



Student/Parent Handbook

GSWB Sports

2026-2027

The primary function of the school is to provide an atmosphere and environment for students to learn. Extra-curricular activities are a privilege supported by the school board to assist the students in learning how to compete in life and to help them develop a larger scope of interests in both athletics and fine arts. To qualify for participation, the student must first realize his/her first purpose in attending school, to obtain an elementary education.

Rules for Participation in Extracurricular Activities

The Illinois Elementary School Association is a state group of schools whose function is to establish guidelines for the schools to compete. As a member of that body, we assume the same guidelines for academic achievements that they require. They are:

1. Students must be in grades five through eight in school.
2. Participants must be doing passing work in all subjects.
3. Schoolwork shall be checked/enforced by the Athletic Director on a weekly basis for eligibility the following Monday through Sunday. *See Eligibility Rule Letter
4. If a student is determined ineligible because of failing grade(s), he/she will remain ineligible for one week. His/Her grades will continue to be checked each week until they are passing.
5. Students may participate for only one year in each grade, five through eight, or a total of four years.
6. Students must turn in the completed athletic parent packet before he/she may participate in an organized practice.
7. Students must be in attendance by no later than 12:00 on the day of an athletic or fine arts competition, unless that activity is on a non-school attendance day. If the event takes place on a day immediately following a school day, the student must be in attendance by noon the day before the event. Special circumstances, which

have been pre-approved by the administration, may create an exemption to this rule.

8. Excused for Bona Fide Religious Objection: Any student who participates in extracurricular activities who is unable, because of the observance of a bona fide religious holiday or practice, to participate in a practice, contests, meet, game, or other meeting of the extracurricular team or group shall be excused from such practice, game or meeting upon the written request of the student's parents or legal guardians. Neither the District nor the extracurricular team or group shall subject the excused student to discipline or other adverse consequences due to such excusal. For purposes of this policy, discipline and adverse consequences do not include actions necessary to be taken for the safety of any student or students as a result of the absence(s).
9. If a student transfers, the student becomes eligible according to the IESA rules.
10. To be eligible to participate in IESA-sanctioned activities for GSWB, a student must be enrolled at one of the three co-op schools. Students who receive their academic training/education at home are not eligible to participate in IESA-sanctioned activities for GSWB.
11. For all seventh-grade athletic activities sponsored by a member school, a student shall be eligible through age fourteen (14). If a student in a seventh-grade athletic activity becomes fifteen (15) from the beginning date of practice in an activity, as determined by the IESA standardized calendar through the final event in the seventh-grade state tournament series in girls' basketball, boys' basketball, or girls' volleyball, he/she is not eligible to participate in that activity. For boys' and girls' track, the final date of eligibility shall be governed by the member school's size classification, other than activities designed as seventh-grade activities subject to by-law 3.061, a student shall be eligible through age fifteen (15). If a student in an eighth-grade athletic activity becomes sixteen (16) from the beginning date of practice in an activity, as determined by the IESA standardized calendar through the final event in the seventh-grade state tournament series in girls' basketball, boys' basketball, or girls' volleyball, he/she is not eligible to participate in that activity. For boys' and girls' track, the final date of eligibility shall be governed by the member school's size classification.
12. It is the policy and practice of the district that no extracurricular groups, including but not limited to athletic teams, shall practice on Sunday. Any use of the facilities should be approved by the Building Administration.
13. Coaches will collect all uniforms for winter sports following the last game of the year. For other sports, uniforms must be turned in to the coach during the designated date/time given by the coach shortly after the last game of the season.
14. Extra-Curricular activities are school-sponsored activities, and therefore, the Administration has the right to discipline students in a manner as such.
15. Participants are only allowed 3 unexcused practices before they are asked to be removed from an activity. An absence is considered unexcused regardless of the reason if the coaching staff or Athletic Director is not made aware of the absence in advance.
16. Students who are absent or late from practice due to disciplinary measures (Detentions, Suspensions) are considered unexcused. Students who are unable to

- make bus times due to discipline procedures will not be allowed to participate in the activity.
17. Students who serve a suspension are unable to participate in extracurricular activities that day.
 18. Participants are expected to ride school-supplied transportation to the event. Parents/Guardians may sign them out during the activity, allowing them to ride home with parents or anyone listed on the travel release form. Participants are only allowed to be signed out by other individuals who are not listed on the travel release form if a note has been pre-approved by the Administration, no later than the morning of the event.
 19. Students who choose to participate in school-sponsored activities shall choose to attend school-sponsored events and practices over non-school sponsored activities. Absences due to out-of-school sponsored activities may be considered unexcused.
 20. IESA Post-season: GSWB Athletics does not cut students from any sports. However, once the IESA post-season tournament starts, teams are only allowed to carry a maximum number of players for the given sport. Baseball and softball postseason maximum is 18, while basketball and volleyball are 15. In the event this situation would arise, it would be up to the coach to make a cut(s) to carry the 15 or 18 athletes who the coach feels are most deserving and able to be competitive.
 21. State Competitions: Student athletes competing in the state tournament will travel to games as a team. Student athletes will be given information pertaining to the state tournament following the Sectional championship.
 22. During IESA state series tournaments (regional, sectional, state finals) games, the displaying of signs, banners, placards, balloons, or constructed frames through which players run is prohibited. Such devices obstruct the view of spectators, are unsightly, and in many instances may become safety hazards. All mechanical noise-making devices (radios, tape players, megaphones) shall be excluded from IESA tournaments as well.
 23. Only students who are currently eligible to participate in an interscholastic contest shall appear at the contest in the uniform of their school.
 24. Concessions: It is the responsibility of the parents of GSWB athletes to work the concession stand for home games. Parents will be charged a fee of \$100 prior to the start of the first sport that their child participates in for the school year. This fee will be returned once the parent has worked in the concession stand at the end of your child's season. Parents who choose not to work in the concession stands will forfeit this fee. No uniforms will be issued until this fee is paid.

In addition to these I.E.S.A. rules, the GSWB coaches have set their own rules and expectations for their sports. Parents and students should become familiar with these rules as well as the general ones.

Gymnasium Guidelines to ensure proper care of the wood floor

1. No outdoor shoes are allowed inside the playing area marked by the outer boundary line around the perimeter of the gymnasium floor. No exceptions to this rule are permitted.
2. All visitors and spectators are expected to walk outside of the boundary line while walking around the gym floor without cutting corners.
3. The only beverage allowed in the gym for spectators is water.

Expectations of Behavior

Of the Student-Athlete

- You are always a student first, then an athlete!
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials. Avoid public criticism of the game officials. Accept the decision of contest officials.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Teach sportsmanship and reward/acknowledge players who display good sportsmanship.
- Learn and follow the rules of the game. Share this knowledge with parents and fans to help them have a better understanding and appreciation of the game.
- Respect your opponents and teammates. Treat them the way you would wish to be treated. Handshakes between participants and coaches at the end of a contest, regardless of the outcome.
- Hazing will not be tolerated: Hazing is any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a student to belong to a team or group, regardless of his or her willingness to participate. *Bullying* includes cyber-bullying (bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication) and means any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students.
- While in the stands, student athletes should demonstrate sportsman-like behaviors, including leaving the bleachers or other areas clean and free of trash.
- Uniforms are not to be worn to and from contests for winter sports. For other seasons, please do not wear uniforms other than for the events.
- It is the athlete's responsibility to maintain a clean uniform. Uniforms should be washed after each game on a gentle cycle and hung to dry or dried on a very low setting. If a uniform is turned in with stains or torn, it will be the athlete's responsibility to pay to replace it.
- Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatening or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.
- **Penalty for a Player Ejected for Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any player ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct will be required to miss the next two contests at the level at which the ejection occurred and all contests in the interim. The player must also complete the NFHS Sportsmanship course. A second ejection results in a five-game suspension and a \$100 fine to the school.

Of the Spectators/Parents

- Avoid criticism of game officials and sideline coaching, which detracts from the performance of the student.
- A ticket is a privilege to observe the contest and not a license to verbally assault others.
- Learn the rules of the game so that you may understand the game and appreciate the effort of the participants.
- Remember that the school athletic experience is a learning experience for students and mistakes are sometimes made.
- Recognize and show appreciation for outstanding play by either team.
- Students are to be picked up promptly from games and practices.
- Only members of the teams are allowed to attend practices.
- **Penalty for a Fan Ejected for Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any fan ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct will be required to complete the NFHS Sportsmanship course before he/she can return to future contests.
- Expected Communication from parents to coaches:
 - **Concerns should be addressed following the chain of command: 1) Coach, 2) Athletic Director, 3) School Administrator**
 - **Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance**
 - **Specific concerns concerning a coach's philosophy and/or expectations**

As your child becomes involved in the programs at GSWB, he/she will have the opportunity to experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, respectful discussions with the coach are encouraged. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. Certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches

- Treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches

- Playing Time (although coaches should effectively communicate each player's role on the team)
- Playing Strategy
- Play Calling
- Other student-athletes

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, the procedure you should follow:

- Call or email the coach to set up an appointment. **It is never appropriate for parents to confront a coach before, during, or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of**

this nature do not promote a resolution. Give 24 hours after a completed game to contact a coach.

- If the coach cannot be reached, contact the Athletic Director, and a meeting will be set up for you

The Next Step

- If the meetings with the coach and or AD do not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent may call and set up an appointment with the school administrator to discuss the situation.

Of the Cheerleaders

- Select positive cheers that praise your team without antagonizing the opponents.
- Encourage a positive crowd alternative when booing or an inappropriate chant begins by starting a popular cheer.
- Encourage injured players and recognition of outstanding performances by both teams.
- Treat opposing cheerleaders the way you would wish to be treated, as a guest or friend.

Of the School Administration

- Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each interscholastic event.
- Develop a crowd control plan for both home and away games.
- Support participants, coaches, and fans who teach and display good sportsmanship.
- Actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants' coaches and fans.
- Develop a program for teaching and promoting good sportsmanship.

GSWB Extra-Curricular Activities

The GSWB Cooperative believes that competitive teams help develop pride and loyalty in the school and each other, as well as self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment as an individual. We believe making a 7/8 grade team is an honor that an athlete earns with hard work and dedication, as well as the development and refinement of his/her talents.

1. Coaches of 7/8 (Jr. High) grade teams will select for their teams those players who can compete competitively in a contest at this level. The ultimate goal is to be as competitive as possible. In most game situations, not all players will have the opportunity to play. When looking to promote students to the next level, overall player development should be considered along with the potential for team success. Ultimately, continuous player development and long-term program success are our goals.
2. Fifth/Sixth coaches will make greater efforts than the Jr. High coaches to promote participation in games by all members. They must balance their wish to build a winning team spirit with the need for giving hard-working young players the

opportunity to compete during each contest. Playing time at these levels is never equal among players in each game. At the 5/6 grade level, the main focus should be to develop players for the Jr. high level by working on the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful at the next level.

3. Awards Night-Notice will be given to acknowledge participants in various extra-curricular activities. Coaches will give season highlights and administer an MVP, Most Improved, Tiger/Lion Award, and a coach's award, if applicable.

Math Club (hosted by Gardner)

Students in sixth through eighth-grade classes may participate in the Math Club. All students have an opportunity to join the club and attend meetings. These meetings begin in January or February, and they are held after school. The team will compete per IVC rules and regulations. Students must be academically eligible to compete.

Spelling Bee (Gardner, South Wilmington, & Braceville)

A total of three students in sixth through eighth from Gardner, South Wilmington, and Braceville will compete in the Spelling Bee per the IVC rules and regulations. The top spellers from each grade at each school will compete in a three-school spelling off to determine which students will represent the co-op at the IVC meet. Students must be academically eligible to compete.

Scholastic Bowl (hosted by Braceville)

Students in fifth through eighth grade will have the opportunity to participate in the IESA-sanctioned scholastic bowl. Students must be academically eligible to compete.

Boys' Baseball (hosted by South Wilmington)

Boys in fifth through eighth grade may participate in baseball. They will participate in the IVC conference and the IESA tournament. The IESA state rules are used for all of these activities.

Boys' Basketball (hosted by Gardner)

Boys in fifth through eighth grade may participate in basketball. Basketball teams at the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels will represent the grade school in scheduled competition. Basketball teams for 7th and 8th grade will participate in the IVC conference and IESA competition.

Cross Country (hosted by South Wilmington)

Students in fifth through eighth grade may participate. They will participate in the IESA tournament.

Girls' Softball (hosted by South Wilmington)

Girls in fifth through eighth grade may participate in softball. They will participate in the IVC conference and the IESA tournament. The IESA state rules are used for all of these activities.

Girls' Basketball (hosted by Gardner)

Girls in fifth through eighth grade may participate in basketball. Basketball teams at the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels will represent the grade school in scheduled competition. Basketball teams for 7th and 8th grade will participate in the IVC conference and IESA competition.

Track and Field (hosted by Gardner)

Girls and boys in fifth through eighth grade may participate in Track. Track teams compete in at the 7th and 8th Grade levels for both boys and girls (5th/6th/7th Grade Levels can run up). These teams will have an opportunity to compete in Class A State Competition through the IESA.

Trap (hosted by GSW)

Girls and boys in sixth through eighth grade may participate in the Clay Target League. As this is not an IESA-sponsored sport, there is a fee of \$40 for students to participate. Parents will also be responsible for helping with fundraisers and other responsibilities related to the team. (GSWB Sports Boosters does not sponsor these events.) Practices and scoring weeks will be held at the Diamond Range.

Volleyball (hosted by Gardner)

Girls in fifth through eighth grade may participate in Volleyball. Volleyball teams at the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. The seventh and eighth-grade girls will participate in the IVC conference and IESA competition.

Cheerleading (hosted by Gardner)

Students in fifth through eighth are selected to represent the school as cheerleaders. Tryouts are held at the beginning of the school year. Twelve girls will be selected to make the team. Any changes to squad numbers must have Board approval.

Speech (hosted by Gardner for the purpose of hosting contests only)

Students in fifth through eighth grades may participate in speech contest. Each school is responsible for providing speech materials and coaches for its individual students. The purpose of the coop for speech is to host contests only.

GSWB Return to Play after a Concussion Protocol

Summary

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Definition of a Concussion

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be “knocked out”) to have suffered a concussion.

Behavior of Signs Observed Indicative of a Positive Concussion

- Loss of consciousness
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears confused
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events before or after the injury

Symptoms Reported by a Player Indicative of Possible Concussion

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling Sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

Protocol

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians, licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois, and certified athletic trainers.

1. During the pre-game conference of coaches and officials, the official shall remind the head coaches that a school-approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a contest for an apparent head injury.
2. The officials will have no role in determining a concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious, as is provided under the previous

- rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that the player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the school-approved health care provider.
3. If no school-approved health care provider is on site, the athlete may not return to competition that day, and is then subject to the IESA's/IHSA's Return to Play (RTP) Policy before the student-athlete can return to practice or competition.

The Return-to-Play Policy of IESA and IHSA require athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all branches before returning to play or practice following concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest.

4. Following the contest, a report shall be filed by the contest's coaches and shared with the Athletic Director and the IESA Office through the Official's Center if necessary.
5. In cases where an assigned IESA state finals event medical professional is present, his/her decision not to allow an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

What can happen if my child keeps playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after the concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember, it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

GSWB GRADE SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY RULE

The teachers/Athletic Director will notify students if they are ineligible before the end of the day on Friday. Eligibility will be checked at 12:00 p.m.

If a student is failing in one or more classes, he/she is ineligible for practice and playing for seven days. Therefore, if a student is found ineligible, he/she may not practice or play from Monday to Sunday.

If he/she regains eligibility the following week, the student may start to practice and play again on the next day, Monday, through the next Friday. If an athlete is ineligible for 3 consecutive weeks, he/she will be removed from the team.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Date

SAMPLE - DO NOT SIGN

Student/Parent Consent and Acknowledgements for **GSWB Return to Play after a Concussion Protocol**

Student Name (Print): _____ Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

SAMPLE - DO NOT SIGN

GSWB Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment and Pledge

Name of Student: _____

Student Acknowledgement and Pledge

I acknowledge receiving and/or being provided electronic access to the GSWB Athletic Handbook. I have read these materials and understand all rules, responsibilities, and expectations. In order to help keep my school safe, I pledge to adhere to all GSWB rules, policies, and procedures.

I understand that the GSWB Athletic Handbook policies may be amended during the year and that such changes are available on the School District website or in the school office.

I understand that my failure to return this acknowledgment and pledge will not relieve me from being responsible for knowing or complying with school rules, policies, and procedures.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

I acknowledge receiving and/or being provided electronic access to the GSWB Athletic Handbook. I have read these materials and understand all rules, responsibilities, and expectations.

I understand that the GSWB Athletic Handbook policies may be amended during the year and that such changes are available on the School District website or in the school office.

I understand that my failure to return this acknowledgment will not relieve my child or me from being responsible for knowing or complying with school rules, policies, and procedures.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

SAMPLE - DO NOT SIGN