

## **WINDHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK**

This handbook is not designed to replace those procedures developed for the general student body. The Student Athlete Handbook is intended to serve as a guide to help students and their families come to know the WMS Athletic Program. This handbook will provide everyone with expectations of WMS student-athletes and to have the knowledge of the rules and regulations by which the athletic program is governed.

We will try to cover many rules in this handbook, but please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that may arise. The rules, and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or non-standard responses. This handbook does not limit WMS to deviate from the normal rules and procedures, and to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by the WMS Administration and Athletic Director.

**Windham Middle School Athletics Philosophy:** The athletic program at WMS is a vital component in the overall educational experience. We ask that the positive attributes of a student athlete be displayed on the field as well as the classroom. We value sportsmanship, growth of the spirit, mind and body. We expect to contribute to the students experience in the school while developing desirable character traits including persistence, determination, dedication, tenacity, team spirit, and the will to win. The goals of WMS athletics are to encourage maximum participation of the student body in athletics while maintaining high standards of achievement.

We are not separate but rather an extension of a quality educational program. It has been found that students who participate in athletic programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, and fewer discipline problems. Athletic programs provide valuable lessons on many practical situations, teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, as well as hard work. Students gain experience with self-discipline, self-confidence, and develop skills to solve complex situations. All these skills are needed and used later in high school and in life.

## WINDHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Athletic General Policies

1. **Eligibility:** In addition to being academically eligible (see scholastic eligibility policy), prior to the start of tryouts, practices, or competitions students must have a permission slip on file. This permission slip should be given to the coach to hold on to. Furthermore, prior to the start of the first game at a date set by the Athletic Director, each athlete must have on file:
  - a. Signed Athletic Handbook Policy Form, from the student-athlete and the parent/guardian stating that the policies of the athletic department have been read and understood.
  - b. Physical Form, completed by a doctor following a physical examination, clearing the student-athlete for participation. One must be completed each year of participation and kept on file with the school nurse.
  
2. **Uniforms:** Uniforms are the responsibility of the athlete and are responsible for the care and regular cleaning of the uniforms. If a uniform is damaged in any way, the athlete should let the AD know immediately. The athlete, at the replacement cost price, will pay for uniforms lost or damaged. No athlete will be allowed to try out for another sport until the uniform is returned or it is paid for in full.
  
3. **Transportation:** All team members shall travel to and return from games, matches, meets on the team bus. We understand that certain circumstances to arise where the student-athletes would need to ride home with a parent. The student athlete must provide the coach with a written note granting permission, and the athlete can only ride home with their parent. Exceptions to this rule must be pre-approved by the Athletic Director at least 24 hours in advance. The WMS athletic department would like to express that we do feel traveling to and from away contests are an important part of the unity of the team. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up their children in a prompt manner (20 minutes) at the end of any game or practice.
  
4. **Injuries:** Injured athletes should remain as much as an active part of the team as possible. They should attend all practices and games and sit with the team, assisting in any way possible. If you are injured in a game or practice you should let the coach know immediately. That information will then be relayed to the Athletic Director and the School Nurse. Depending on the injury a note may be required for the athlete to return to activity. A concussion requires a note from the parent and a doctor to return.

5. **Attendance:** Students are expected to arrive at school on time and attend all scheduled classes. In the event of an athlete being absent from school they may not participate in any athletic contests or practices that day. For contests dates that fall on non-school days the student-athlete is expected to attend all classes on the previous day of school. *For an athlete to participate in practice or games, the student must be in attendance in school by 11:00a.m.*
6. **Dropping from team:** If an athlete decides to drop from a team, he/she has a responsibility to the team and coach to see the coach and explain the reasons involved. At which time uniforms and equipment must be returned. In the event that team apparel was purchased then it is the student's responsibility to still make payment for those items ordered before they left the team. No athlete may quit and participate in another sport during the same season.
7. **Unauthorized areas:** Athletes before or during practice or games should not enter any unauthorized part of the school, or any reason without the coach's supervision, during non school hours.
8. **Vandalism or Theft:** Destroying, damaging, defacing or theft of any private or school property at a practice or contest, home or away, will result in a one week suspension from the team, depending on the severity of the incident and is conditioned upon agreement of restitution. If disciplinary action is taken by the school administrators, this action supersedes other actions and may then result in additional penalties being taken by both the school administrators and athletic department.

### **Student/Athlete Eligibility Regulations**

The following athletic expectations are designed to:

1. Reinforce the educational values of athletics.
2. Ensure athletic peak performance.
3. Help develop a "team" concept.
4. Involve student/athlete self-discipline
5. Have student athletes that are excellent representatives of our school and community.
6. Understand the privilege of representing the school in co-curricular activities and that the school has the authority to revoke the privilege when the student does not conduct him/herself in a reasonable manner. Student athletes here at WMS are expected to be model citizens of the school, in class, on the field of play or in the community.

**Scholastic Eligibility:** Athletes are responsible for academic performance and should plan their time so that they devote sufficient time to their academic work as to not allow athletics to interfere with their studies. If an athlete sees that there may be an issue with this, they should schedule a time to speak to the coach to attempt to resolve any conflicts and to help students with appropriate solutions. To be fair and consistent to all student-athletes, *no exception to the below policy will be made*. Students are encouraged to check their grades throughout the trimester to ensure they are doing well. Students should not wait to the last minute to try to make up missing work.

If a student is failing and/or has an incomplete in two classes, he or she will be suspended from the team for two weeks. No participation with the team at games or practices is allowed. If at the end of the two week suspension a passing grade is earned in all classes, the student will be reinstated. If a passing grade is not earned after the two week suspension in all classes, the student will be permanently removed from the team. If a student has a failing grade and/or an incomplete in three classes, that student will be suspended from the team for the remainder of that season. Determination of eligibility will be made at mid-term report time, (day midterms go home) or when grades are posted at the end of the trimester.

**Behavior:** All athletes are to abide by school handbook regulations. In the event of a violation of school policy has occurred and such violation results in discipline of that student being suspended from school (This includes out of school, and/or in school suspensions) they may not participate in athletic contests or practices during such suspension. Furthermore WMS may extend such suspended time for athletic eligibility as follows:

- A. The team may impose additional penalties as needed.
- B. These violations are in addition to loss of eligibility due to school policy and may or may not include additional penalties imposed as a result of predetermined team rules.

Any student receiving a detention must serve the detention on the assigned days, whether or not it conflicts with any athletic contest or practice. If it is a home contest, student athletes will not be able to participate in the contest that day. They would be allowed to attend the event, but will not be allowed to participate. If it is an away contest, they would not be able to participate or travel to the event as they would miss the bus. If the detention falls the day before a contest and the student athlete misses practice, the student athlete may be suspended or play time restricted the next day of the contest.

If the student receives a lunch detention for not abiding to the school handbook regulations playing time may be restricted based upon the severity of the act.

All questions of eligibility to participate will be resolved by the Athletic Director, the Principal, and the coach. The decision of this group is **final**.

**Non-School Competition:** A member of a school team is a student who is regularly present for, and activity participates in, all team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are prohibited from missing a school practice, or competition to compete with an out of school team. Whenever a conflict arises between the school team practice/competition and an out of school team practice, competition, camp, or clinic on the same day, the student athlete must honor the commitment to the school team. *Priority must be given at all times to the school team. That includes practices/competitions that are not on the same day. For example, a baseball player that pitches on an AAU team should not pitch over the weekend when they have games for the school team the following week.*

## **REGULATIONS FOR WMS ATHLETICS**

### **Windham Middle School Athletic Code of Conduct**

- 1. Sportsmanship:** Athletes at WMS are expected to display good sportsmanship both on and off the field. Unsportsmanlike behaviors that include gestures, cheating, disrespect to officials, coaches, players or fans will not be tolerated. It is a privilege to participate and attend an athletic contest; violations of the sportsmanship code of conduct may result in removal of such privileges. If a player or coach receives a game disqualification during an athletic event, that player or coach shall be ineligible for the next event or contest. During a suspension the player or coach may not attend the contest/event in which the suspension is imposed. If any player or coach receives a second game disqualification during the season, that individual will be suspended from the sport for the remainder of the season. ( This rule is also a Tri-County Athletics rule) If an athlete is observed by a coach, faculty or administration displaying a behavior of poor sportsmanship on or off the field, that individual may forfeit their right to participate in future events.

The expectation of a WMS athlete is to act responsibly and respectfully whether on the field or off. Good sporting behavior is WMS number one priority and failure to comply will not be tolerated. A student may be declared ineligible in any interscholastic activity in which he or she represents the school in a public appearance if they conduct themselves in a manner that, in the opinion of the school authorities, would reflect unfavorably upon the school, the students, and the community.

- 2. Spectator Behavior:** Any fan acting disrespectful towards other fans, players, coaches, officials or game personnel may be asked to leave the site without prior warning. Any fan, including students, asked to leave a contest will be barred from attending any Windham Middle School games-Home or Away, for (at least) the remainder of the

season, or until a meeting with the Athletic Director and Principal takes place regarding behavioral expectations.

- 3. Hazing:** There will be no activities by individuals or teams that are designed to humiliate, initiate, degrade, or intimidate another student. Any form of hazing behaviors or knowledge of hazing taking place and doing nothing to end the behavior is prohibited and governed by state law. When the school administration has determined that the hazing policy has been violated, the student will immediately be removed from the team for the remainder of the season. In addition, sexual harassment and bullying policies will be strictly enforced as per school student handbook.
- 4. Tryouts and Playing Time:** Playing time is determined by the coach and is based on ability, effort and compliance to team policies. It is our belief that every attempt shall be made to allow each athlete playing time. At no time shall an athlete or parent of an athlete attempt to discuss playing time with a coach just prior to or immediately following an athletic contest. Such conversations are best handled following a predetermined time to speak to the coach, if further discussion is needed you may contact the Athletic Director. If still further discussion is required you may contact the Principal. *See the NHIAA Parent/Coach communication guide.* All students are encouraged to participate in WMS athletics; however, in the event that too many athletes are attempting to make a team some athletes will need to be cut from a team. Student-athletes are only allowed to try out for one team a season. The coach makes the final decision on who will be cut from the team and they may solicit input from others to determine who will make the team. *You do not automatically make a team just because you were on the team the previous season; each sport has a tryout period.* Each student/athlete has the right to request explanation as to the reason for being cut and/or tips for improvement.
- 5. Locker Room:**

  - a. No one except assigned coaches and players are allowed in the locker room.
  - b. No cell phones or cameras may be used in the locker rooms.
  - c. Cleats are to be removed and cleaned **prior to entering the building** and not in locker rooms.
  - d. Teams are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the locker rooms during their season.
  - e. All players will be assigned a locker, and all items should be placed in their lockers and secured. Anything left outside the lockers will be placed in lost and found. **Windham Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**
  - f. Following the season, all sports lockers should be emptied and if needed locks returned within 48 hours of the final contest or event. Failure to do so will result in the contents of the lockers removed. If you are playing a sport the following

season, the lockers are still to be emptied until a new sports locker is issued. Only school issued locks are permissible.

**6. Missing practices or games due to field trips, family vacations, or school functions:**

Due to the broad spectrum of educational opportunities available at WMS, there are occasions when two or more interests compete or conflict. Students who participate in interscholastic athletics or other formalized clubs/organizations that require consistent, continuing commitment must occasionally choose between participation in the sport or club and participation in a family vacation. Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices and competitions during the season. An athlete who is planning to miss a practice or competition is expected to request an absence from the coach as soon as possible. Attendance exceptions that may be reviewed by the coach include medical and dental appointments, family emergencies, religious obligations, tutorial assistance, or other school based activities. As each sport varies in nature and team structure, a coach will evaluate a request based upon the unique nature and requirements of the respective sport and team. Even pre-planned trips both family and school based may not be permissible based upon the specific nature and structure of the team. Coaches are asked to establish team rules on participation and communicate those rules to the athletes and parents. The practice of setting team requirements for participation emphasizes the importance of commitment to the team and recognizes that team success is rooted in daily contributions made by all individuals on the team. In an effort to minimize potential conflicts between athletic participation and other interests, parents and students are encouraged to communicate with each other early about choices and decision making. Refer to athletic schedules on the website.

**7. Bus Behavior:** The driver and coaches will oversee student conduct on the bus. Failure to act responsibly and respectfully on the bus will result in suspension from additional away games. If in the event damage is caused on the bus, the student-athlete will be responsible for payment of damages caused.

**8. Dismissal from class:** From time to time it is necessary to have a student-athlete dismissed from class to leave for a game. When this happens, the student-athlete is responsible for seeing their teachers to make up any work that was missed. In addition, leaving the room and going to the locker room should be done with respect. Students are expected to act in a courteous manner when they leave their classrooms to limit distractions. Communication with teachers ahead of time will greatly help in this process. Students should not leave the classroom until their team is called for dismissal. Any student who leaves the classroom without permission or without being called will be suspended or play time restricted.

