**OHS General Athletic Rules and Guidelines**

*It is imperative that all parents and athletes involved with OHS Athletics read, understand and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth by the program. The best interest of the team will always be put ahead of the interest of an individual. Parent and athletes actions and behaviors can have a positive or negative impact on the team as a whole.*

\****WARNING***

***The potential for injury is inherent in all interscholastic athletic activities. Even with the best coaching,***

***the most advanced protective equipment, and a strict observance of rules, injuries can and will***

***happen. Although serious injuries are not common in supervised high school athletic programs, it***

***is impossible to eliminate the inherent risk. Parents and students must be willing to accept the risks***

***associated with inter-scholastic sports participation.***

\* In compliance with IHSA State By-Laws, students MUST be passing 25 hours (5 academic classes) each week, semester, year in order to remain eligible for IHSA contests. Any student ineligible for 4 consecutive weeks in a single season will be removed from the team for the remainder of that season. Our main focus is on academics; therefore we do reserve the right to remove athletes who are consistently struggling with their academics in order to focus more on grades.

\*A student must be in attendance for 4 periods in a school day in order to be eligible to practice or play in that same day. Emergency or unusual situations can be reviewed on a case by case basis.

\* Our teams are taught to focus on working hard and performing to the best of their ability. The way other teams perform should not dictate how our athletes feel about their performance.

\* Encourage and support all athletes on the team. Make sure all your comments are positive.

\* Respect parents, coaches, athletes, game officials and administration for all teams. OHS Teams need to be role models of good sportsmanship and behavior. Both athletes and parents will cheer for our team, not against the opposing team. Bullying and/or harassment will not be tolerated.

\* Parents and fans understand that at all events they are representing our program and our school and will behave in an appropriate manner.

\* During events, please allow the team to prepare and perform without interruption. We need the athletes’ full attention to prepare and perform to our best ability. The athletes need to make sure he/she has everything he/she needs before the event. Parents should not need to bring items to their athlete.

\* When a player is frustrated with the program, coach or teammates, we all will support their need to vent. We will listen and offer constructive comments to help them resolve the conflict themselves.

\* If the athlete finds conflict with a teammate, we will encourage positive discussion between the athletes.

\*Issues that arise between parents should be resolved by the parents, it is not the responsibility of the athletic department to resolve parent to parent conflicts.

\* Parents will refrain from talking to or commenting about members of the team other than their own athlete.

\* All will wait 24 hours before contacting a coach if there is an incident or concern; unless there is a serious injury/incident. Emotions often run high during a game, practice, competition or event, and a 24 hour minimum waiting period gives both parties an opportunity to reflect on the issues at hand.

\* All will wait through the weekend or break for a response from a coach, please do not send a second email or call again until this time has passed.

\* If one feels it is necessary to contact the coach because an athlete is unable to resolve their own conflict, please request a meeting through e-mail. The student-athlete is expected to be at the scheduled meeting in order to assure all information is accurate.

\* Please refrain from calling the coach on their personal cell phone unless there is an injury or emergency. Please refrain from calling a coach at their home for anything other than a true emergency.

\* It is the responsibility of the athlete to contact the coach in advance if the athlete is going to miss any or all of a team function. Communication after the fact (call, text, e-mail, etc.) WILL NOT be accepted to excuse an absence.

\* E-mail is to be used as much as possible for concerns, scheduling questions, etc. to be considerate of professional obligations and time.

\* Informational e-mails, tweets, Facebook, etc. messages sent to the entire team or to all of the parents will be sent by the coaches or the Booster team representative as directed by the head coach. Mass messages sent to the team and/or parents to voice opinions and concerns are NOT appropriate.

\* Any concerns brought forth must have factual documentation. Only the specific athlete involved will be discussed, not any other members of the program.

\* Please respect and follow the guidelines outlined in the Communication Brochure, this will be the model communication chain that will be followed.

\* Athletes will not be permitted to use their cell phone, without permission, during practices and events. There are also times that athlete cell phones will be in the possession of the coach and will not be readily accessible to athletes.

\* All will respect the coaching decisions made and allow the coaching staff to coach the team.

\* All understand that decisions made by the coaching staff and/or school administration will be final.

\* As a parent, you are able to speak for your athlete and yourself, and not the team as a whole.

\* Although the athletic office is always willing to be of any help we can, we would ask that in the event of specific team related concerns, the athletic director should only be contacted after the athlete and parent have already met with the coach to discuss the concern and feel it has not yet been resolved.

\* Please understand that although this is an educationally based high school program, it is a competitive varsity sport. We wish for each student-athlete to have a positive experience in which to learn good leadership skills, develop positive team relations and provide a positive learning environment to grow as athletes. However, there may be times when team members become frustrated with coaches and other team members. Please encourage them to talk to their coaches first. **At no time will team members or parents be persecuted for bringing problems to the attention of a coach in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time. If it is felt that this has happened, the athletic director should be notified.**

\* It is the responsibility of the parents and athlete to carefully read the Code of Conduct and sign the agreement. *This is taken care of during the on-line registration process for athletics.*

\**In dealing with social media (twitter, Facebook, etc) any derogatory, offensive, slanderous, bullying or hazing comments made by or towards any OHS athlete, coach, team or opponent that is PROVEN and brought to the attention of the OHS athletic department will be dealt with immediately. Consequences will be swift and may include suspension and/or removal from the athletic program. Consequences will be handled on a case by case basis.*

\*Competitive high school athletics normally practice or play 6 days per week. Athletes are expected to be at all events, including those that occur over holidays, breaks, etc (i.e. Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break). Missing events for any reason (including other school events, illness, vacations, etc) can impact playing time, position, etc. This policy is not used as a punishment for the absent athlete, but instead as a reward for the athletes that are present. Any athlete in any program that has more than 5 absences will be removed from that sport for the remainder of the season. Unusual circumstances can be discussed on a case by case basis with the program coach in advance.

\* High School athletes understand that competitions are scheduled and may conflict with other school events such as plays, dances, other sporting events (i.e. football games), proms, possibly even graduation for certain sports in the spring season. Athletes are expected to compete at their event BEFORE being concerned about any other conflicting event. If an athlete chooses not to compete, then it is understood that position and/or playing time may be impacted.

\*High school athletics require travel to and from events on district approved transportation. All team members are expected to travel to and from events together on the bus. A travel release form can be requested for rare family emergency or special events. These forms must be filled-out and signed by a parent and then approved by the athletic department office at least 24 hours in advance of the event. Athletes that are late to a departure time for a bus may not be allowed to travel and/or take part in that days event.

\*Competitive high school sports often involve try-outs and athletes not making a team. Not everyone will make all teams they try-out for and not everyone will play the exact position they might like to. There is no promise or guarantee of playing time. Playing time, positions, offenses, defenses, performances, routines, etc. are the decision of the head coach and the specific sport coaching staff.

\*Competitive high school sports require participation in the off- season and during the summer in various conditioning and/or camps and leagues in order to keep both the athlete and the team as competitive as possible. Although these items are not mandatory, they are highly recommended and encouraged in order to give the athletes the best opportunity to achieve. Athletes understand that by not taking part in these events, they may be passed up by athletes who improve their skill sets by taking part.

\*All injuries that occur, including head injuries, will be looked at and evaluated by our athletic training staff and, if need be, will be directed to a medical doctor. Protocols are in place to protect the players’ safety and welfare. These protocols will be followed to the letter and there will be no return to play until the issue is cleared completely by satisfactory completion of the protocol and/or medical clearance from a medical doctor.

\*As an OHS athlete, you must recognize that any failure to follow the guidelines set forth will impact participation in this program. Please understand your commitment is to your studies first and then to your sport. You need to understand that you are expected to sacrifice the “**ME for the WE**” in order for our teams to reach the success we all wish to enjoy. Understand that being an athlete is a **PRIVILEDGE** and that you are representing yourself, your team, your school and your community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Any action that you take that does not meet the high standards of being an OHS student-athlete may lead to consequences and possibly your eventual dismissal from the program.