



James A. Garfield Local School District

Athletic Handbook

June 2023

PHILOSOPHY

Participation in athletic activities is a privilege that will be regulated. The athletic program is an integral part of the James A. Garfield educational system. As such, our goal is to provide each participant the opportunity to grow mentally, morally, physically, emotionally, and to attain athletic excellence. The athletic code applies to all James A. Garfield student athletes in grades 7-12. It must be adhered to by the student athlete year round, both in season and out of season. **Consequences may extend beyond the school year into a new school year and from season to season.**

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Students will become more effective members of a democratic society.

Specific Objectives:

1. To learn teamwork – To work with others in a democratic society, an individual must develop self discipline, respect for authority and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. Athletes must place the team and its objectives higher than personal desires.
2. To have fun – the main reason people participate in sports and games. Athletic competitions as well as practice sessions should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for ALL student athletes involved.
3. To be successful – Our society is very competitive. We do not always win, but we succeed when we continually strive to do so. You can learn to accept defeat only by striving to win with earnest dedication. Develop a desire to excel.
4. Sportsmanship – To accept success and defeat like a true sportsman, knowing you have done your best. We must learn to treat others as we would have others treat us. We need to develop desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation and dependability. Sportsmanship should not only be demonstrated in competitive settings, but also during daily practice sessions.
5. To improve – Continual improvement is essential to good citizenship. As an athlete, you must establish a goal and constantly try to reach that goal.
6. Enjoy athletics – Participating in athletics is a right and privilege. It is necessary to acknowledge all of the personal rewards we derive from athletics and to give sufficiently of ourselves in order to preserve and improve the program.

7. To develop desirable personal health habits – To be an active, contributing citizen, it is important to obtain a high degree of physical fitness through exercise and good health habits and to develop a desire to maintain this level of physical fitness after formal competition has been completed. The knowledge and skills obtained as a high school athlete should last a lifetime.

SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES AND PHILOSOPHY

Demonstrating good sportsmanship is the cornerstone of the James A. Garfield Athletics Code of Conduct. Sportsmanship is not something that simply happens, but is a trait that must be taught and learned. The promotion of sportsmanship is the responsibility of all school personnel (principals, athletic directors and coaches) and is directed to the behavior of spectators, coaches and players. An additional component to consider is coaches' ethics. We believe the development of good sportsmanship through the practice of ethical behavior and moral reasoning is one of the acknowledged objectives of interscholastic athletics.

We, therefore, expect school administrators, coaches, athletes, cheerleaders and spectators to know and embrace the following fundamentals of sportsmanship:

1. Respect should be demonstrated for athletic opponents and for their school at all times. Opponents are guests of the James A. Garfield Community, and should be treated that way at all times.
2. Respect should be demonstrated for the officials at all times.
3. All participants should strive to maintain self-control at all times. Maintaining self-control is a direct reflection of the participant's use of good Sportsmanship.
4. Knowledge of and a proper respect for the current rules of the contest should guide the behavior of all participants. Rules are essential for a fair contest. Good sportsmanship suggests the importance of conforming to the rules.

Players

Because players are admired and respected, they exert a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of spectators. It is important that athletes embrace the following behaviors:

1. Treat opponents with the respect that is due to them as guests and as fellow human beings.
2. Shake hands with opponents and wish them a good game when appropriate.
3. Demonstrate self-control at all times.
4. Handle defeat with dignity.
5. Understand that as an athlete of the James A. Garfield Schools your actions are not only a direct reflection of yourself, but also your school and community.
6. Follow both team and Athletic Department rules and standards at all times.

Spectators

Spectators, by their behaviors and reactions, play an important role in their school's reputation for sportsmanship. Spectators should be reminded and should keep in mind that athletes are friendly rivals as members of opposing amateur teams. They are expected to be treated as such. Spectators should be reminded, too, that the contest should be between the teams engaged in the competition and not between their supporters. It is important that all spectators embrace the following:

1. Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
2. Respect, cooperate and respond enthusiastically to the cheerleaders, coaches and athletes of all teams.
3. Be positive toward players and coaches regardless of the outcome of the contest.
4. Respect the judgment and the professionalism of the officials and coaches. It is the responsibility of the James A. Garfield Athletic Department to evaluate the performance of coaches and officials.

CONDITIONS

1. All athletes will be good representatives of the Garfield School District 24 hours a day, exhibiting good citizenship in the school and in the community.
 - A. Athletes convicted of a crime or sentenced to the juvenile detention center will be removed from all Garfield athletic teams for a semester or a season, whichever is greater.
 - B. *Athletes suspended out of school for any offense other than items covered in Items 2 and 3 below will be denied the privilege to participate in all practices and contests during the suspension.*
2. All athletes will abstain from possession, use, sale or distribution of alcohol, drugs, intoxicants or controlled substances of any kind, or possession of drug paraphernalia.

Violation of this section will result in:

1st Offense – Denied the privilege to participate in not less than 10% of the scheduled contests and mandatory participation in a professional counseling service. The athletic manager may consider cases of extreme hardship. An athlete refusing to attend a professional counseling service will be denied the privilege to participate in not less than 50% of the scheduled contests. An athlete caught lying during questioning about his/her use will be denied the privilege to participate in not less than 50% of the scheduled contests and will be required to attend professional counseling before returning to contest participation.

2nd Offense – Denied the privilege to participate in not less than 50% of the scheduled contests and no local post-season awards. The student will be required to undergo an assessment by a professional counselor (such as Townhall II or the Alcoholism Services of Portage County) and follow the recommendations of the assessment counselor before returning to contest participation.

3rd Offense – Denied the privilege to participate in the athletic program for one calendar year from the date of the infraction.

3. **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY** The use of email messages, text messages, blogs, websites or other electronic communications to make inflammatory or derogatory comments, and/or inappropriate descriptions or pictures regarding another team member, another student, a coach, another school or team, or other staff member is strictly prohibited. For the

purposes of this policy, inappropriate comments may include, but are not limited to, inappropriate comments/pictures/descriptions regarding another person's race, ethnic background, culture, religion gender or sexual orientation. Any violation of our social media policy may result in disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and/or dismissal from the team.

Violation of this section will result in:

1st Offense – Denied the privilege to participate in not less than 10% of scheduled contests.

2nd Offense – Denied the privilege to participate in not less than 50% of scheduled contests.

3rd Offense – Denied the privilege to participate for a semester or season, whichever is greater.

NOTE: Consequences for Students violating Items 2 or 3 above between seasons will carry into the next season of participation.

DENIAL OF PARTICIPATION AND DUE PROCESS

1. The infraction(s) will be verified by the following: a school employee, chaperone, or a member of any law enforcement agency, an adult or the parents of admission by the athlete.
2. In the event of an infraction of these rules and/or training rules established by the athletic department, the following procedure will take place.
 - A. The athletic manager will conduct an informal hearing to notify the athlete (verbally) of the infraction(s) and what discipline might take place. The athlete will have the opportunity to explain his/her actions in regard to the infraction(s).
 - B. If the athletic manager denies the student the opportunity to participate, he shall inform the student and his/her parents/guardians, both verbally and in writing of the infraction and the punishment to be levied. They may appeal in writing within three school days of the athletic manager's written notice.
 - C. If appealed, the principal will meet with the student(s), his/her parents and the athletic manager to hear the issue. The student may have a representative of his/her choosing at the appeal.
 - D. The principal's decision may be appealed to the superintendent and Board of Education with conformity with the current acceptable practice.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

1. All student athletes must adhere to the OHSAA eligibility standards.
 - A. High School Athletes must pass a minimum of five (5) one-credit classes, or the equivalent (P.E. does not count), in the immediately preceding grading period.
 - B. Middle School Athletes must pass at least 75% of subjects in which enrolled the immediately preceding grading period. All students enrolled in 7th grade for the first time will be eligible to participate in athletics during the first grading period.
 - C. All student athletes must also adhere to the James A. Garfield Board of Education eligibility policy and maintain a minimum GPA of 1.0 in the immediately preceding grading period.
 - D. Athletes may not fail more than one (1) class in the immediately preceding grading period.
 - E. All athletes will maintain academic eligibility as set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Board of Education Policy No. 2431.
 - F. Any athlete who is deemed academically ineligible is not authorized to take part in any practice sessions, team travel, or team activities (senior night, team dinner, etc.) without consent from the Athletic Director.
2. All athletes will be responsible for the proper maintenance of athletic equipment and uniforms.
3. Game uniforms are to be worn only at games, not as regular clothing, for practices, or for P.E. classes. (Exception may be made for team shirt day and for articles purchased by the athletes.)
4. Athletes who lose, damage equipment, or have financial obligations with the Athletic Department, will not be permitted to participate in another sport until the loss, damage, or financial obligation has been remedied. Athletes required to purchase uniforms, equipment, etc. ordered by a school district employee must have parental consent.
5. All athletes shall be provided the following authorization forms, which must be returned prior to their first practice:
 - A. physical form completed by a licensed physician
 - B. insurance waiver form
 - C. emergency medical form (athletic department copy)
 - D. athletic eligibility form
 - E. concussion information sheet

- F. athletic code of conduct signature page
- G. if provided, the coach's specific rules and regulations signature page
- H. weightroom agreement

Athletes without proper authorization forms are ineligible for inter-scholastic contests and cannot participate in practices.

6. All athletes shall follow rules, procedures, and regulations set down by the coach and/or athletic manager. Athletes failing to comply with the rules, procedures, and regulations may be subject, but not limited to, the following:
7. If an athlete participating in "Sport A" either quits the team or is denied participation for a violation, he/she is not eligible to join other organized sports within that same season. If an athlete is "cut" from the team, before the regular season begins, not because of a violation, he/she will be eligible for "Sport B". Athletes unable to complete during a season due to extreme hardship or medical reason may be eligible for other organized sports in the same season.
8. It is the intent of this school district to provide the opportunity to excel and become successful in the endeavor a student may choose. An opportunity shall be given to the student to change sports once started. A student may elect to change sports not later than two calendar weeks from the beginning of the first scheduled practice. Once that grace period has expired a student may not change programs.
9. Academic probation – Students athletes who have below a 2.0 Grade Point Average on their previous Interim Report or Report Card will be placed on academic probation. They will be required to complete a daily academic progress sheet, which will be signed by all of their classroom teachers and parents or guardians daily. The forms need to be turned into the Athletic Department at the end of each school week. Students will be removed from academic probation once their Grade Point Average is above 2.0 on their next Report Card. Athletic participation is at the discretion of administration.

PARENT / COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDE

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing communication and understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to our student athletes. To be successful, communication is vital and requires involvement, dedication, sacrifice, and commitment from parents, student athletes, and coaches.

1. COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH
 - A. Coach's and program's philosophy.
 - B. Individual and team expectations.
 - C. Location and times of all practices and games.
 - D. Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, off season conditioning.
 - E. Procedure followed should your child be injured during practice or games.
 - F. Any discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

2. COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS
 - A. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
 - B. Notification of schedule conflicts well in advance.
 - C. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.
 - D. Support for the program and the attributes of dedication, commitment, and responsibility that are ingredients for success and excellence. Encourage your child to excel.

3. APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES
 - A. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
 - B. Ways to help your child improve and develop.
 - C. Concerns about your child's behavior.

4. ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES
 - A. Playing time
 - B. Team strategy
 - C. Play calling
 - D. Other student athletes

TWO-SPORT PARTICIPATION

Athletes may participate in more than one sport within the James A. Garfield Local School District in any one sport season (fall, winter or spring) **if both coaches concur and cooperatively** work out the details of practices, games, etc. with the athlete. The athlete who is attempting to “double up” must declare one of the sports as a “sport of first priority”. This means the athlete will attend all “events” (contests, practices, meetings, etc.) connected with that squad. The athlete can participate with the other squad during the time there are no obligations to the sport of first priority. Student athletes have a responsibility to avoid continuous conflicts. Students must hold a minimum 2.0 GPA in order to participate in two sports during the same sport season.

DEFINITIONS

1. Athlete – Any student participating in an athletic sport as a contestant, manager, scorekeeper, statistician, trainer or cheerleader.
2. Sport Season – The season begins with the first day of organized practices and is terminated when that athlete is no longer eligible for State Tournament competition, as per the OHSAA handbook.
3. Possession – The custody and control of property.
4. Self-Referral – Seeking help before a violation is detected.
5. Tobacco/Drug/Alcohol Rehabilitation Program – A recognized treatment program with a history of tangible positive results. (All costs for assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, or counseling shall be the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family.)
6. Penalty Carry Over – Consequences carried over into another sport season or school year.
7. Sport- Any athletic extracurricular
8. Attendance at Activity – Students must be in school the equivalent of ½ day to participate in **practice and /or contest**. For events during the school year but not on a school day, the student athlete must be in school for ½ day the day prior to the contest. Participation in athletic events are at the discretion of administration.

CONCUSSION POLICY

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION/CONCUSSIONS If a concussion is suspected by a physical education teacher or coach, the student will be removed from the class, practice, or game. The student will not be permitted to return to full participation on the same day as the removal and not until s/he is evaluated by a healthcare professional experienced in concussion management and receives written clearance for full participation from that professional. Limited physical activity in the physical education context may eventually be permitted, depending on the recommendation of the healthcare professional. Parents or guardians shall be notified about the possible concussion and given information on concussions and the need for medical attention. If a concussion is detected, the student athlete must have the concussion protocol provided by the OHSA.

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

If a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the coach or referee who removes the student shall not permit the student, **ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED**, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or contest official is responsible. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest officials shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied: 1) The student's condition is assessed by either of the following: a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (OCR) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.) b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition. 2) The student receives written authorization that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance. Click here <http://ohsaa.org/medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf> to retrieve the OHSA's Medical Authorization to Return To Play (RTP) form. A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed health care provider who is NOT a PHYSICIAN to make an assessment and grant authorization for a student to return to participation ONLY if the provider is acting in accordance with one of the following as applicable to the provider's authority to practice in Ohio: 1) In consultation with a physician; 2) Pursuant to the referral of a physician; 3) In collaboration with a physician, or 4) Under the

supervision of a physician. Note: A physician or other licensed health care provider who makes an assessment or grants clearance for a student to return to participation may be a volunteer.

TRANSGENDER POLICY

The Athletic Department at James A. Garfield High School has adopted the policies and procedures set forth by the OHSAAs regarding transgender student participation in sports. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Eligibility/OtherEligibilityDocs/TransgenderPolicy.pdf>

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If you have a concern with an employee, please discuss the matter with the employee first. If you are unable to resolve the issues, please bring it to the attention of the principal so that he/she can schedule an appointment with the employee for you to meet. If you are unable to resolve the concern, please call the principal again. If the concern still remains, there is a formal complaint procedure that parents are to follow. If you desire to file a formal written complaint about an employee, please contact the principal for the forms and a copy of the procedure and timelines.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES

The use of private vehicles for transportation of students, volunteers, teachers and other employees to and from student activities is discouraged. If the need arises, transportation by private vehicles is permitted only if previously approved by the appropriate administrator. Students may be permitted to drive or ride in private autos for field trips under the following conditions.

1. They have parental permission to do so.
2. They are legally allowed to drive (e.g., not operating without a valid license)
3. They are not in an obvious physical or mental state which suggests they should not.
4. They voluntarily wish to drive and indicate they are properly insured.

5. No official school transportation is available.

If it is necessary to use private vehicles, evidence must be presented upon request to the appropriate administrator that the vehicle and driver are covered for liability, medical payments, physical damage and uninsured motorist liability.

COLLEGE/CAREER GUIDANCE

College athletic Scholarships: The NCAA offers athletic scholarships for Division I and II colleges and universities. There are no athletic scholarships given at the Division III level of colleges and universities. The college recruiting process starts in earnest at the end of a student-athlete's junior year in high school. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable coaching staff with tremendous expertise in dealing with the collegiate recruiting process. The Athletic department strongly discourages any student-athletes paying a fee to a collegiate recruiting company. The coaching staff, athletic department, and guidance staff are very capable of facilitating any recruiting process. If there are any questions regarding athletics and college, the coach should be contacted at the end of the student's junior year. If additional information is needed, contact the Athletic Department at 330-527-0039.

NCAA Clearinghouse Information: If a student is fortunate enough to be a college scholarship athlete, he/she will need to submit a clearinghouse form to the NCAA no later than their senior year of high school. If a student athlete wishes to participate on the Division I or Division II level, they are encouraged to talk to Mr. Pfleger during their junior year to begin the recruiting process.

As a member of the MVAC, JAG athletics has adopted protocols and policies provided below.

MAHONING VALLEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

~~ SPORTSMANSHIP ~~

THE ADMINISTRATION OF EACH SCHOOL WILL ENFORCE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The MVAC condones and encourages positive cheers that build school spirit through good sportsmanship. Cheers that are vulgar or demeaning to opposing teams or their fans are prohibited.
2. There are to be no gestures or verbal expressions of an obscene, profane, taunting or vulgar connotation directed toward athletes, coaches, officials or other fans.
3. Noisemakers of any kind are prohibited at indoor events.
4. Any posted signs in or around the playing area are to be monitored and judged for value, appropriateness and positive tone by the host administration.
5. Spectators are not permitted on the playing floor or field during or immediately after a contest. Anyone who goes onto the field of play during a contest will be immediately removed from the event. Those entering at the conclusion of play will face disciplinary action as well.
6. Only authorized personnel are permitted in the locker room and press box areas.
7. Recognized law enforcement officials will be present at all games at which the administrators of the schools involved deem appropriate.
8. Behavior expectations for the MVAC are to be printed in the game programs.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

THE STUDENT ATHLETE

- Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility and the privilege of representing the school and the community.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with parents, fans, fellow students to assist all in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the game.
- Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Never argue or make gestures which indicate disagreement.

OTHER STUDENT GROUPS (PEP CLUBS, BAND, ETC.)

- Be leaders in conduct before, during and after contests and events. Always provide positive support.
- Assist cheerleaders with yells, chants, etc., and be a working part of pep assemblies with preparation, organization and involvement.
- Treat opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups with respect and enthusiasm.
- Conduct is to always be exemplary. All student groups represent their respective schools both home and away.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- Refrain from cheers which downplay the opponent or which use profane or abusive language.

MAHONING VALLEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

~~ SPORTSMANSHIP ~~

SPECTATORS

- Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students; mistakes will be made.
- Understand that a ticket is a privilege only to observe the contest.
- Learn the rules of the game to understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during games and afterwards on or near the site of the event (i.e., tailgating).
- Refrain from cheers which downplay the opponent or which use profane or abusive language.

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR:

Inappropriate spectator behavior, whether by students, staff, parents, or community members, will not be tolerated. The following is illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of some behaviors which will not be tolerated.

1. Verbal/physical abuse of officials, players, coaches, or other spectators.
2. Berating players, coaches, or other spectators.
3. Interruption of the contest (other than for emergency purposes).
4. Removal from contest or premises by a game official or security personnel.

As a result of inappropriate spectator behavior, any of the following consequences could occur. The principal or designee has the right to vary from this guideline based upon the circumstances.

1. Verbal or written warning.
2. The spectator will not be permitted to attend any athletic contests for a period of 14 days from the date of the offense.
3. The spectator will not be permitted to attend any athletic contests for a period of 28 days from the date of the offense.
4. The spectator will not be permitted to attend any athletic contests for a period of one year.
5. The spectator will not be permitted to attend any athletic contests