



# Norwell Middle School Student-Athlete Handbook



2022-2023

# Norwell Middle School Athletic Handbook for Students and Parents

## ***Mission Statement***

***Students of the Norwell Middle School community will attain the skills necessary to become self-learners and problem-solvers for a dynamic, ever-changing world.***

### A Message from the Athletic Department

The school and community are very proud of the athletic history and tradition of the Norwell Knights. The Norwell athletics program reflects the school's overall commitment to excellence. We are proud to provide a number of athletic offerings for our young people. We believe that providing these opportunities for competition enhances the overall development of our student athletes and extends the educational mission of our school.

If you believe that organized sports can contribute to living a healthy life, that the positive values and virtues developed on the playing field can last a lifetime, and that good character influences enjoyment, satisfaction and performance, then our athletics program is for you.

This handbook is designed to explain the expectations, regulations, and policies relative to participation in interscholastic athletics at Norwell Middle School. It is a privilege to participate in interscholastic athletes at Norwell.

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete and parents to read this handbook and familiarize yourselves with the various policies contained within.

The athletic department and administration need and depend on parent/guardian help and cooperation to aid coaches and the athletic director in promoting a successful athletics program. Please feel free to call the school whenever you have a question concerning our programs. We are here to serve you.

The faculty and staff of Norwell Middle School thank you for your continued support of Knights athletics. We invite you to share in our enthusiasm for the coming season!

Joel Reinhard  
Athletic Director

Updated 8/1/2022

# **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **To the Parent:**

This material is presented to you because your daughter or son has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics and you have expressed your willingness to permit her/him to compete. Your family's interest in this phase of our school program is gratifying. We believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences which assists students in personal adjustments.

We who are concerned with the educational development of boys and girls through athletics, feel that a properly controlled, well-organized sports program meets with the students' needs of self-expression, mental alertness and physical growth. It is our hope to maintain a program that is sound in purpose and will further each student's educational maturity inside and outside the classroom.

### **To the Athlete:**

Being a member of a Norwell Middle School athletic team is a fulfillment of an ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic squad at NMS, you have inherited a wonderful tradition, a tradition you are challenged to uphold. It will not be easy to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. When you wear the colors of our school, we assume that you not only understand our traditions, but are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them.

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF:** The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden yourself and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible good from your middle school experiences. Your academic studies, your participation in other extracurricular activities as well as sports, prepare you for your life as an adult.

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR SCHOOL:** Another responsibility you assume as a squad member is to your school. Norwell Middle School cannot maintain its position as an outstanding school unless you do your best in whatever activity you wish to engage. By participating in athletics to the maximum of your ability, you are contributing to the reputation of your school. You assume a leadership role when you are on the athletic squad. The student body, our community and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitudes, both on and off the field of play. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute greatly to your school spirit and community pride. Make Norwell Middle School proud of you, and your community proud of your school, by your faithful exhibition of these details.

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHERS:** As a squad member, you also bear responsibility to your home. If you never give your parents anything to be ashamed of, you will have measured up to the ideal. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all the team expectations, that you have practiced to the best of your ability everyday, and that you have played the game “all out” you can keep your self-respect and your family can be justly proud of you. The younger students in the schools are watching you. They will copy you in many ways. Do not do anything to let them down. Set good examples for them.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

A. All 6th grade students are eligible at the beginning of the school year.

B. Eligibility at the beginning of the school year for 7th & 8th grade students is subject to grades earned on the final report card of the previous school year.

1. Any student receiving one (1) failing grade at mid-term or on a 9 weeks report card will be placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation may try-out for and practice with any extracurricular interscholastic athletic team, cheer group, or academic group, but cannot participate in competitions, games, or programs. A student on academic probation may attend extracurricular activities such as dances and all activities open to the general public.

2. Any student receiving two (2) or more failing grades at mid-term or on a 9 weeks report card will be ineligible for extracurricular participation. A student who is academically ineligible may attend such activities that are open to the public such as athletic contests, performances and concerts. However, they are prohibited from attendance at activities such as dances or other activities that are restricted to Norwell Middle School students.

3. Academic status will be reviewed after 4½ weeks. Eligibility could be reinstated. A student who is on academic probation or academically ineligible must earn all passing grades at either the mid-term or 9 weeks report to become eligible.

Attendance for ineligible students is mandatory at curriculum-related performances during non-school hours, i.e. attendance at a band concert in which the band director required the student to attend as part of the class grade requirements. Eligibility does apply to students wishing to perform with the high school band, flag corps, or other extracurricular activity.

4. Students must have a health certificate (physical) signed by a physician before participation in athletics. Physicals done after April 1 are valid for the following school year.

Students are not eligible if they are 16 years of age or older.

Students must have taken school insurance or provided proof of private insurance.

Students and parents must sign an acknowledgment of risk and code of conduct form for participating in athletics.

Eligibility rules apply to athletes, cheerleaders, managers, clubs, and performing groups.

5. Students participating in extracurricular activities must be attending NMS for at least one class period in order to be eligible to participate.

The exception to this policy applies to Bethlehem Lutheran students, who, as sixth graders are not yet enrolled in NMS classes. These students who meet other eligibility criteria, will be permitted to participate in athletic opportunities available to sixth grade students.

The school administration will verify academic and attendance status as required.

Students who are placed in alternative placement, SOS or external suspension are ineligible to tryout, practice or compete on the day or days when the suspension is served.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

#### **1. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

A yearly pre-participation physical examination is required. The physical form must be completed by the physician and submitted to the Athletic Director PRIOR to participation. The physical covers all sports for the entire school year provided the examination occurred AFTER APRIL 1ST. The form will be kept on file in the athletic office.

#### **2. EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Emergency medical information supplied by the parent during registration will be available to the coach during the season. This information will be used when the parent(s) are not available. The form will be kept in the coach binder for quick access.

#### **3. INSURANCE**

The school district does not carry primary insurance coverage for student athletic injuries. Parents will need to indicate on the athletic physical form, the name of the insurance company under which the athlete is covered. Individual student insurance is available for purchase through the school if needed by the parent.

#### **4. SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY**

In order to participate on a Norwell Middle School athletic team, each athlete must have satisfied all of the scholastic eligibility requirements PRIOR to participation. (See the eligibility guidelines above.)

#### **5. RISK OF PARTICIPATION**

All athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury which may be a result of athletic participation. Norwell Middle School will use the following safeguards to make every effort to eliminate injury:

- a. Conduct a mandatory parent/athlete meeting at the start of the season to fully explain the athletic policies and to advise, caution and warn parents/athletes of the potential for injury.
- b. Maintain a continuing education program for coaches to learn the most up-to-date techniques and skills to be taught in their sport.
- c. Instruct all athletes about the dangers of participation in the particular sport.
- d. Student athletes and their parent(s) shall complete an acknowledgment of risk form in order to participate on a Norwell Middle School athletic team.

#### **6. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS AND EQUIPMENT**

Uniforms - In several sports, athletes may be required to purchase a portion of the practice uniform, which will become their property.

Equipment- All athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment issued to them. School furnished equipment is to be worn only for contest and practices. Students will be held financially responsible for items not returned in clean, good condition at the end of the season.

#### **7. CONDUCT OF ATHLETES**

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department. The community, school administrators and 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 is our major consideration and transcends any other consideration.

#### **8. ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students and parents are expected to read, sign, and abide by the NMS Code of Conduct included on the physical examination form. (See sample on last page)

### **PARTICIPATION**

An athlete may participate in one sport per season. Coaches, Athletic Director and the Principal will review individual exceptions. Student athletes will participate in at least 10 separate days of organized practice under the supervision of the coaching staff preceding the date of participation in interscholastic contests. Only one practice may be counted for any one day. Team practice sessions are open to team members and school staff only. Most teams practice each day of the week, Monday through Friday. Coaches may schedule optional practices during the season. Athletes not participating in optional practices will not be penalized or their status on the team jeopardized.

### **SQUAD SELECTION**

In accordance with our philosophy of athletics and our desire to see as many students as possible participate in the athletic program while at Norwell Middle School, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without unbalancing the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. Athletes must complete 10 organized practices before competing in contests as explained under the participation section. Exceptions to this may occur when the athlete is completing one season and starting the next.

### **CUTTING POLICIES**

Choosing the members of athletic squads is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those squads. The coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

1. Extent of try-out period
2. Criteria used to select the team
3. Estimated number of athletes to be selected
4. Practice commitment if they make the team
5. Game commitments

When a squad cut becomes a necessity, the process will include two important elements. Each candidate shall have:

1. Competed in a minimum of two (2) practices.
2. Performed in at least one (1) intra-squad game like situation or scrimmage

### **ATTENDANCE**

Students who miss part of the school day due to illness must be in attendance **ONE HALF OF THE ACADEMIC DAY** in order to play in a contest or practice on that date.

Students missing school for reasons other than illness must have an excused absence in order to participate. Final authority for infractions of this rule will rest with the Athletic Director. An athlete who is unable to participate in physical education class or swim class may not participate in athletics.

### **EQUIPMENT**

School equipment checked out by the student/athlete is his/her responsibility. He/she is expected to keep it **CLEAN** and in **GOOD CONDITION**. Loss of equipment is the athlete's financial obligation. Uniforms range in price from \$20 to \$60 per item. Warm up jackets and pants range in price from \$40 to \$80. You are responsible for their care.

Uniforms should be washed after each competition. Since our school colors include navy, it is imperative that you take extra caution in washing uniforms. Always use cold water when washing any Norwell uniform with navy on it and be extremely careful with the heat of dryers. Hang dry uniforms instead of tumble-drying in clothes dryers. Do not use liquid fabric softener or spray-wrinkle free products on uniforms. At the end of the season, make sure your uniforms are **cleaned** before returning them to your coach. Students returning uniforms that have not been cleaned will be assessed a laundry fee by the Athletic Department.

### **REPORTING FOR PRACTICES**

Upon completion of afternoon classes, athletes are to take all needed items (books, coats, boots, etc.) to their athletic lockers in order to avoid entering academic hall areas after 3:00 p.m.

### **MISSING PRACTICE**

An athlete should always consult his/her coach **BEFORE** missing practice.

### **VACATION POLICY**

Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are discouraged. In the event of an absence due to an approved vacation, an athlete must:

1. Be accompanied by his/her parents while on vacation.
2. Contact the coach **PRIOR** to the vacation.
3. Be willing to assume the consequences related to their absence. (status on that squad as a starter, 2nd string, 3rd string, etc)

### **TRAVEL**

All athletes must travel to and from athletic contests in transportation provided by the athletic department unless the parents, for exceptional situations, make previous arrangements with the athletic director. If this situation arises Parents/Guardians must sign the school provided form after each athletic event to take their child with them. **Student athletes may only ride home from contests with their parent/guardian.**



1. Athletes will remain with their squad and under the supervision of the coach when attending away contests.
2. Athletes that miss the bus will not be allowed to participate in the contest unless there are extenuating circumstances.
3. All regular school bus rules will be followed.
4. Dress appropriately and in good taste.

### **CONFLICTS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

An individual student, who attempts 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 the area of extracurricular activities, and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts.

At Norwell Middle School, we understand that sports are an important part of school life. We encourage student athletes to devote themselves to Norwell athletics above any and all club sports while in season at Norwell Middle School. An athlete's first responsibility is to the school and club/intramural second. Students may practice with a club after their school practice has concluded. Parents are encouraged to speak with the coach and Athletic Director should there be any questions.

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 sponsors/coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise.

When a conflict arises the sponsors/coaches will work out a solution so the student does not feel caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the Athletic Director will make the decision based on the following:

1. The relative importance of each event.
2. The importance of each event to the student.
3. The relative contribution the student can make.
4. How long each event has been scheduled.
5. Talk with parents.

Once the decision has been made and the student has followed that decision, HE/SHE WILL NOT BE PENALIZED IN ANY WAY BY EITHER FACULTY SPONSOR OR COACH. If it becomes obvious that a student cannot fulfill the obligation of a school activity, he/she should withdraw from that activity.

### **REPORTING AN INJURY**

All injuries that occur while participating in athletics should be reported to the coach. If the injury requires medical attention by a doctor or treatment center, it will be necessary to have an INJURY REPORT FORM COMPLETED. Once a physician treats an athlete, the athlete MUST OBTAIN THE DOCTOR'S PERMISSION TO RETURN TO THE ACTIVITY.

## **ILLNESS**

Athletes who are physically unable to practice for FIVE (5) CONSECUTIVE DAYS due to illness or injury are to present to the Athletic Director a statement from a PHYSICIAN STATING THEY ARE AGAIN PHYSICALLY FIT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTER-SCHOOL ATHLETICS. The parents must sign this form, which is available from the coach, or in the Athletic Director's office.

## **LOCKER ROOM REGULATIONS**

Roughhousing and throwing towels or other objects is not allowed in the locker room. Hazing of other players is not allowed. All showers must be turned off. The last person to leave the shower room is expected to check all showers.

No one except coaches and players are allowed in the locker room. NO GLASS CONTAINERS ARE ALLOWED IN THE LOCKER ROOMS. All shoes with spikes or cleats must be put on and taken off outside of the building. No metal or hard plastic spikes or cleats are ever allowed in any other part of the school building.

## **GROOMING AND DRESS POLICY**

Appearance, expression and actions always influence peoples' opinions of athletes, the team and the school. Once you have volunteered to be a member of a squad, you have made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of athletes in this community. Team members will adhere to the following grooming and dress rules:

1. An athlete shall dress presentably at all times, on trips, or at assemblies.
2. Only uniforms issued or sold by the department of athletics will be permitted to be worn for contests.
3. Athletes will not be permitted to participate until deviations of the above rules are satisfactorily corrected.

## **POSTPONING CONTESTS**

If a game must be postponed due to weather or any other factor not conducive to good game conditions, the following factors will be considered:

1. Playing conditions of the field
2. Safe travel for the team
3. Safe travel for the opponents
4. Safe travel for the official(s)
5. Safe travel for the students, fans and parents
6. Damage to equipment
7. Safety to the spectators in or on the school grounds, gym or field

After considering factors, it will then be up to the Athletic Director and/or Principal to play the game or postpone the game. The Athletic Director will re-schedule the contest, if possible. In case of postponement, students will be notified as quickly as possible.

## **DROPPING OR TRANSFERRING SPORTS**

Quitting is a poor habit to acquire. A student who quits may lose the privilege of participating in athletics for that season. On occasion however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Consult with your immediate coach.
2. Report your situation to the Athletic Director.
3. Check in all equipment issued to you.

#### **UNDUE INFLUENCE FOR PARTICIPATION**

1. It shall be the philosophy of the Norwell Middle School athletic department that athletes shall enjoy as many sport seasons as the student athlete and their parents wish them to participate in without influence from any coach to specialize in one sport. All coaches should encourage participation in other sports.
2. Although athletes may choose the sport they wish to enjoy, once the season has started, **NO ONE SHALL CHANGE SPORTS WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF EACH COACH INVOLVED.**
3. At Norwell Middle School, we understand that sports are an important part of school life. Therefore, we encourage student athletes to devote themselves to Norwell athletics above any and all club sports while in season at Norwell Middle School. An athlete's first responsibility is to the school and club/intramural second. Students may practice with a club after their school practice has concluded. Parents are encouraged to speak with the coach and Athletic Director should there be any questions.
4. It shall be the philosophy of Norwell Middle School that no student athlete be retained for the purpose of benefiting an athletic program.
  - a. Athletes cut from one sport, however, may try out for another sport providing they were not cut from the first sport for disciplinary reasons.
  - b. No athlete who is dropped from one squad for disciplinary reasons or who "quits" shall be eligible to compete in another sport for that particular season.
5. No athlete may start another sport until the previous one has been completed and all equipment, etc. is returned to the coaches.

#### **VIOLATION OF ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

In the event that an athlete is found to have violated the code of conduct, we will use the NHS code of conduct consequences as a guide in determining the appropriate consequence for the NMS athlete.

**(SAMPLE)**

# **Form found on back of physical**

## **Norwell Middle School**

### **Athletic Code of Conduct**

**A Norwell Middle School athlete's responsibilities are as follows:**

- Be a good student academically, socially, and display good citizenship.
- Display good sportsmanship.
- Respect other athletes, cheerleaders, officials, spectators, and those in authority.
- Use language that reflects well on family, school, and self.
- Be a positive leader, and contribute to team morale by example, words, and actions.
- Work to develop athletic skills to a competitive level.
- Have respect for one's own body, including the discipline to maintain excellent physical and mental condition, and to refrain from any form of self-abuse.

**A Norwell Middle School athlete is also expected to abide by the following rules:**

1. No use or possession of tobacco in any form at any time.
2. No use or possession of illegal drugs at any time.
3. No consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages at any time.
4. No attendance at parties or gatherings where alcoholic beverages or drugs are being used. If this situation arises unexpectedly, the student is expected to make arrangements to exit the situation immediately. Athletes should be accompanied by their parents at adult functions where alcohol is being served.
5. Athletes, as students of Norwell Middle School, are expected to follow the rules of the school handbook. Their general conduct, in and out of school, shall be such as to bring no discredit to themselves, their school, or their teammates.

I understand that any infraction of the above stated responsibilities and rules may result in consequences up to, and including an immediate dismissal from all athletic participation. I have read, understand, and will abide by this code of conduct.

We, as parents or guardians, have read, understand and will enforce with our child the code of conduct. We understand that if we fail to enforce the rules our child may be suspended from any/all athletic teams.