

**ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL  
ATHLETICS**



**2025 - 2026  
STUDENT-ATHLETE / PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

## **Table of Contents**

Welcome Letter from Athletic Director

Ashland Athletics Philosophy

Mission Statement

Governing Bodies

- MIAA
- TVL
- Ashland High School
- Ashland Middle School

## **SPORT OFFERINGS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

Participation Requirements

- Participation Permission Form/Family ID
- Physical Examination
- Concussion Consent and Release Form(online)
- Academic Eligibility
- Health Insurance
- Financial Obligations
  - Ashland Middle School
  - Ashland High School

## **TRYOUTS AND TEAM GOALS**

- Goals of the Middle School Teams
- Goals of the 9th Grade Teams
- Goals of the JV Teams

- Goals of the Varsity Teams
- Commitment to the Team
- Vacation Policy
- Playing Time
- Team Captains
  - Ashland Middle School
  - Ashland High School

## **MIAA SPECIFIC CODES OF CONDUCT**

- Rule 45 - Loyalty to High School Team
- Rule 51 - Student Eligibility: Baseline Eligibility
- Rule 59 - Student Eligibility: Participation Limits
- Rule 60 - Student Eligibility: Age Limitations
- Rule 62 - Student Eligibility: Chemical Health
- Rule 63 - Student Eligibility: In-House or Out-of-House Suspension
- MIAA Playoffs

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Academic Achievement
- School Discipline Obligations
- Transportation
- Attendance / Tardiness School
- Attendance / Tardiness Team
- Out of Season Activity
- Hazing

- Bullying
- Physical Education / Wellness
- Exemption to the PE / Wellness Graduation Requirement
- Sportsmanship
- Language or Gestures
- Team Rules and Regulations
- Disciplinary Action
- Athletic Facilities
  - Fields
  - Gymnasium
  - Weight Room
  - Yoga Room
- Locker Room / Security
- Equipment
- Release from Class
- Conflicts in Extra-Curricular Activities
- Social Media

## **SPORTS MEDICINE | ATHLETIC TRAINING ROOM**

- Athletic Trainer
- Athletic Training Room
- Concussion
- Return to Play
- Doctor's Note
- Emergency Transportation

## **ASHLAND'S ATHLETIC COACHES**

- Expectations
  - Ashland Middle School
  - Ashland High School
- Assessment of Coaches
  - Ashland Middle School
  - Ashland High School
- Student-Athlete/Parent/Guardian Communication Guideline
- Athletic Awards
- Athletics General Criteria
- College/Career Guidance
- Practice & Game Schedules
- Practice Start Times
- Captain Policy
- Parent/Guardian Expectations

## **THE ASHLAND “CLOCKERS”**

Ashland is where Henry E. Warren invented the Warren Synchronizing Timer in 1916. This machine made electric clocks possible by keeping alternating current flowing from power plants at a consistent sixty cycles per second.

In partnership with General Electric, Warren founded Telechron, and manufactured electric clocks in Ashland into the 1980s.

Since the town is famous as the birthplace of the electric clock, the Ashland Public School sports teams have been affectionately named "The Clockers".

## **WELCOME TO ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS**

Welcome to Ashland Athletics and the home of the Clockers! I would like to take this opportunity to share important information regarding the Ashland Athletic Program.

This handbook serves as a valuable tool to reinforce the policies and procedures created with the goal of supporting a well run education-based athletic program.

This handbook includes information regarding practices and regulations that govern our athletic program and should help to answer many of your questions about interscholastic athletics in the Ashland Public Schools. It is intended to help explain what is expected of a Clocker student-athlete and parent.

***Participation in athletics is a privilege.*** Students who elect to participate in athletics are voluntarily making a choice that involves self-discipline and commitment. Only students who comply with the rules and expectations of their team are assured membership on the team. This concept of self-discipline is tempered by the responsibility to recognize the rights of the individual within the framework of a team.

Student-athletes, along with their parents/guardians, make a commitment to the responsibilities and obligations found within this handbook and the Ashland High School Parent/Student Handbook. Please understand that skill improvement, healthy learning experiences, and social and emotional well-being are a focus of the athletic program.

I believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences, both on and off the field. Being a part of a sports team in the Ashland Public Schools can also be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

If your questions and concerns are not answered within this handbook, please speak with a member of our coaching staff or feel free to contact me directly.

Best of luck to all students on their athletic journey and please let me know if I can ever be of assistance. I'll be here cheering on all of our student-athletes. Go Clockers!

**Peter Connery**

**Director of Athletics**

Email: [pconnery@ashland.k12.ma.us](mailto:pconnery@ashland.k12.ma.us)

Office (508) 881-0177 ext. 8022

## PHILOSOPHY

The Interscholastic Athletic Program in Ashland is committed to the physical, emotional, and social development of anyone who participates.

Athletics are an extension of the academic day where our coaching staff is charged with the responsibility of reinforcing the core values of our schools: **Achievement, Involvement, Integrity, Responsibility, and Respect**. We acknowledge that building self-esteem and self-confidence is an ongoing process, achieved in both games and practices. Through this process, Ashland coaches challenge and develop student-athletes, both technically and emotionally, in a positive manner, using both praise and constructive criticism. Coaches are encouraged to make praise personal, and criticism impersonal.

We believe that athletics is a valuable component of education and attempts to provide avenues for all students who want to take part in them. The entire program is based upon these precepts:

- **Winning isn't everything, nor is it the only thing.** Student-athletes cannot possibly learn from winning and losing if they think the only objective is to beat their opponents. However, to play sports without striving to win is to be a dishonest competitor. Every student can experience the true success that comes from trying their best to win. The opportunity to strive for success is the right of every student-athlete.
- **Failure is not the same thing as losing.** Student-athletes should not view losing as a sign of failure or as a threat to their personal values. Student-athletes can learn to persist in the face of obstacles and support each other even when they do not achieve victory.
- **That the highest standards of sportsmanship and fair play will be observed by players, coaches, parents and spectators. That is non-negotiable.** Winning and losing in competition will be placed in their proper perspectives.
- **Representing Ashland is a way to learn responsibility and to build a favorable self-image.** For many student-athletes, participating on a team provides a feeling of belonging. In accordance with this philosophy and the desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic program at Ashland, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as possible without

compromising the integrity of their sport and team. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport.

Ashland pays close attention to its athletic programs. When a school's athletic policy mirrors its academic policy, each enhances the other. When students learn that effort in class brings rewards, they will also learn that effort on the field brings rewards. When students learn that booting a ground ball isn't the end of the world, they will relax and make the play the next time. This lesson will help with taking exams in their proper perspective.

Athletics have an enormous impact upon every student who takes part. Ashland Public Schools ensures that the effect is a positive one.

## **ATHLETIC MISSION STATEMENT**

The Ashland Athletic Program models the vision of the Ashland Public Schools. We provide leadership and support for students by enriching their educational experiences along with their total wellbeing - physical, social, and emotional.

The educational goals for our students will be enhanced through the lifelong learning experiences provided by our athletic program. We do so by the following:

- **Encouraging participation in a wide variety of offerings**
- **By teaching sport skills, improving physical conditioning and developing good health habits and how to avoid injuries**
- **Psychologically, by teaching how to manage their emotions and develop a higher level of self-esteem feelings**
- **Socially, by teaching cooperation and respect in a competitive context, and by practicing appropriate standards of behavior.**



These standards are defined by the state association, league, and school requirements/guidelines.

- **Emphasizing respecting differences and accepting diversity.**

Students and coaches are expected to demonstrate proper respect for teammates, opponents, officials, spectators and property.

- **Expressing the importance of Sportsmanship.**

Student-athletes and coaches are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct, both on and off the playing field, as they are, at all times, representatives of their team, school and community.

- **Evaluating, by ensuring that our athletic, professional, and personal efforts progress regularly.**

Success is measured by more than wins and losses as winning and losing become by-products of the quality of our efforts. A dynamic athletic program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students.

- **Fostering moral awareness and civic participation.**

An example of our daily behavior. We offer opportunities to serve the school and develop fellowship and goodwill. We encourage the qualities of good citizenship and the ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity throughout our school and community.

## **GOVERNING BODIES**

### **Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA):**

Ashland High School is a member in good standing of the MIAA. With membership, the School's Principal agrees to abide by all rules and regulations of the MIAA. All schools are voluntary members of the MIAA and compete only with member schools. As a member, Ashland agrees to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations of the association.

The primary role of the state association is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the student/athletes and a balance with other educational programs. The association solicits input and is responsive to requests for rule modification from member schools, appointed committees, and coaches' associations. The state association attempts to enforce such rules that assure the

greatest good for the greatest number and to ensure that competition is conducted in an appropriate manner.

One of the primary functions of the MIAA is to sponsor and conduct post-season tournaments leading to the determination of geographical district and state champions. When our varsity teams qualify for and enter such tournaments, we are completely subject to the specific rules and regulations that govern each tournament as set by the MIAA. Tournament qualification, divisional placement and geographical district criteria are sport specific. Some of our teams may qualify for regional tournaments beyond the MIAA tournaments that are sponsored and conducted by the combined state associations that make up the region of competition.

Some of our varsity teams may host and/or play in seasonal tournaments that are sponsored by local school districts or other qualified agencies. MIAA regulations specify that such tournaments be sanctioned by the Association and be conducted totally under their policies, rules and regulations. The MIAA does not sanction or sponsor any sub-varsity tournament competition. The MIAA is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations and is bound by their set of rules, policies and regulations.

### **The Tri-Valley League:**

Ashland is a member of the Tri-Valley League (TVL). The TVL is governed by the MIAA and its own constitution. The Principal of each member school agrees that his/her school will abide by all league rules and regulations. Several sports compete within the South Sectional depending upon the sport and number of participating schools.

Ashland is a voluntary member of the TVL. This league was established for the primary purpose of promoting selected interscholastic activities among member schools and the assurance of such advantages that may be gained by a unified effort.

The conference membership facilitates the arranging of schedules, equalizing competition, conducting league meets, and determining league championships. The TVL provides the opportunity for competition without excess travel and with schools of similar athletic philosophy. League membership implies abiding by conference schedules, rules, and regulations. Member schools are Ashland, Bellingham, Dedham, Dover-Sherborn, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medway, Medfield, Millis, Norton, Norwood, and Westwood.

**Ashland High School:**

Additional policies, regulations, and rules are set by the Ashland School Committee and the Principal. Under MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set additional policies, rules and regulations so long as they are more restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA.

**Ashland Middle School:**

Additional policies, regulations, and rules are set by the Ashland School Committee and the Principal. Under MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set additional policies, rules and regulations so long as they are more restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA.

**INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORT OFFERINGS AND LEVELS**

Fall Sports	Varsity	Junior Varsity	Freshmen	Middle School
Football	x	x	x	x
Cheerleading	x			
Cross Country, Boys & Girls	x			x
Field Hockey	x	x		x
Golf (Co-ed)	x			
Volleyball- Girls	x	x	x	x
Soccer, Boys and Girls	x	x	X (boys)	x

Winter Sports	Varsity	Junior Varsity	Freshmen	Middle School
Basketball, Boys and Girls	x	x	x(boys)	x
Ice Hockey Boys (Co Op w/ Holliston)	x	x		
Ice Hockey Girls (Co Op)	x			
Indoor Track (Boys and Girls)	x			
Cheerleading	x			
Gymnastics (MADS-Co-Op with D/S & Medfield)	x			
Wrestling (Coed)	x	x		
Swim & Dive (Coed)	x			
Alpine Ski (Coed & Co-Op with Medfield)	x			

Spring Sports	Varsity	Junior Varsity	Freshmen	Middle School
Baseball	x	x	x	x
Softball	x	x		x
Lacrosse, Boys & Girls	x	x		
Tennis, Boys & Girls	x			
Track, Boys & Girls	x			x

## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

### REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY FOR PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AT ASHLAND

#### Pre-Tryout Requirements:

A student must be declared eligible by the Athletic Director according to the standards listed in this section before he/she will be allowed to try out for a team.

#### 1. REGISTRATION (ONLINE- FamilyID)

A parent/guardian must complete the registration prior to the first tryout/practice session. This must be completed for each athletic season of involvement. The information from the registration process provides the Athletic Department and coaches with the necessary information for the Emergency Contact Forms.

The registration portal will open and close on specific dates set by the Athletic Director. The portal will close on a date published by the Athletic Department prior to the start of a sports season, which allows time for the Athletic Director to declare student-athletes eligible. Once the registration portal closes, the Athletic Director may reopen the portal for late registrations.

Students who register late must sit out one practice unless prior authorization from the Principal or Athletic Director.

Information regarding registration can be found by following this link  
<http://athletics.ashland.k12.ma.us/teams-schedules/participation>

## **2. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

The MIAA Board of Directors voted on Thursday June 7, 2012 to adhere to the Department of Public Health's policy regarding the physical exam required for participation in athletics. In order to be in compliance with the state regulation, physical exams will be required every thirteen months to the day of the exam. For example if a student-athlete has a physical exam dated September 14, 2018 that exam will expire on October 14, 2019. Meaning as of October 15, 2019 the student-athlete becomes ineligible to practice or compete until they present proof of a current physical exam to the Athletic Director. If a student/athlete's physical exam has expired, he/she will not be able to participate in any sports related activities (practices, games, conditioning).

Parents need to make certain that their child has a current physical exam that will last the **duration of the season**, or schedule a doctor's appointment as soon as possible to have an updated physical exam. There will be no exceptions to this rule. **There will be no extensions granted based upon a doctor's note.** Physicals from walk-in clinics are accepted if you cannot make an appointment to see your physician.

All Sports Physicals are kept on file in the Athletic Office. An up-to-date copy of the student-athlete's physical must be on file in the Athletic Office prior to the student trying out for a sport. We do not share information with the school nurses and coaches are not allowed to accept physicals from student-athletes or parents. Physicals, for both high school and middle school students, can be mailed to the high school (65 E. Union St), dropped off in the front office of the high school or emailed to the Athletic Director.

## **3. CONCUSSION CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM**

As part of the ONLINE registration, the parent/guardian of each student-athlete must "agree & sign" that they have read the Ashland Public Schools School Committee policy on concussions and protocol for return to play.

Families are encouraged to familiarize themselves with signs and symptoms of any type of head trauma. Among the many online resources, families should pay particular attention to the information provided on the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the state of Massachusetts websites. A free concussion course offered by NFHS. Information on this course can be found by following this link <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/61037/concussion-in-sports>

#### **4. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

The first priority for students, their parents, and the school must be on the achievement of appropriate academic goals. While those goals will differ for each student, there is a minimum standard that all students must achieve in order to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics in the Ashland Public Schools.

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Ashland High School is a privilege earned by students in good academic and behavioral standing. This policy shall define academic good standing for the purpose of interscholastic athletics.

##### **Ashland High School Academic Eligibility**

AHS Standard: Students shall be considered in good standing if, in the marking period prior to participation (Q4 for Fall Sports), ***they have passed five subject areas which factor into a student's GPA. Classes which are deemed Pass/Fail will not qualify as a course eligible for participation in athletics or other co-curricular activities.***

Any student receiving services under an IEP may be declared academically eligible by the Principal provided that all other eligibility requirements are met.

MIAA Standards: In no case shall a student who does not meet MIAA standards be allowed to participate in ***co-curricular*** activity at Ashland High School. The MIAA standards are promulgated for the purposes of participation in interscholastic sports. However, in order to treat all students at Ashland High School equitably, regardless of what form of ***co-curricular*** activity they choose to pursue, the MIAA standard shall be applied to all students and activities.

Students who meet MIAA eligibility requirements, but do not meet Ashland's may be offered a **ONE TIME academic contract** through the Athletic Department and School Administration.

Student-athletes must be enrolled in a minimum of six subjects. A student-athlete must also have secured a passing grade in at least five of the subjects, or equivalent during the marking period preceding the first day of tryouts. If a report card is issued during a season, the grades on that report card determine eligibility for the remainder of the season.

Any student-athlete ineligible to start a season may try out and practice on a team, but can not compete interscholastically until they are deemed academically eligible (on the next marking period). Likewise any student deemed ineligible during a season, may

continue to practice on the team, but can not complete interscholastically until he or she receives the next report card and is deemed eligible. All freshmen are given a clean slate and are eligible for the fall season regardless of 8th grade final grades.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT ASHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Extra-curricular activities include interscholastic and intramural sports, clubs/activities, field trips. Participation in extracurricular activities at Ashland Middle School is a privilege earned by students in academic and behavioral good standing.

Each student shall be considered in good standing by maintaining a 70% average in all subjects, and adhering to the behavioral expectations of the AMS community. If a student is in danger of falling below a 70%, teachers will communicate this information to the principal and assistant principal. Students will meet with administration and a success contract will be put into place. Students may not return to the team or activity until teachers indicate that the student has returned to good academic standing. In the case of fall interscholastic sports, the Third trimester grades of the previous school year will be used to determine eligibility.

## **5. ATHLETIC USER FEES**

The Department of Athletics is authorized by the Ashland School Committee to collect Athletic User Fees from each student-athlete. User fees can be submitted in the form of checks, money orders, or cash only. Checks or money orders should be made payable to: Ashland Public Schools.

**Financial Aid:** The **Athletic Fee Waiver Form** must be filled out if you need to be considered for a financial waiver. To request a waiver you must provide proof of income (last year's tax return or a pay stub with YTD earnings) from **ALL** family members living in the child's/children's home.

If a family applies for financial aid and is not approved to receive aid, they will be permitted to set up a payment plan over the course of an athletic season. If the financial obligations of a student/athlete are not met by graduation, the Athletic Director will not be permitted to sign off on a student's graduation requirements.

**Any student who has not paid their Athletic fee, applied for a waiver, or set up a payment plan with the Athletic Director will not be given a uniform for that season until they have done so.**

Requests for refunds must be made directly to the Athletic Director. Guidelines for refunds will be:

- a. If an athlete is cut from the squad following the tryout period.
- b. If an athlete suffers a season-ending injury prior to or during the first regular season contest.
- c. If an athlete quits, at any time, there will be **no** refund.
- d. If an athlete is removed from the team for any school or MIAA rule violation, there will be **no** refund.

The 2025-2026 Athletic User Fee has been set on a variable scale for high school athletics and \$230 for Middle School athletics with no family cap.

Sport	Fee
Girls Ice Hockey	\$450
Football	\$300
Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Soccer, Golf, Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Swim & Dive, Lacrosse, Baseball, Softball, Tennis	\$290
Cross-Country, Track, ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS	\$230
Gymnastics Co Op	User fee set by host school Medfield
Boys Ice Hockey	User fee set by host school Holliston
Alpine Ski	\$350

**Playing Time:** The payment of the user fee will not influence the amount of playing time an individual student-athlete receives. It will be up to each coach to determine the amount of playing time a student-athlete receives.

### **TRYOUT/TEAM SELECTIONS**

Students try out voluntarily and for some programs, there is a risk of not making the team. It is the judgment of the coaching staff that determines the selection and number of participants for teams. That number is based on several factors. Cutting students is a difficult process, and all coaches realize that sensitivity and communication are essential. All students are given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their abilities prior to the selection of teams. During the tryout period the coach will provide an explanation of



his or her expectations. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate that they can meet those expectations.

Students who do not make a team will be informed of the reason and offered alternative possibilities for participation in the sport or in other areas of the athletic department. Students are encouraged to try out for another team if there is space and if final cuts have not yet been made.

After tryouts begin, no student-athlete may voluntarily leave a team and try out for another without the consent of both coaches and the Athletic Director. It is important to note that before holding tryouts, the coach will provide the following information to all candidates trying out for the team:

- Extent of the tryout period
- Criteria used to select the team
- Practice commitment if they make the team
- Game commitments

If a student-athlete is injured before the tryout period begins, they must provide a doctor's note to the Coach, Athletic Director, and Athletic Trainer. The student will only be permitted to try out for the team once he/she is medically cleared to play by a doctor and our Athletic Trainer. At that time the student-athlete will be given the same opportunity the other student-athletes had to make the team. The Head Coach makes the final decision on whether the student-athlete makes the team.

Please keep in mind that the emphasis at each level of competition (listed below) and that per MIAA rules, seniors are not permitted to play on a junior varsity team.

:

- VARSITY - **VERY COMPETITIVE / INSTRUCTIONAL**
- JUNIOR VARSITY – **COMPETITIVE / INSTRUCTIONAL**
- FRESHMAN – **INSTRUCTIONAL**
- MIDDLE SCHOOL - **INSTRUCTIONAL**

### **Goals for Middle School and 9th Grade Teams/Student-Athletes**

- Introduce and develop the skills and rules of the sport
- Present an opportunity for an athlete to experience a specific sport
- Introduce student-athletes to interscholastic competition
- Allow a student-athlete to explore further study in a specific sport
- Give all participants playing time in all games, assuming that athletes have attended practice, worked to their potential, have the proper attitude, and have committed to the team

### **Goals for Junior Varsity Teams/Student Athletes**

- Further develop the skills and knowledge of the sport
- Increase the intensity of the competition
- Prepare for the varsity level in that sport
- Give all participants playing time based upon practice attendance, work ethic, attitude, commitment to the team and athletic skill

When ninth graders have demonstrated an advanced level of ability, they may be placed on a junior varsity or varsity team after agreement among the student-athlete, his/her parents, and the coach.

### **Goals for Varsity Teams/Student-Athletes**

- Develop skills and knowledge to their highest level
- Allow student-athletes the chance to excel and prepare them for future competitions
- Compete for League, Sectional and State Championships
- Expect all members to be role models and mentors for younger students

There is a possibility that students may be cut during tryouts. There are many decisions made on a regular basis by members of our coaching staff. These include: which athletes should start a contest, who should play what position and the amount of playing time. These decisions are made by members of the coaching staff only.

The most competitive, skilled team members will play the major portion of contests. However, teams cannot be successful without committed substitutes or "role players." These athletes push the starters, and can help make the team more competitive. They must also strive to do their best.

## COMMITMENT TO THE TEAM

When trying out for and after being selected to be a member of a team, Ashland student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and games of that team. Weekend practice sessions vary by sport and should be expected. Interscholastic athletics demands much more commitment than a club or recreational activity.

***Missing a team practice or game for another event can affect playing time in future games and lead to disciplinary actions.***

### School / Family Vacations, Extended Absences

Every team member is expected to be present for all team practices and games. Because of scheduling parameters, many of our teams practice and play during scheduled school vacations. Students who plan to be absent for an extended period of time due to vacation or a planned extended absence should discuss their situation with the coach as soon as possible. Specific roles on athletic teams will not be held for student-athletes who are absent for extended periods of time or vacations.

### Playing Time

Perhaps the most emotional part of a student-athlete's involvement in athletics centers around playing time. Factors such as practice attendance, attitude, commitment and athletic skill enter into the playing time decisions of the coach. It is the coach's responsibility to decide which student-athletes should start a contest, who should play what position, and how long each student-athlete should play. These coaching decisions, often difficult to make, are made only by the coaching staff and are approached very seriously after having observed the student-athletes in practice sessions, game-like situations, scrimmages and actual game competitions.

### Team Captains

Being a captain is a privilege, and with that privilege comes great responsibility. Captains are expected to be fully committed to the team and be in attendance at all practices, games, and events. **A Captain is held to a higher standard than other teammates.** A Captain is expected to model what is expected of all the members of the program such as attitude, behavior, responsibility, and dependability on and off campus. A Captain represents their team, coaches, the Ashland Community and themselves in fulfilling duties and responsibilities of the team. Team Captains are leaders of their team and should be ready to assume duties as outlined by their coach. Captains are expected to communicate with the coach, team, and Athletic Director in the event of any problems that may affect the team or its members. Captains may be asked to meet with the Athletic Director during the school year to discuss the athletic program. Captains of

teams may be relieved of their position for violation of team, athletic department or school rules. Any captains found in violation of Rule 62: Student Eligibility: Chemical Health / Alcohol / Drugs / Tobacco will have their captaincy revoked in addition to the loss of eligibility as described under the MIAA code of conduct. Violations of Rule 62 can be taken into consideration when applying for future captainship.

### **Captainship at the Varsity Level:**

A student-athlete must apply for captainship at the varsity level. If a student-athlete is a returning captain from the previous year, the Head Varsity Coach may name them captain again without an application at the Varsity Head Coach's discretion.

A candidate will go through the following process to be chosen as captain:

1. Complete application with completed responses and signatures (Student and Parent)
2. Obtain two teacher recommendations

The following may also be taken into consideration.

3. Interview with the Varsity Coach, which can also include any members of his coaching staff, and the Athletic Director.
4. Attitude, behavior, actions, and skills demonstrated during previous year
5. Opportunity to speak to teammates
6. Team vote

The final selection of Captains is up to the determination of the Head Varsity Coach. The coach also reserves the right to remove/replace the Captain or Captains if needed. The number of captains will be at the discretion of the Varsity Head Coach (at least 2 with a maximum of 4).

### **Captainship at the Junior Varsity/Freshman Level:**

Captainship at the Junior Varsity and Freshman Level are determined by the coach for each team. All student-athletes who are selected at this level should be in good academic standing and maintain the values listed previously under the Team Captains section. The final selection of Captains is up to the determination of the Head Coach. The coach also reserves the right to remove/replace the Captain or Captains if needed. If a coach chooses to, they may use the Varsity Application process to select their captains.

### **Captainship at the Middle School Level:**

Captainship at the Middle School Level is determined by the coach for each team. All student-athletes who are selected at this level should be in good academic standing and maintain the values listed previously under the Team Captains section. The final selection of Captains is up to the determination of the Head Coach. The coach also reserves the right to remove/replace the Captain or Captains if needed. Coaches are also permitted to select captains on a game to game basis at this level.

### **MIAA SPECIFIC CODES OF CONDUCT**

The community, school administrators and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics. The welfare of the student/athlete is our main consideration and transcends any other consideration. All athletes are expected to abide by all school rules as well as the rules of the Tri-Valley League (TVL) and the MIAA.

**The following are requirements for participation after being selected for a team at AHS and AMS.**

### **MIAA RULES AND REGULATIONS**

All Ashland Public School athletic teams will follow the rules set down in the current MIAA handbook, which is available on the MIAA website at: [www.miaa.net](http://www.miaa.net). The entire handbook is also available in the athletic office. Student-athletes are responsible for adhering to all MIAA rules and regulations. Below are some key rules:

#### **Rule 45 Loyalty to the High School Team: Bona Fide Team Members**

A bona fide team member is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all High School team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity / event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. Any student who violates this standard is ineligible for the next two contests or two weeks (whichever is greater) immediately upon confirmation of the violation. (see rule 95.1 for additional tournament restriction.) Rule 95.1 states: Any student who violates this standard becomes ineligible for the MIAA tournament(s) in that sport for that season.

A coach does not have the right or authority to excuse a team member from practice or a contest so that he/she may practice or compete with a non-school team. The principal may request a waiver of this rule in special circumstances and that waiver must be completed at least 60 days prior to non-school participation.

**Rule 51 Student Eligibility: Baseline Eligibility Requirement**

For a student to practice with, or to represent a MIAA member school in athletic competition, the student must be duly enrolled in that school. Additionally, the student must be a candidate for that school's diploma, subject to the jurisdiction of that school's Principal (i.e. the Principal must have the authority to suspend the student from classes), and under the supervision of that school Principal (i.e. the Principal must have control and knowledge of the student's daily attendance and achievement).

**Rule 59 Student Eligibility**

Time Allowed for Participation After Completing Grade Eight. A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive athletic seasons beyond the first completion of grade 8.

**Rule 60 Student Eligibility: Age Limitations**

A student shall be under 19 years of age, but may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that his/her 19th birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year.

For Freshman competition, a student shall be under 16 years of age but may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that his/her 16th birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year.

**Rule 62 Student Eligibility: Chemical Health / Alcohol / Drugs / Tobacco:**

From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product(including e-cigarettes, VAPE pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as "NA or near beer". It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor. This MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render "guilt by association", e.g. many student-athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate this standard. If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again.

**At Ashland High School, this rule is in effect from the first scheduled practice date for any sport in the fall until the completion of the final sport team in the spring or the end of the academic year, whichever comes last.**

## Minimum PENALTIES:

### First violation:

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport.

No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student continue to participate in practice. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season in which the student will participate.

### **Minimum penalty / 25% loss of eligibility: (examples)**

1-7 Game season = 1 Game suspension

8-11 Game season = 2 Game suspension

12-15 Game season = 3 Game suspension

16-19 Game Season = 4 Game Suspension

20+ Game Season = 5 Game Suspension

### Second and subsequent violations:

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport.

If after the second or subsequent violations the student of his/her own volition becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events **provided the student was fully engaged in the program throughout that penalty period. The high school principal in collaboration with a Chemical Dependency Program or Treatment Program** must certify that the student is attending or issue a certificate of completion. If the student does not complete a program, the penalty reverts back to 60% of the season.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year, **but serving the penalty could carry over for one year. Or**, if the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year. **(e.g. A student plays only football: he violates the rule in winter and/or the spring of the same academic year: he would serve the penalty [ies] during the fall season of the next academic year).**

**Rule 63**

Student-athletes may not represent their school if they are on in-house or out-of-house disciplinary suspension. This means the student-athlete is prohibited from participating in practices or games until the disciplinary suspension is completed.

**MIAA Playoff Eligibility Rule 98**

Each Student Participant Must Be A Bona Fide Team Member 98.1 A bona fide member of the school team is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non school activity/event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. Any student who violates this standard twice becomes ineligible for the MIAA tournament(s) in that sport for that season.

**ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT**

In Ashland, student-athletes are expected and encouraged to maintain the highest level of scholastic achievement possible. They are also expected to maintain the highest level of citizenship. To promote these goals the following are in effect:

**Academic Achievement**

Scholastic “extra help” sessions and make-up work are expected to be completed as soon as possible. On a practice day students should stay after school to complete work whenever necessary. Coaches should be informed by students, in advance, when practice time will be missed due to academic obligations.

Once the obligations are completed, students are expected to report to practice on that day, as soon as possible. If students did not give advance notification to the coach, students should ask their teacher for a note explaining the tardiness. Students arriving late to practices due to make-up work or extra help will not suffer any athletic team penalty.

The athletic department reserves the right to remove a student from a team for poor academic performance and may reinstate the student upon sufficient evidence of improvement.

Coaches may request a written “Academic Progress Reports” when it becomes known that a student is performing poorly in the classroom.



### **School Discipline Obligations**

A student-athlete with a school disciplinary obligation (either office or teacher detention) is expected to fulfill the disciplinary obligation before reporting to an athletic practice and /or game. Disciplinary action will not be postponed or canceled for any athletic reason.

Student-athletes who have out-of-school suspension are not allowed to participate in athletics until their suspension is completed. The athletic department reserves the right to remove or suspend a student-athlete from a team for disciplinary problems. It is expected that our student-athletes be model citizens both in and out of school and they will be held to high standards and should set a positive example for all students.

### **Transportation**

All participants will travel to and return from all events in school provided transportation. With approval from the Athletic Director, students are able to return from events with a parent/guardian, if parents/guardians send an email to the coach and Athletic Director the day of the contest before noon. Students may return from a contest only with parents/guardians, upon prior approval of the Athletic Director.

### **Attendance/Tardiness – School**

Any student absent from school may not participate in or attend practice or competition that day, unless prior approval of the Principal has been given. Students must be in attendance at school **before 9:23 AM** to participate in any meeting, practice or game unless prior approval for absence is granted by the Principal or designee. In addition, student-athletes may not be dismissed **prior to 1:42 PM** unless prior approval of the Principal has been given. On early release days, students must be in attendance for the entire school day in order to participate in any meeting, practice or game unless prior approval for absence is granted by the principal or designee. Students dismissed from school due to illness, may not return to school for participation in practices or athletic contests. Any athletes competing in an MIAA Tournament game must be present for the entire school day to participate in that tournament game, unless prior approval is provided by the Principal and Athletic Director.

### **Attendance/Team**

It is extremely important that a coach be **notified in advance** if a student is **not** going to be present at a practice or a game. Student-athletes are expected to be present at all team related activities. Suspension or dismissal from the team may take place because of such absences. Students are excused from team activities for illness, injury, academic help sessions, family emergencies or religious reasons. Prior notification is strongly recommended and expected of the student-athlete.

### **Out of Season Activity**

A coach may not directly or indirectly require an athlete to participate in a sport or a training program outside of the MIAA defined sport season. Voluntary conditioning sessions open equally to all students in a school which are entirely devoid of sports-specific activity may be conducted between seasons provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so.

***“Captains Practices” are not in any way sanctioned, encouraged, recognized or condoned in any sport by the MIAA or Ashland High School.***

### **Hazing**

Any Ashland student-athlete involved in any form of hazing will be expelled for the team and subject to administrative disciplinary action and possible police intervention. Coaches will review the hazing laws with teams at their pre-season team meeting.

#### **MGL, Chapter 269: Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined**

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment. The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

#### **MGL Chapter 269: Section 18. Failure to report hazing**

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

**MGL Chapter 269: Section 19. Copy of Secs. 17 to 19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report**

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of postsecondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations. Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such

reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

## **Bullying**

Any Ashland student-athlete involved in any form of bullying will be expelled from the team and subject to administrative disciplinary action and possible police intervention. Please read below for the [\*\*Ashland Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan\*\*](#) regarding the bullying policy. Coaches will review the bullying policy with teams at their pre-season team meeting.

Bullying, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37O, means the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include cyberbullying. Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a: wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including but not limited to: electronic mail, internet communications, instant messaging or facsimile communications.

It is important for all members of the community to understand that conflict is not automatically synonymous with bullying. Arguing, bantering back and forth, ignoring, roughhousing and fighting, while potentially serious forms of conflict; are not necessarily instances of bullying. **Bullying is characterized by intention, repetition, and power imbalance.** Not every conflict meets these criteria.

In Ashland students are expected to behave in a friendly and respectful manner. Our goal is to maintain a positive environment, which promotes learning and contributes to each child's social, emotional, academic and physical development.

It is the responsibility of the building Principal or his/her designee to make clear to students and staff that bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation or harassment in the school building, on school grounds, on our school buses or school sanctioned transportation, or at school sponsored functions will not be tolerated. The Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention procedures, including investigating all charges of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Please refer to Appendix A which includes a draft district wide process, draft forms, and procedures to support the reporting, response and investigation.

Reporting bullying or retaliation: The Ashland Public School Staff members are required to immediately report to the Principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

**Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witness or has reliable information about bullying.**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents, or guardians, or others. This can be in oral or written form, face to face, via telephone or by email when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation.

### **Physical Education/Wellness**

All athletes are required to participate in regularly scheduled Physical Education Wellness classes. Students being medically excused from Physical Education will not be allowed to participate in their team's practice or game on that day. All class attendance rules apply to Physical Education classes.

### **Exemption to the Physical Education/ Wellness Graduation Requirement**

Students in grades 11-12 at Ashland High School who successfully complete one full season of Ashland High School interscholastic athletics may be excused from taking physical education classes for that particular year. The waiver form can be found in the Program of Studies in the PE/Wellness section.

### **Waiver Application/Request Requirements**

- A student must be an athlete in 11th or 12th grade
- The student must participate in a sport during the Fall or Winter Season or Spring Season of their junior year
- The student must complete the Waiver Application Form the day after the varsity team is established
- The Waiver Application Form must be signed by the student, parent/guardian and coach before approval is given by the Athletic Director and Principal

- The student must be at practices or games each day of the season unless an excused absence is provided per the student handbook
- If a student leaves the athletic program for any reason, he/she will be required to return to the regular Health/Wellness class immediately.

### **Impact on Graduation Requirements**

Those students excused from taking high school physical education/wellness courses their junior or senior year are still required to meet the graduation credit requirement of 1 credit in physical education/wellness.

### **Successful Completion of a Season**

Successful completion of a season, in the case of interscholastic athletics and cheerleading, means that a student has completed all required activities and is a member in good standing of the team or group and is eligible for end of season awards/recognition.

### **Sportsmanship**

Ashland Public School expects **all** parties at a contest to display the highest possible level of sportsmanship before, during and after the competition. Players, coaches and spectators are expected to treat opponents, game officials, and visiting spectators with the respect and class we speak about in our philosophy.

The MIAA reserves the right to “warn, censure, place on probation, or suspend up to one calendar year any player, coach, game or school official, or school determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship”. Ashland High School in turn, reserves the right to impose the same penalties on spectators displaying poor sportsmanship at any of our contests, home or away.

The Ashland community values good sportsmanship not only from our athletes and coaches, but also from our spectators. The level of sportsmanship is not determined solely by behavior on the day of the game. It starts long before competition commences at any level. Traits learned in our youth programs, with reinforcement through family attitudes and values, all influence the ongoing development of sportsmanship as our student-athletes progress through the various levels of competition

Some general guidelines for all to follow are:

1. Appreciate good play-no matter who makes it
2. Show compassion for injured players

3. Do not jeer/ taunt opponents
4. Do not use profane language
5. Avoid obnoxious cheers
6. Respect the judgment of calls by officials
7. Keep in mind that Ashland Public School is judged not only by its team's performance and behavior, but also by that of its student and adult fans.

### **Intent to Injure Rule**

The MIAA rule number 49.7 states “any student in any sport” (in the opinion of the game official) who willfully, flagrantly or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent shall be removed from the contest immediately, and shall not participate in **any sport season** for one year from the date of the incident. “Fighting” does not apply to this section unless warranted in the judgment of the game official.

### **Language or gestures**

Profane, derogatory and abusive language or gestures during any team related or school activity is strictly prohibited.

### **Team Rules and Regulations:**

At the start of each season a coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director, may issue a set of team expectations. These expectations, which are not to be in conflict with any regulations of the school or MIAA, may vary to reflect the program philosophy, the nature of the sport and the practice/competition schedule. Violations of these rules may result in temporary or permanent suspension from the team.

### **Disciplinary Action**

The Athletic Department (Head Coach, Athletic Director or designee) may impose disciplinary action for violations established in this Student-Athlete/Parent Handbook. Sanctions may vary depending on the type and circumstances of a violation, but may include suspension, loss of athletic eligibility and the privilege to be nominated for postseason accolades (i.e. all-star team, media awards).

A coach and/or Athletic Director or Principal shall determine if a violation of the athletic rules and regulations has occurred. In all cases, infractions of any type must be reported to the Athletic Director, whether action is taken or not. If disciplinary action is taken, (including temporary or permanent suspension, censure, or reprimand) an athlete may have his or her case reviewed upon request.

Review procedure:

1. The student and /or parents/guardians may meet with the Coach and Athletic Director. This request must occur within 2 school days of the disciplinary decision by the Coach.
2. If not satisfied, the student and/or parents/guardians may ask to meet with the Principal, Athletic Director, and Coach.
3. Final decision on these matters rests with the Principal.

### **Athletic Facilities/Building Access**

Ashland Middle School and High School Student-Athletes, along with coaches, parents/guardians, and spectators are privileged to have some of the best facilities in the Tri Valley League. Student-athletes, along with coaches, families, and spectators are expected to treat these facilities with the utmost respect. Student-athletes are expected to clean up their bench area of trash, debris, and equipment once a practice or contest is completed. Coaches are expected to oversee and ensure the cleanliness of their team's bench, locker room, and playing surface after each practice or contest. No student-athletes will be allowed access to any of the athletic facilities without supervision by a school staff member.

### **Fields**

Student-Athletes and coaches are expected to clean up after all practices and contests. It is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that garbage is disposed of properly after the team uses a facility. It is the responsibility of the teams to ensure that all equipment used during games and practices are properly stored away after practices and contests. If a team has use of the press box during a practice or game, that team is responsible for cleaning and locking the press box once the practice or contest is completed. Fields can be reserved by individual teams through the athletic office throughout the year with approval from the Athletic Director.

### **Gymnasium**

No student-athlete is allowed access to the gymnasium without appropriate supervision by a school staff member. Student-athletes and coaches are expected to clean up garbage and equipment after using the gymnasium for practices and contests. It is the responsibility of the teams to ensure that all equipment used during games and practices are properly stored away after practices and contests. Gymnasiums can be reserved by individual teams through the athletic office throughout the year with approval of the Athletic Director.



## **Weight Room/Yoga Room**

The weight room/yoga room is run by the Wellness Department and Athletic Department. When open and supervised, it is available for all students unless it has been reserved as an in-season site for a practice session. Students/athletes are not allowed in the weight room unless supervised by a staff member. Student-athletes and coaches are expected to abide by the following rules regarding usage of the weight room/yoga room. If the student/athletes and or coaches do not abide by the following rules the Athletic Director reserves the right to close the weight room/yoga room once the school day is complete.

- Student-athletes must be supervised at all times within the weight room/yoga room
- Student-athletes and coaches are expected to clean up all garbage, debris, and equipment after using the facilities
- All free weights should be removed from bars and put away in their appropriate place.
- Dumbbells, bars, mats, etc...must be returned to their appropriate place.
- All equipment, including yoga mats, bands, dumbbells, etc..., shall remain in the weight room or yoga room and returned to their appropriate places

Student-athletes are expected to respect the locker room facilities, showers, and general areas of the athletic wing. We expect the student athletes to take pride in their facilities by using trash barrels and keeping their athletic facilities in good condition. Glass containers of any kind are not allowed in the locker rooms or gymnasiums at any time. At no time should shoes with cleated soles or spikes be worn inside the building. Serious injury can occur from slipping on the concrete or tiled surface, as well as causing damage to the flooring.

## **Locker Rooms/Security**

Students are responsible for all athletic equipment issued to them as well as personal belongings. The athlete is responsible for the proper care of their equipment from the date of issue, to the date of return. Equipment and uniforms should be stored in a locked locker at all times (locks are provided for each athlete) when not in use. Valuables can be locked up by coaches in their office or in the coach's room. Experience has shown that most losses are due to unsecured lockers. Ashland Public Schools cannot be responsible for the personal belongings of student-athletes.

## **Equipment**

Payment of lost equipment is required prior to the start of next season the students-athlete participates in or graduation, whichever comes first. No student will be allowed to try out for another sport until all outstanding equipment has been returned or payment to replace lost equipment has been made to the athletic department.

Student-athletes are not permitted to wear school issued uniforms at any time other than for practices or game competitions. If a student-athlete leaves the team during the season due to injury, academics, discipline or quitting, it is his/her responsibility to return all school equipment immediately. If a student loses school equipment or fails to return the assigned equipment in satisfactory condition, they are responsible to meet the current replacement cost of the equipment. The Athletic Director cannot sign off on a student-athlete's graduation requirements unless all Ashland Athletic uniforms and/or equipment are not returned to the Athletic Office by the time of graduation.

## **Release from Class**

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to see his/her teacher before the classes that will be missed because of an away athletic contest, ceremony, or other event offered by the MIAA. All work shall be made up at the convenience of the teacher. Distance and transportation limitations are the primary reasons for early dismissals. The Athletic Department will make every effort possible to schedule contests so that classes will not be missed.

## **Conflicts in Extracurricular Activities**

Students who attempt to participate in several extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict of obligations. The athletic department recognizes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in extracurricular activities. Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts are bound to happen. It also means notifying the faculty, advisors and coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise. When a conflict arises, the advisors/coaches will work out a solution so the student is not caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the Athletic Director and or principal will make a decision.

## **Social Media**

Teams are encouraged to use social media outlets to help promote their programs. Social media outlets can be utilized to communicate information to student-athletes, parents/guardians, and the community, and post scores and accolades such as all-star selections and achievements throughout the season.

Any hazing, cyber bullying, or inappropriate use of social media is expected to be reported to the Athletic Director or Principal immediately. Following along with the policies regarding hazing and bullying, student-athletes may be disciplined according to these policies. Any inappropriate use of social media may result in the removal of that student-athlete from their specific team as well as school consequences if found to be in violation of the student/parent handbook.

## **Sports Medicine/Athletic Training**

### **Athletic Trainer**

Ashland is fortunate to have a full time, licensed Athletic Trainer (ATC) to evaluate and treat injuries as they occur. The athletic trainer provides medical coverage for athletic contests and practices on school days. The athletic trainer is available from 2:00 PM until duties and responsibilities are completed. On weekends and school vacations, the athletic trainer will be available by appointment only, and/or with prior approval/consent of the ATC and Athletic Director. When there are simultaneous contests, the athletic trainer will cover the sport or location with the greatest risk of injury. The athletic trainer is legally obligated to cover all home football events, which will take precedence over all other non-emergent situations. In the event of injury, the athletic trainer will evaluate and recommend the direction of care. If the athletic trainer is not present, the head coach will follow the steps outlined in the emergency action plan and will notify the athletic trainer of the injury at their earliest convenience.

At many away contests the visiting team will provide athletic training coverage. The hosting athletic trainer holds the same authority to disqualify an athlete from play due to injury as the Ashland athletic trainer.

### **Athletic Training Room**

Students are never allowed into the athletic training room unsupervised. The athletic training room is a medical facility and stores private medical information. Students left unattended in the Training Room can be considered a HIPAA violation. The athletic training room should be treated with the same respect as all school facilities and should be left clean and orderly. Cleats should not be worn in the athletic training room, and muddy shoes should be cleaned before entering. The athletic training room is not a hangout spot, and students who are not injured are not allowed to use the treatment tables for lounging, unless explicit permission is given by the athletic trainer.

Each team is assigned a medical kit at the beginning of the season and is responsible for taking the kit to all practices and games. The kit will be restocked as needed by the athletic trainer. Basic first aid supplies are left out in the athletic training room, but all tape and specialty supplies are kept in locked cupboards. Any student caught breaking into the cupboard may be subject to suspension from participation for theft of school supplies. Students will only be taped for a diagnosed injury that is being rehabilitated with the athletic trainer, or with an outside physical therapist. Tape will not be provided for sparring, taping laces, holding shin guards, wrist compression, or any other use deemed not medically necessary by the athletic trainer.

Teams are responsible for preparing, transporting, and cleaning their own water coolers. If the athletic training room is locked after a game or practice, coolers may be left outside the door to the athletic training room. Teams that need them will be provided with water bottles at the beginning of the season and are expected to treat them with respect. Water bottles that are broken due to mistreatment will not be replaced during the season. Teams that use cups are expected to dispose of them and use them economically. Gatorade may only be made with prior approval and **MUST** be cleaned each night. If coolers are not being cleaned, Gatorade privileges will be revoked.

### **Concussions**

Concussions are a serious injury and need to be treated as such by students, family members, and members of the athletic staff. Students are expected to report to the athletic trainer or their coach if they are experiencing any symptoms of a concussion. These symptoms include, but are not limited to: loss of consciousness, headache, nausea, dizziness, balance issues, difficulty concentrating, sensitivity to noise, sensitivity to light, and increased emotional state. Any student that is suspected of having suffered a concussion must be removed from activity to be evaluated by the athletic trainer. If the athletic trainer is not present, the student must sit out the rest of the game or practice and must check in with the school nurse and the athletic trainer on the next school day. If a concussion is suspected, the student will be sent to their primary care physician (PCP) to confirm the diagnosis. In the state of MA, the only medical professionals who may clear a student from a concussion are a physician, a physician's assistant, a nurse practitioner, an athletic trainer, and a neuropsychologist in coordination with the PCP. The athletic trainer holds the final decision over whether or not a student enters the concussion protocol, regardless of the diagnosis from their PCP or other practitioner.

Once a student has a confirmed concussion diagnosis by their PCP or another practitioner, the academic staff can make academic accommodations for the student, as directed by the PCP and the school nurse.

It is Ashland School District policy that a student who has been diagnosed with a concussion must refrain from participating in all athletic activities until they have been symptom free for 7 consecutive days and have clearance from their doctor. At that point they may begin the return to play (RTP) protocol. The RTP progression will be overseen by the athletic trainer, and at times the head coach at the direction of the athletic trainer. The athlete will progress through a stage of the protocol every 24 hours as long as their symptoms do not return. If symptoms return, the athlete must wait 24 hours and go back to the previous level. The RTP progression is as follows:

Level 1: 20 minutes of light aerobic exercise.

Level 2: Sport specific activities, including skating, body weight exercises.

Level 3: Non-contact practice drills. Weight training may begin.

Level 4: Full contact practice.

Level 5: Unrestricted return to activity

### **Athletic Injuries/Return to Play**

All injuries must be reported to the athletic trainer or the coach immediately, and an injury report placed on file. Injuries that go untreated are likely to worsen and can result in a lengthened treatment process. Subsequent to any serious injury (an injury which is required to be seen by a physician), and prior to further participation in a sport, students must provide a signed medical release from a physician if a game or day of practice has been missed due to injury. In cases where the athletic trainer suspects a serious injury, the student will not be allowed to return to play until they have been cleared by their PCP or a specialist. Students are expected to follow up with the athletic trainer when instructed to, and to perform any rehabilitation exercises assigned as part of their return to play protocol. Rehabilitation will be provided to any athlete that needs or desires it, and can be done in conjunction with treatment from an outside physical therapist.

If an athlete is injured at an away event, they are expected to follow up with the athletic trainer on the next school day. If an athlete does not follow up it will be assumed they are still injured and cannot participate until proven otherwise.

When an athlete is injured and required to be seen by a doctor or transported to the hospital, the coach or event staff will notify the athletic director once the game is complete or after the athlete has been transported to the hospital. Coaches will follow

up with the parents/guardians when an athlete has been injured and seen by a doctor or taken to the hospital.

### **Doctor's Notes**

The athletic trainer reserves the right to hold a student out from participation regardless of a doctor's clearance note. Students are always allowed to seek a second opinion outside of the athletic trainer, and all visits to a doctor must be accompanied by a note stating the doctor's diagnosis. Athletes that do not bring back a doctor's note are precluded from returning to play until they bring a note showing they have not been disqualified by their doctor. The athletic trainer reserves the right to hold a student out from participation regardless of a doctor's clearance note. Students are expected to inform the athletic trainer of doctor's appointments so that proper follow up and documentation can occur.

### **Emergency Transportation**

In the event that an emergency occurs, an ambulance will be called at the discretion of the athletic trainer, or head coach if the athletic trainer is not present. A minor that is unaccompanied by their parent or guardian cannot refuse transport from the ambulance. If an athlete is injured to the extent that they need to be taken to the ER, the parents and emergency contacts will be called first. If none of the contacts listed on the registration form can be reached, an ambulance will be called to take them to the ER. An adult is to ride with an injured player to the hospital, i.e. an assistant coach, a designated parent, event staff. When an athlete is transported to the hospital, via parent/guardian or ambulance, the athletic director and school principal needs to be informed by the coach or event staff once the player has been transported.

### **Ashland High School and Middle School Coaches**

#### **Expectations of High School and Middle School Coaches**

Student-athletes should expect to be treated with respect and to be treated fairly by their coaches. The coaches are professionals who are aware of and committed to upholding the policies and regulations of the MIAA, the Tri-Valley League, and AHS/AMS. Each student must be treated as an individual, yet as part of the team. Rules and regulations must be uniformly and fairly enforced at all times. In most instances, during the season of play a student-athlete spends more time daily under the direct supervision and guidance of his/her coach than any other adult. This time spent should be enjoyable, educational, positive and worthwhile; the influence that a coach may have with each individual team member is quite powerful. As recommended by the

MIAA, we encourage participation in varied activities under different teacher/coach role models. The percentage of student athletes who complete their formal athletic experiences at the conclusion of his/her senior year is overwhelming (well in excess of 90%).

Athletes and their families can expect the following from members of the Ashland coaching staff:

Time Commitment - Practice and game schedules and other time commitments, consistent with the guidelines mentioned previously in this booklet, will be made known to all team members.

Team Standards - Coaches have the option of establishing expectations for their team members with the Athletic Director's prior approval. The coach will present these expectations to all team members in writing as soon as possible prior to the first contest of the season.

Individual Success - The coach will provide an opportunity for each student-athlete to grow socially and emotionally.

Team Spirit - The coach will attempt to instill and promote team spirit and cohesiveness.

Athletic Performance - Individual performance by a student-athlete will be critiqued by a coach at the appropriate time. Each student-athlete will be encouraged to work towards his/her potential and to develop a positive self-image.

Skill Development - Each athlete will be taught the rules and skills of the game with the goal of developing maximum proficiency in the specific sport area.

Approachability - The coach will be available to all of his/her athletes. Team members are encouraged to approach the coach about any topic that they wish. If a matter is of a personal nature, students should make every effort to approach the coach privately and when there is sufficient time for worthwhile discussion.

Competitiveness - MIAA philosophy states that, winning contests is a commendable goal, but it should not supersede the primary priorities of high school sports. Ashland coaches do and should play to win, as all involved enjoy winning, but they also know

that preparing students to succeed rather than merely to win games is more important. Win or lose, students should learn lessons of a lasting and positive nature.

### **Assessment of Coaches**

Each coach employed by Ashland is formally evaluated at the end of each season. The evaluations are performed by the head coach for each of the sub varsity and assistant coaches, and by the Athletic Director for each head coach.

### **Student-Athlete and Parent/Guardian Communication Guideline**

The following section is designed for parents of athletes who participate in the Ashland Public School athletic program. Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to students. As parents/guardians, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

### **Communication You Should Expect From Your Child's Coach**

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning
5. Procedure to follow should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

### **Communication Coaches Expect From Parents**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts, well in advance
3. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your child becomes involved in the programs at Ashland, they will 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 those times a discussion with the coach would be encouraged.

### **Appropriate Concerns To Discuss With Coaches**

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior



Coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those that follow, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

### **Issues that are Not Appropriate To Discuss With Coaches**

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach, athlete, and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue.

### **If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, the following procedures should be used:**

- Student-athlete should first discuss concerns directly with the coach
- If parents/guardians still have concerns, they should contact the coach to make an appointment.

DO NOT confront a coach before, during or after a practice or game. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

If the conversation / meeting did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation with the coach.

Never hesitate to follow the above procedures to make your concerns known.

### **Retribution**

On occasion, there is a perception by members of the Ashland community that voicing an opinion or concern about a coach, or about the athletic department, carries with it the risk of "retribution" towards the athlete either by the coach or by other staff members within the department. Of course, students who violate team, department or school rules will continue to face consequences. However, students and parents must be confident that the voicing of an opinion or a concern, using the proper forum and method described above, is not only free from penalty or retribution, but also is strongly

encouraged. The Athletic Director and coaches are committed to ensuring that after a student or parent raises an issue or concern, there shall be no “retribution” in any form within the athletic department at Ashland Public Schools. If at any time, a student or his/her parent suspects that some form of retribution is surfacing as a result of the voicing of a concern, opinion, or issue, using the proper forum and method, he or she should contact the Athletic Director immediately.

Remember as your student-athlete and you as a parent begin the journey of interscholastic athletics the common goals of the athletic program at **ALL LEVELS** of play at Ashland High School are for athletes to:

- \*Have FUN
- \*Develop their physical, emotional, social and mental skills
- \*Develop respect for authority, teammates, opponents and themselves
- \*Develop pride in themselves, their team, school and community
- \*Develop leadership qualities
- \*Learn to work as a team member towards the attainment of common goals
- \*Develop team responsibility and dedication
- \*Learn rules of particular sport
- \*Develop skills necessary to play a particular sport
- \*Attempt to place athletes on a team level that will allow them to succeed to the best of their ability

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **Athletic Awards**

Prior to the beginning of the season, coaches will clearly define and communicate criteria for earning a Varsity Athletic Letter. Letters will be awarded in varsity athletics based on the following general and specific sport criteria. Varsity letter awards will be presented at end-of season celebrations. Other individual awards may be given at the discretion of the head coach.

General criteria to receive an athletic award...

1. All athletes are expected to be at all practices and games unless excused by the coach.
2. Athletes must realize that they are representing Ashland and should conduct themselves accordingly. The highest standards of sportsmanship and fair play will be enforced at all times.
3. All athletes must successfully complete the season:

- a. Athletes dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons will not be eligible to receive a varsity letter.
  - b. An athlete must be a member of the squad at the end of the regular season, including postseason tournament play.
  - c. Injured athletes will be considered on an individual basis by the coach and Athletic Director.
  - d. All postseason obligations must be satisfactorily completed, i.e. equipment and uniform turned into the athletic department.
4. An athlete must be academically eligible.
5. Criteria established by the coach must be achieved.
6. The Tri-Valley League will not award first team all-star selections to any student-athlete found in violation of the MIAA Chemical Health Policy during that specific season of play.

### **Fan Buses**

The athletic department will support a fan bus to away events for any team which reaches the state semi-final game and beyond.

1. To have a fan bus more than 35 students must be signed up for the bus.
2. The bus will cost \$5 per student.
3. The bus must be staffed by an Ashland High School employee.
4. No food or drink is allowed onto the bus.
5. All students who ride the bus to an event must return on the bus. If a student fails to comply he or she may be disciplined by the school as this is a school event.
6. Once the game is finished, students are expected to promptly return to the bus.
7. All students who ride the fan bus are subject to have bags/carry ons searched by Ashland Public School staff.

### **College / Career Guidance**

One of the most important decisions facing the high school athlete is what to do with their lives after high school. The members of the Ashland High School athletic staff are willing to assist all of their students with this extremely difficult decision. Staff members fully understand the importance of this assistance. They may be able to answer questions, contact schools or coaches, send video tapes, if available and write letters of recommendation. If a student's goal is to compete athletically at the collegiate level it is very important to be aware of the ever-changing NCAA regulations. The Athletic Director and High School Guidance Department have a wealth of information on the NCAA regulations. They also have copies of the NCAA Clearinghouse registration

forms which must be completed by all students planning to participate at the college level.

### **Practice and Game Schedules**

Practice and game schedules will be distributed by the head coach at the beginning of the season. At the high school level it is the responsibility of the coach to communicate any changes to the schedule during the season to the student/athlete. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to communicate those changes to parents/guardians. At the middle school level it is the responsibility of the coach to communicate changes in the schedule to both the student/athlete and parent/guardians during the season. All Ashland Coaches are encouraged to create a team email list at the beginning of each new season. Game schedules can be found on the ArbiterLive website along with the Arbiter app. Student/athletes and parents/guardians are encouraged to download this free app to receive notifications on changes to game schedules and venues. Directions to away venues can be found on the MIAA website and or the Ashland Athletic website.

### **Parents/Guardians Expectations**

All parents/guardians are expected to follow along with all guidelines, rules, and policies outlined in the Ashland Student-Athletic Handbook. All parents/guardians who register their student-athlete shall sign off that they have read and understand the Student-Athletic Handbook during the registration process. Any questions or concerns regarding the handbook should be forwarded to the Athletic Director directly.