director with said request. Students will be expected to once again sign an **Equipment Issue Form**. Students will return any issued equipment within a reasonable period of time to the Athletic Director or face the consequences outlined above. It is preferred that students request such equipment/uniforms at least one week prior to Senior Pictures being taken.

VACATION POLICY

Vacations by team members during sport seasons are extremely discouraged. When an absence due to vacation is unavoidable, an athlete must:

- Be accompanied by his/her parents/guardians/custodians while on vacation
- Contact the head coach prior to vacation (minimum 4 weeks' notice)
- Be willing to assume the consequence related to their status on that squad as a starter, 2nd string, 3rd string, etc.

INELIGIBLE STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student who is declared academically ineligible **may** participate in in-season practices, off-season conditioning, and pre-season conditioning if:

1. The student and coach meet with the subject teacher(s) in the class(es) the student is presently failing.
2. An **Academic Action Plan please see Building Principal**) is created and agreed upon by the parties involved which should include periodic academic reports on the student's classroom performance and academic progress.
3. The **Academic Action Plan** is signed by the parties involved as well as the student's parent(s).
4. The coach is willing to monitor the student's performance and progress and communicate openly with the teacher(s) involved.

EARNING A VARSITY LETTER/SPECIAL AWARDS

Due to the diversity of interscholastic sports, it is virtually impossible to establish standard requirements which would govern awarding a varsity letter. Consequently, it will be up to each varsity head coach to determine the requirement for his/her sport.

In establishing sport specific requirements for earning a varsity letter, head coaches should consider the following:

1. Earning a varsity letter is a considerable achievement.
2. Award winners must be considered as the top athlete at his/her position or in his/her event.
3. Award winners should have participated in a majority of the contests.
4. Award winners, where applicable, should have participated in at least half of the quarters, innings, matches, etc. per individual contest.
5. The head coach/coaching staff should consider the award winner's contribution to the team as significant.
6. The requirements for earning a varsity letter should be applied consistently from one athlete to another.
7. Coaches should use common sense when determining letter winners.
8. Coaches should realize that earning a varsity letter is considered an important accomplishment to a high school athlete.
9. Coaches should realize that there are always exceptions to any established requirements.
10. Student trainers, managers, and statisticians should not be excluded from receiving awards. However, varsity letters should not be awarded until the second year of an individual's participation in such cases.

Important Note:

No awards from either the school or outside recognition (such as all-league, district, state, etc.) will be given if the student-athlete does not finish the year/season in good standing. Good standing means that the player must be on the team roster at the end of the season with no game suspension(s) pending.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INSURANCE

Annually, the Struthers City Schools offers low cost Student Insurance in case of accident or injury.

Traditionally, these plans provide cash benefits to help meet the cost of medical and hospital expense. If you have other insurance, these plans will help meet the deductibles and coinsurance gaps in those plans. If you have no other insurance, these plans will provide low cost, basic coverage. Furthermore, these plans will cover your child for the entire school year and throughout the summer months – right up to the day school re-opens.

Students who participate in interscholastic sports are **encouraged to have insurance coverage**. Injuries occur, and it is the recommendation of the Athletic Department that all parents be advised as to the opportunity to purchase these plans.

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT

The Struthers City School District strives to provide a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds and school buses, and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims, and bystanders. The school district consistently and vigorously addresses bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Bullying in Ohio Schools is defined in Ohio law (Ohio Revised Code 3313.666) as any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student more than once, and that the behavior both: causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student. Cyberbullying is the above prohibited behavior perpetuated with computers, cellular phones, Internet websites, and/or any other electronic device.

Bullying behavior can be:

- Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)
- Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing, name calling, racist remarks)
- Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion, sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the Internet-also known as cyberbullying)

Any acts of bullying, as defined above, should be reported immediately to school administration.

While the majority of these issues may occur “on school property”, or “at school events”, it should be noted that discipline involving bullying may also include where bullying originates as well as where it is communicated. If the act of bullying occurs off school property/during non-school hours, it may still result in school/athletic discipline if there is a disruption in the learning environment in the school setting.

Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district. Educational environments, include, but not limited to, every activity under school supervision. The Struthers City School District must be a safe haven where all students feel physically and emotionally safe and secure at all times. Parents can assist the school district and help protect their children by joining in this effort.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RESPECTIVE BULLYING PRINCIPAL TO REPORT ANY ACTS OF BULLYING.

ANTI-HAZING

Hazing is an act that places a student or athlete in an embarrassing, demeaning, or humiliating situation as a rite of passage or initiation to a team. The school district and athletic department forbids the practice of hazing by fellow athletes or coaches. Athletes are never required to pass or perform any initiation or ritual to become part of or retain membership on an athletic team.

TECHNOLOGY/SOCIAL MEDIA

Cell phones may not be used while on a team bench, team sideline, during a team meeting, or during an athletic contest or practice unless instructed to do so by a coach, athletic trainer, etc. For privacy reasons, **cell phones are not permitted to be used in a locker room at any time.** The use of cell phones may be further restricted during team travel or at away contests as part of team rules or policies.

Athletes should remember any image, photo, or video appearing on the Internet or posted on social media sites may be used to trigger co-curricular code violation. There may be no way to establish timeframe for when or where the image was taken. Therefore, an athlete assumes the responsibility for placing himself/herself in a compromising situation.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Athletes are responsible for their actions and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that meets the highest standards of personal conduct. Whether this is behavior in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, on the court or field, athletes are held to a higher standard of conduct. When mistakes are made, athletes are expected to own up to those mistakes and accept the consequences of their mistakes. Consequences outlined for behavior mistakes should be viewed as a deterrent to poor/inappropriate behavior rather than punishment for conducting poor/inappropriate behavior.

DRESS CODE

Student athletes will follow the Struthers City School District dress code policies and procedures. Student athletes taking photos for publication in the yearbook, school newspapers, etc. must be in dress code or risk the chance of the picture not being published. Students attending the MCCTC, PACE, Southern Park Academy, etc. are required to follow our dress code for participation and/or publication of photos.

SENIOR NIGHT POLICY

Senior Night Recognition ceremonies will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes prior to varsity contests. Head coaches will distribute the standard bio form to all senior athletes in advance of the ceremony and public address remarks will be limited to the information provided on the form.

ATHLETIC TRAINING PROGRAM

Assumption of Risk:

In every sport and activity, particularly in contact sports, there is a risk of injury to participating students. If an injury does occur, the student has a responsibility and an obligation to report the injury to the coach

immediately. This risk of injury may be severe, including the risk of fractures and other injuries which may be life-threatening.

Use of Athletic Trainer:

There is a certain amount of risk involved with athletic participation. The district retains a certified athletic trainer to assist in managing those risks. The athletic trainer serves at the liaison between the athlete, coach, parent, and physician. Coaches are required to respect the decision of the athletic trainer as it concerns the wellbeing of the athlete. Coaches or parents may not set aside or otherwise countermand the decision the athletic trainer makes concerning the availability of an athlete to participate in a practice or contest. **The health and safety of an athlete trumps any and all other considerations concerning athletic participation.**

Responsibilities of the Athletic Trainer:

The Athletic Trainer is responsible for caring for athletes and all athletic injuries. This health care includes evaluations, treatment, and rehabilitation of the athletic injuries and illness sustained during practice or contests.

All student-athletes who sustain an injury while participating should be seen by the Athletic Trainer. It is very important that the athlete follow the Athletic Trainer's directions in terms of medical referral. **Student-athletes returning to play from an injury must have a clearance form from the Athletic Trainer or from the physician caring for the injury or condition prior to resuming participation. NOTE: If the athlete has been evaluated by a physician, that athlete MUST receive medical clearance from the treating physician. A written clearance and/or restriction statement must be on file with the Athletic Trainer before returning to play. The Athletic Trainer shall not release an athlete without proper clearance from the treating physician.**

- **The fundamental and over-arching obligation of the Athletic Trainer and the coach is to ensure the health and safety of all players. No contest is worth risking the physical well-being of the athlete.**

Concussion Information:

A concussion information form is included in the forms that parents and student-athletes must sign in order to participate in athletics for the Struthers City School District.

Any student, while practicing for or competing in an interscholastic contest, who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest by either of the following:

- 1) The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition.
- 2) An individual who is serving as a contest official or referee during that practice or competition.
- 3) An individual who is serving as the Athletic Trainer

If a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the individual who removes the student shall not permit the student, **ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED**, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest officials shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- 1) The student's condition is assessed by either of the following:

- a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.)
 - b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.
- 2) The student receives **written authorization** (OHSAA’s Medical Authorization to Return to Play (RTP) form) that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance.

Return to Play or Practice:

The time and amount of rehabilitation required before an athlete returns to participate (practice or competition) shall vary on the severity and type of injury/illness. When an athlete suffers an injury that is either life threatening or could cause long-term damage or disability, he/she shall be permitted to return to play only after written approval from the treating physician is received by the Athletic Trainer. If an Athletic Trainer is present, he/she shall make the decision regarding a sideline return to play judgment. As the Athletic Trainer deems fit, the return to play decision may be made in consultation with parents, coach, and other qualified healthcare professionals.

REQUIRED FORMS FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

In order for a student to participate in the athletic programs of the Struthers City Schools, the following forms must be completed, signed by all parties and on file in the Athletic Department **annually**:

1. The Student & Parent Athletic Handbook Sign-Off Form
2. A Participation Physical Examination Form
3. Emergency Medical Authorization Form (one on file **and** one for each sport)
4. An Athletic and Waiver Information Form (one on file **and** one for each sport)
5. OHSAA Authorization Form
6. OHSAA Pamphlet “Athletic Eligibility Guide”
7. Concussion information form
8. Drug Testing consent form
9. Lindsay’s Law/Sudden Cardiac Arrest form

ALL FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND ON FILE BEFORE AN ATHLETE MAY PARTICIPATE IN ANY WAY WHICH INCLUDES BOTH IN AND OUT OF SEASON PROGRAMS.

STRUTHERS CITY SCHOOLS

STUDENT & PARENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK SIGN OFF FORM

As a student-athlete I have read the rules and regulations of the Struthers Athletic Department and agree to abide by them as a member of any athletic team in Struthers.

As a parent/guardian of the student-athlete I have read the rules and regulations of the Struthers Athletic Department and understand that violation of said rules and policy will result in possible disciplinary action. I will fully uphold these rules and policy as long as my son/daughter is a member of an athletic team at Struthers.

The undersigned agree and/or acknowledge as follows:

- A. There is no fundamental **right** to participate in interscholastic activities and participation in a Struthers City School District athletic program is a **privilege**.
- B. They have read the “STUDENT & PARENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK” and understand all of its terms and conditions.
- C. They understand if they fail to sign this form, the student-athlete will **not** have the privilege of participating in any Struthers City School District athletic program.
- D. They shall comply with and be bound by all terms and conditions of this handbook.

Student

Grade

Date

Parent/Guardian/Custodian

Date