

**Valentine Community  
Schools  
Activities Handbook**

**Rules and Regulations  
2023 - 2024**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Introduction3**

### **Section One: General Information5**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Academic Eligibility                           | 5  |
| Attendance at Practices and Contests           | 5  |
| Closings                                       | 6  |
| Complaint Procedure                            | 6  |
| Concussion Awareness                           | 6  |
| Dances   | 8  |
| Electronic Communication                       | 9  |
| Equipment                                      | 9  |
| Fundraising                                    | 9  |
| Individual Training Rules and Rules of Conduct | 10 |
| Initiations and Hazing                         | 9  |
| Injuries                                       | 10 |
| Insurance                                      | 10 |
| Lettering Requirements                         | 10 |
| Mascot   | 12 |
| Practices                                      | 12 |
| Secret Organizations                           | 12 |
| Student Managers or Helpers                    | 13 |
| Sunday and Wednesday Night Activities          | 13 |
| Transportation                                 | 13 |
| Weight Room                                    | 15 |

### **Section Two: Available Activities16**

### **Section Three: Code of Conduct18**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Standard of Conduct                      | 18 |
| Coach and Sponsor Rules                  | 18 |
| Prohibited Conduct                       | 18 |
| Discipline                               | 20 |
| Evaluation, Counseling and Treatment     | 21 |
| Reporting of Incident                    | 21 |
| Review of Activities Director's Decision | 22 |
| Misrepresentations                       | 22 |
| Questions                                | 22 |
| Assistance                               | 22 |

### **A Parent's Guide to Concussions23**

### **Authorization and Acknowledgement27**

## **Introduction**

Student participation in extracurricular activities has been linked to improved attendance, higher academic achievement, and greater student self-confidence and self-esteem. Valentine Community Schools Public provides students with the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive activities program that includes athletics, fine arts, and select clubs or organizations associated with academic areas.

Although the school district believes strongly in the value of student activities, participation in the activities program is a privilege, not a right. Students must obey the rules set out in this handbook and any additional rules created by their coach or activity sponsor. This handbook is advisory and does not create a "contract" with parents, students, or staff. The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

**Please read this handbook carefully. Students and their parents are responsible for complying with all of the rules and procedures detailed in this booklet.**

**Parents must sign the acknowledgement and permission to participate form at the end of this handbook before their student will be permitted to participate in the activity programs of the district.**

The provisions in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Board of Education. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in the handbook. These updates should be kept within the handbook so that it is up to date. If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please contact the Superintendent for assistance.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Name: Mike Halley  
Title: Superintendent  
Address: 431 N Green St, Valentine, NE 69201  
Telephone: 402-376-1780  
E-mail: mhalley@vcsbadger.net

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area or call 1-800-421-3481.

For additional prohibited discrimination and related information, please review school district Policy 3053 – Nondiscrimination

## **SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM**

### **Academic Eligibility**

To be eligible to participate in the school's activity programs, each student must (1) meet Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA) requirements concerning scholastic eligibility (2) meet the requirements of board policy including all rules applicable to the activity, and (3) have not less than a 70% grade in two or more classes for a period of one week to remain eligible to participate in any portion of the activities program. Participants must attend practices and participate in all conditioning during any period of ineligibility.

The school district will notify a participant and his or her parents whenever the participant is declared academically ineligible.

Students may not participate in any activity, performance or practice while serving a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion from school.

### **Attendance at Practices and Contests**

Participants in the activities program are expected to attend and be on time at all practices and meetings scheduled by the coach or sponsor. Participants may be excused for absences resulting from a participant's illness, a death in the family, a doctor's appointment, a court appearance, or other absences that are arranged in advance. The coach, sponsor, or director of an activity may require a participant who has an excused absence to complete an alternate assignment for missing a practice, meeting, event, performance, or contest. A participant who is unable to attend a scheduled practice, meeting, or game must contact the coach or sponsor in advance. Students who are absent from school due to illness are not required to provide the coach or sponsor with additional notification of the student's absence from practice.

Students who are absent from school for any part of the day will not be permitted to practice or participate in an athletic contest or activity performance unless the student has the building principal's prior permission to participate despite the absence.

If a participant misses a scheduled contest or performance, the coach or sponsor may impose discipline up to and including suspension of the participant from the activity for the remainder of the season or length of the activity.

## **Closings**

Unless the administration determines that it is permissible for the activity to continue as scheduled, all activities will be cancelled or postponed in the event that school has been called off for inclement weather or any other reason as determined by the administration. Unless the administration determines that it is permissible for the activity to continue as scheduled.

## **Colors**

Valentine Community Schools colors are red and white.

## **Complaint Procedure**

To reduce conflicts in the school's activities program, students and/or their parents should use the district's formal complaint procedure to manage conflicts about the program. The complaint procedure is printed in the school's student handbook and may be found on the district's web site: [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org).

## **Concussion Awareness**

The Nebraska Unicameral has found that concussions are one of the "most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities and that the risk of catastrophic injury or death is significant when a concussion or brain injury is not properly evaluated and managed."

The School District will:

- a. Require all coaches and trainers to complete one of the following on-line courses on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or brain injury and how to seek proper medical treatment for a concussion or brain injury:
  - Heads UP Concussions in Youth Sports
  - Concussion in Sports—What You Need to Know
  - Sports Safety International
  - ConcussionWise
  - ACTive™ Athletic Concussion Training for Coaches; and
- b. On an annual basis provide concussion and brain injury information to students and their parents or guardians prior to such students initiating practice or competition. This information will include:
  - 1 The signs and symptoms of a concussion;
  - 2 The risks posed by sustaining a concussion; and
  - 3 The actions a student should take in response to sustaining a concussion, including the notification of his or her coaches.

A student who participates on a school athletic team must be removed from a practice or game when he/she is reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury in such practice or game after observation by a coach or a licensed health care professional who is professionally affiliated with or contracted by the school. The student will not be permitted to participate in any school supervised team athletic activities involving physical exertion, including practices or games, until the student:

- a. has been evaluated by a licensed health care professional;
- b. has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed health care professional; and
- c. has submitted the written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities to the school accompanied by written permission to resume participation from the student's parent or guardian.

If a student is reasonably suspected after observation of having sustained a concussion or brain injury and is removed from an athletic activity, the parent or guardian of the student will be notified by the school of:

- a. the date and approximate time of the injury suffered by the student,
- b. the signs and symptoms of a concussion or brain injury that were observed, and
- c. any actions taken to treat the student.

The school district will not provide for the presence of a licensed health care professional at any practice or game.

School officials shall deem the signature of an individual who represents that he/she is a licensed health care professional on a written clearance to resume participation that is provided to the school to be conclusive and reliable evidence that the individual who signed the clearance is a licensed health care professional. The school will not take any additional or independent steps to verify the individual's qualifications.

## **Dances**

School dances are part of the district's extracurricular activity program. Students who wish to participate in school dances must comply with the activity code. Students may be prohibited from participating in school dances as a consequence for violating school rules or these activity rules.

### **Junior High/Middle School Dances**

Junior high/middle school (6-8) dances are restricted to students currently enrolled in the junior high school and will be sponsored by junior high teachers and parents. Any organization wishing to sponsor a junior high dance must obtain permission from the principal regarding date and times. Each dance must be sponsored by at least two faculty members and one additional adult couple. Once admitted to the dance, students must remain until the close of the dance. Students who leave the dance will not be readmitted. Students who are academically ineligible will not be allowed to attend school dances.

### **High School Dances**

All high school dances are restricted to Valentine High School students and their guests which must be approved by administration. Any organization wishing to sponsor a dance must obtain permission from the principal regarding date and times. Each dance must be sponsored by at least two faculty members and one additional adult couple. Once admitted to the dance, students must remain until the close of the dance. Students who leave the dance will not be readmitted. Students who are academically ineligible will not be allowed to attend school dances.

### **Homecoming and Prom**

The Homecoming dance is open to students and guests of Valentine High School.

The Junior/Senior Prom is open to students and guests of the Valentine High School junior and senior classes. Guests must follow all rules that the students must follow. Each student is responsible for his/her guest's conduct. Appropriate attire is required for these dances. No blue jeans, shorts, or T-shirts will be allowed at the banquet or dance for Prom. Black dress jeans will be acceptable.

### **Electronic Communication**

The school board supports the use of technology by coaches, extracurricular sponsors, and other staff members to communicate with students for legitimate educational, extracurricular, and other school-related purposes. However, electronic communication between students and teachers, sponsors, and coaches shall be appropriate at all times and shall not violate any law, district policies, or the Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria, commonly known as Rule 27 of the Nebraska Department of Education ("Rule 27"). Please see the Social Media Policy For School District Employees for further explanation.



## **Equipment**

Each participant in the athletic portion of the activities program will be issued a locker to store his/her personal belongings and school equipment that has been checked out. Students should secure their athletic lockers with combination locks.

School-owned clothing or equipment that is checked out to individual students remains the property of the school. The clothing or equipment is not to be used or worn by the student except for the intended use. Each piece of equipment or clothing is to be returned to the instructor or coach when the season or the use for such clothing or equipment is over. Each participant is responsible for all equipment checked out to him/her. Students will be assessed the replacement cost for school equipment that has been checked out to him/her and is lost or stolen.

## **Fundraising**

All school-sponsored fundraising activities must be approved by a member of the school district administration. Fundraising for any activity must comply with the district's policies, including applicable provisions specifically pertaining to Booster Clubs and PTOs for non-school-sponsored fundraising. Use of the school mascot shall not be permitted unless approved by the school district administration.

## **Individual Training Rules and Rules of Conduct**

Head coaches or sponsors may develop additional training rules or rules of conduct for their activity. Students are responsible for knowing these rules and complying with them.

## **Initiations and Hazing**

Initiations and hazing by members of classes, clubs, athletic teams, or any other organization affiliated with the district are prohibited except as otherwise permitted by this policy. Any student engaging in hazing or non-approved initiations is subject to discipline as permitted by policy and law.

Initiations are defined as any ritualistic expectations, requirements, or activities placed upon new members of a school organization for the purpose of admission into the organization, even if those activities do not rise to the level of "hazing" as defined below. Initiations are prohibited except by permission of the superintendent.

Hazing is defined as any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any school organization. Hazing activities include, but are not

limited to, whipping, beating, branding, an act of sexual penetration, an exposure of the genitals of the body done with the intent to affront or alarm any person, a lewd fondling or caressing of the body of another person, forced and prolonged calisthenics, prolonged exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or harmful substance not generally intended for human consumption, prolonged sleep deprivation, or any brutal treatment or the performance of any unlawful act that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any person.

### **Injuries**

Participants who suffer any type of injury while involved in extracurricular activities must notify the coach or sponsor immediately. The coach or sponsor will then evaluate the injury and, if necessary, notify the participant's parents or seek immediate medical treatment.

If at any time during participation a doctor removes an athlete from participation because of an illness or injury, the athlete must have a written release from a doctor before participating again. The written release must be given to the coach or sponsor of the activity.

Note: The release requirement will be satisfied if the initial doctor's order specifies the duration of the student's restriction from participation and/or competition. Also see Concussion Awareness above.

### **Insurance**

The school district does not provide medical or other insurance coverage for students who participate in athletic contests or other activities. It is the parents' responsibility to provide adequate insurance to cover any medical expenses that may be incurred while the student is participating in athletics or other activities.

The school district makes an accident insurance plan available for purchase by participants and their families through an authorized insurance agent. Information about policies which families may purchase will be available prior to each sports season and at fall registration.

### **Lettering Requirements**

The following guidelines will be used in determining students' eligibility for lettering:

**Football:** The athlete must participate in 50% of the varsity games, play in a state playoff game, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Volleyball:** The athlete must participate in 50% of the varsity games, play in a district game, or any student who is on the varsity roster should the team qualify for the state tournament, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Cross Country:** The athlete must participate in at least 50% of the meets at the varsity level, is a medalist at a conference or district meet, or who competes for a district team that qualifies for the state meet, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Basketball:** The athlete must participate in 50% of the varsity games, play in a district game, or any student who is on the varsity roster should the team qualify for the state tournament, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Golf:** The athlete must participate in at least 50% of the meets at the varsity level, is a medalist at a conference or district meet, or who competes for a district team that qualifies for the state meet, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Track:** The athlete must compete in 50% of varsity meets, places at a conference or district meet, or competes for a district championship, complete the season and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Wrestling:** The athlete must compete in 50% of varsity meets, places at a conference or district meet, or competes for a district championship, complete the season and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Student Managers:** The student manager must complete the season and have the recommendation of the head coach of the sport involved.

**Speech:** Student speakers must earn 75 points (through competition, practice and other events) earn a letter, or speakers who qualify for the state meets, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

**Drama:** Any student that is a part of the cast or crew at a district competition will receive a letter.

***\*\*Any student who does not qualify for a letter and is not able to compete during any part of the season because of illness or***

***injury, and in the opinion of the coach, the student would have lettered had they not experienced the injury or illness, may receive a letter at the recommendation of the Head Coach with the approval of the Activities Director.***

***\*\*Any student who violates the activities policy and is suspended for 30 days for a first offense, fifteen days for a self-reported first offense, or is suspended for the remainder of the school year for a second offense, and who meets the requirements to receive a letter, will not receive the letter because of the violation of the activities policy.***

### **Mascot**

The official emblem for boys' and girls' athletic teams is the Badger. The mascot cannot be used for non-school-sponsored purposes unless approved by the superintendent.

### **Practices**

The individual head coach or sponsor, in cooperation with the high school principal, will schedule all starting times of practices. All participants are expected to be ready at the time set by the coach or sponsor.

To be eligible to practice, a participant must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Submit to the coach or sponsor a signed physical form and Activities Code that verifies that a physical examination has been completed and that the student and parent(s) understand the school's position regarding the use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, and other related drugs.
2. Furnish the high school principal with proof of insurance.

### **Secret Organizations**

Secret organizations are prohibited. School officials shall not allow any person or representative of any such organization to enter upon school grounds or school buildings for the purpose of rushing or soliciting students to participate in any secret fraternity, society, or association.

### **Student Manager, Helpers, or Activity Aids**

Students wishing to serve as student volunteers for extracurricular activities must gain the permission of the activity coach or sponsor. Student volunteers must comply with all of the rules and procedures contained in this handbook.

## **Sunday and Wednesday Night Activities**

In order to provide students sufficient time away from school for family-related activities, the school will endeavor not to schedule activities on Wednesday evenings or on Sundays. Practices will be organized so that all participants are showered, dressed, and/or leave the facilities by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday nights. An exception to this guideline would be when a team, group of students, or an individual may be required to participate in an activity sponsored by the conference, district, or state on a Wednesday night.

The school does not allow Sunday practice sessions, except when a varsity team, group of students, or individual is scheduled to compete or perform on a Monday. Practices scheduled for a Sunday must have the prior approval of the activities director or building principal.

## **Transportation**

All participants are expected to ride to and from away activities by means of approved school transportation. Exceptions must be approved by the administration.

1. When students are transported by car, van or bus, an approved adult (at least 21 years of age) must drive. In the case of a bus, an approved sponsor in addition to the driver must be present.
2. Students representing Valentine Community Schools as members of a school sponsored group must travel to and from the site in school transportation unless prior arrangements have been made with the Activities Director or other administrator. Parents may sign a release with the sponsor at the event to transport their student only from the event.
3. A transportation request form must be filled out and signed by the parent by 12:30 p.m. on the day of the event, or by 12:30 p.m. on Friday if it is a Saturday event, if they request that their student travel with an adult designated by the parents (the designated adult cannot be a student of Valentine High School or any other high school). Exceptions may be made by the Activities Director, Principal, or Superintendent.
4. Parents are discouraged from requesting to take their children home after an away contest or performance. Travel to and from an event provides time for the students to further develop a strong team concept.

### **Bus Regulations**

1. Riding school vehicles is a privilege, not a right. The bus drivers have the same authority as teachers while transporting students. Students must comply with the following rules and all school conduct rules and directives while riding in school vehicles. In addition, students must also comply with the student code of conduct while riding in school vehicles. If misconduct is recurring, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus.

### **Rules of Conduct on School Vehicles:**

- 1) Students must obey the driver promptly.
- 2) Students must wait in a safe place for the bus to arrive, clear of traffic and away from where the vehicle stops.
- 3) Students are prohibited from fighting, engaging in bullying, harassment, or horseplay.
- 4) Students must enter the bus without crowding or disturbing others and go directly to their assigned seats.
- 5) Students must remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear while the vehicle is moving.
- 6) Students are prohibited from throwing or passing objects on, from, or into vehicles.
- 7) Students may not use profane language, obscene gestures, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the vehicles.
- 8) Students may not carry weapons, look-a-like weapons, hazardous materials, nuisance items, or animals onto the vehicle.
- 9) Students may carry on conversations in ordinary tones, but may not loud or boisterous and should avoid talking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion. Students must be absolutely quiet when the vehicle approaches a railroad crossing and any time the driver calls for quiet.
- 10) Students may not open windows without permission from the driver. Students may not dangle any item (e.g. legs, arms, backpacks) out of the windows.
- 11) Student must secure any item or items that could break or produce injury if tossed about the inside of the vehicle if the vehicle were involved in an accident
- 12) Student must respect the rights and safety of others at all times.
- 13) Students must help keep the vehicle clean, sanitary, and orderly. Students must remove all personal items and trash upon exiting.
- 14) Students may not leave or board the vehicle at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school unless approved prior to departure by the superintendent or designee.
- 15) Video cameras may be placed on buses, at random, to monitor student behavior on the bus.

### **Consequences**

1. Drivers must promptly report all student misconduct to the administration. These reports may be oral or written. Students who violate the Rules for Conduct will be referred to their building principal for discipline. Disciplinary consequences may include a note home to parents, suspension of bus riding privileges, exclusion from extracurricular activities, in-school suspension, short term or long term suspension from school, and/or expulsion.

2. These consequences are not progressive, and school officials have discretion to impose any listed punishment they deem appropriate, in accordance with state and federal law and board policy

### **Records**

1. Records of vehicle misconduct will be forwarded to the appropriate building principal and will be maintained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of serious misconduct may be forwarded to law enforcement.

### **Weight Room**

The weight room has been developed to help each athlete, student, or adult in the community maintain a level of physical fitness. No one may use the weight room or equipment without proper supervision. The school will develop a schedule for use of the weight room by athletes during the school year and during the summer months.

The weight room is a high demand area within the school facilities. The following guidelines will help determine the priorities in reference to use if more than one group desires to use the facility at the same time:

1. Physical education instruction
2. By the team sports, which are in season
3. Conditioning programs for athletes not currently out for a sport
4. Summer conditioning programs
5. Adult education

## **SECTION TWO: AVAILABLE ACTIVITIES**

### **Athletic Teams**

- Basketball
- Cross County
- Football
- Golf
- Track
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

### **Cheer Squad**

Participants are selected by the sponsor(s) or judges appointed by the sponsor. Members of the cheer squad will attend all home and selected away athletic contests.

### **Drama**

Drama (One-Act Play Production, 6<sup>th</sup> grade play) activities create an understanding of and appreciation for dramatic literature and to instruct students in acting and play production by bringing life to a story before a live audience

### **FBLA**

FBLA is an integral part of the vocational business department and membership is limited to those students with at least one semester of work in the business education field. One of the primary objectives of FBLA is developing leadership and responsibility.

### **FFA**

FFA is an integral part of the agricultural education department and all students of that department are urged to belong. The activities include training in leadership, opportunities for travel and recreation, and safety and community service activities. Students may participate in field trips, conventions, judging contests, and hands-on experience.

### **Mock Trial**

Mock trial is an activity sponsored by the Nebraska Bar Foundation and designed to give high school students an opportunity to improve their knowledge of legal and judicial systems, speaking skills, analytical skills, reading and writing skills.



### **National Honor Society**

The National Honor Society is a national organization that recognizes student character, scholarship, leadership, and service to the school.

Students must have an overall average of 91% or better without having any failing grades at the time of application. Application does not guarantee a student's selection into the National Honor Society. Each eligible student must complete a student activity information form. Each student's scholarship, character, service and leadership are evaluated by a faculty committee on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (superior). Students who receive a total of 80% of the available points from all voting faculty members will be contacted concerning membership election.

### **Student Government**

The purpose of student government is to arouse the spirit of loyalty toward the school, to promote good citizenship, to sponsor school activities, to extend the spirit of good fellowship throughout the student body, to foster a spirit of cooperation between the students and faculty, and to seek to develop a spirit of cooperation, good will, and better understanding with other schools. The organization, operation, and scope of the student government shall be administered by the Superintendent or designee.

### **Student Publications**

The yearbook is published by the Journalism class along with the help of its teacher. The annual is financed partially by funds raised from the sale of the books.

### **Speech**

Speech events are conceived and structured to provide educational experiences for students designed to provide training toward the following: Speaking, reading, performance, research, organization, critical thinking, communication skills, self-expression, creativity, improved cultural awareness, and appreciation of literature.

### **Quiz Bowl**

Quiz bowl is a quiz-based competition that tests players on a wide variety of academic subjects.

## **SECTION THREE: CODE OF CONDUCT**

All students associated with Valentine Community Schools and participating in extracurricular or school sponsored activities (including all NSAA activities) are required to avoid conduct that is detrimental to the integrity of, and public confidence in, the school. Rules promoting lawful, ethical, and responsible conduct serve the interests of all people associated with the school. Illegal and irresponsible conduct puts people at risk, tarnishes the reputation of the offender and everyone else associated with the school, and undermines the public support and respect of the school district.

**Standard of Conduct.** Participation in school-sponsored or extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right. Participants must follow board policy, this code, and all the training rules and rules of conduct of the coaches and/or activity sponsors. Students participating in school-sponsored or extracurricular activities are held to a high standard. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that is lawful, responsible, promotes the values upon which the school is based, and that brings credit to themselves and the school. Students who fail to live up to the required standard of conduct are guilty of detrimental conduct and subject to discipline under all school policies, the general student code of conduct, and these Activity Participation Rules.

**Coach and Sponsor Rules.** Coaches and/or activity sponsors shall establish training rules or rules of conduct for participation in or attendance at the activity or event. General training rules or rules of conduct shall be established prior to the activity or event. This Code shall control in the event that there is a conflict with coach or sponsor rules.

**Prohibited Conduct.** Students in school-sponsored and/or extracurricular activities may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Receipt of a criminal citation by law enforcement for any reason.
2. Conviction of a crime in adult court or the adjudication of a criminal charge in juvenile court.
3. Any behavior that is illegal under the laws of Nebraska or the United States of America regardless of whether it results in a criminal charge or conviction.
4. Any conduct that substantially interferes with the educational process or disrupts the activity or event.
5. Possession, consumption, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco, controlled substances, or any lookalike or imitations thereof; or being in the presence of alcohol, illicit drugs, controlled substances, or any lookalike or imitations thereof that are

being possessed, consumed, used, or distributed by any person under twenty-one (21) years of age without parental supervision. "Lookalike or imitations" means substances such as K2 and products like electronic nicotine delivery systems, vapor pens, etc. (Note: the term "under the influence" for school purposes has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the use or abuse of any substance for the purpose of inducing a condition of intoxication, stupefaction, depression, giddiness, paralysis, inebriation, excitement, or irrational behavior, or in any manner changing, distorting, or disturbing the auditory, visual, mental, or nervous processes).

6. Engaging in initiations, defined as any ritualistic expectations, requirements, or activities placed upon new members of a school organization for the purpose of admission into the organization, even if those activities do not rise to the level of "hazing" as defined below. Initiations are prohibited except by permission of the superintendent.
7. Engaging in hazing as defined by state law and this policy. Hazing is defined as any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any school organization. Under state criminal law, hazing activities include, but are not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, an act of sexual penetration, an exposure of the genitals of the body done with the intent to affront or alarm any person, a lewd fondling or caressing of the body of another person, forced and prolonged calisthenics, prolonged exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or harmful substance not generally intended for human consumption, prolonged sleep deprivation, or any brutal treatment or the performance of any unlawful act that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any person. For purposes of school rules, hazing also includes any activity expected of someone joining a group, team, or activity that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate; personal servitude; restrictions on personal hygiene; yelling, swearing and insulting new members/rookies; being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public; consumption of vile substances or smearing of such on one's skin; binge drinking and drinking games; sexual simulation and sexual assault.
8. Bullying which shall include cyber-bullying, defined as the use of the internet, including but not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook, cell phones or other devices to send, post, or text message images and material intended to hurt or embarrass another person. This may include, but is not limited to; continuing to send e-mail to someone

who has said they want no further contact with the sender; sending or posting threats, sexual remarks, or pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech); ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums; posting false statements as fact intended to humiliate the victim; disclosure of personal data, such as the victim's real name, address, or school at websites or forums; posing as the identity of the victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames or ridicules them; sending threatening and harassing text, instant messages, or emails to the victims; and posting or sending rumors or gossip to instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target.

9. Using any Internet or social networking websites to make statements, post pictures, or take any other actions that are indecent, vulgar, lewd, slanderous, abusive, threatening, harassing, or terrorizing.
10. Violating any school policy, handbook provision, or a coach's or activity sponsor's training rules or rules of conduct.
11. Dressing or grooming in a manner which is (A) dangerous to the student's health and safety or a danger to the health and safety of others, (B) lewd, indecent, vulgar, or plainly offensive, (C) materially and substantially disruptive to the work and discipline of the school or an extracurricular activity, (D) interpreted to advocate the use of illegal drugs or other substances by a reasonable observer.
12. Failing to report for an activity at the beginning of a season unless excused by the coach or activity sponsor.
13. Failing to attend scheduled practices and meetings unless excused by the coach or activity sponsor.

School Year: Such conduct is prohibited during the school year, regardless of whether it occurs on-campus or off-campus. School year means the period commencing on the first day of fall sports practice through the last day of spring sports practice, events, or attendance at school for a given school year.

**Discipline.** Students who violate any provision of these Activity Participation Rules may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion from extracurricular activities and school sponsored events. (including but not limited to graduation ceremony and related activities). These disciplinary consequences and this Activity Code of Conduct are in addition to and do not prejudice, diminish, impede, or reduce any discipline that is authorized by the Nebraska Student Discipline Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 79-254 to 79-294, Board Policy, or the Student Handbook. Disciplinary action may include a probationary period and conditions that must be satisfied prior to or following reinstatement. Administrators and coaches will take the following into consideration when making disciplinary decisions:

1. Any prior or additional misconduct;
2. The nature and seriousness of the offense;

3. The motivation for the offense;
4. The amount of violence involved;
5. The student's demeanor and attitude regarding the violation;
6. The actual, threatened, or potential risk to the student and others due to the student's behavior;
7. Whether the student has compensated or will compensate the victim in the event of property damage or personal injury;
8. Whether the circumstances of the violation are likely to recur;
9. The student's willingness to participate in evaluations, counseling, or other programs;
10. Any mitigating factors;
11. Any other relevant factors.

If suspended, the student must continue to participate in practices and conditioning during the suspension if required by the coach or activity sponsor. The failure to comply with the practice and conditioning requirement will make the student ineligible for reinstatement to the activity.

**Evaluation, Counseling, and Treatment.** Apart from any other disciplinary procedures, students who violate any provision of these rules may be required to undergo a formal clinical evaluation at the administration's discretion. Based upon the results of that evaluation, the student may be encouraged or required to participate in an education program, counseling, or other treatment deemed appropriate by the evaluating professional.

**Reporting of Incident.** Students shall report any violation of these rules to the coach, principal, or superintendent no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of the next school day after the violation has occurred. Failure to report an incident will constitute a violation of these rules and will be taken into consideration in making disciplinary determinations under this policy.

**Discipline Procedures.** Prior to any disciplinary action under this activities code, the following procedures shall be followed:

As used in this "Discipline Procedures" section, "Investigator" means the coach or activity sponsor of the team or activity in which the student is participating, or any teacher, school official, or school representative whom the Principal or the Superintendent has authorized to perform the duties and responsibilities of "Investigator" as described below.

1. The Investigator shall make an investigation of alleged violation and provide an opportunity for the student to present his or her version of the facts surrounding the alleged violation.
2. The Investigator shall consider all information obtained as a result of the investigation, including information obtained from the student, and shall render a decision regarding disciplinary action. Within a reasonable period of time of the Investigator's decision, the student and his/her parent or guardian shall be given written notice of the disciplinary action taken by the Investigator.

**Review of Investigator's Decision.** A student or the student's parents may, within five (5) school days of the notice of disciplinary action from the Investigator, notify the superintendent in writing of their request for a review of the coach or activity sponsor's determination. The superintendent or his or her designee shall review the situation and render a decision within three (3) school days from the date of the request for review. The superintendent's decision shall be in writing and shall be final.

**Misrepresentations.** Any misrepresentation of fact by a student regarding any alleged violation of these rules shall be considered a separate violation of these rules, and the student shall be subject to additional disciplinary action.

**Questions.** Any parent or student who has questions about board policy, this code, training rules, or rules of conduct of coaches or activity sponsors, or their interpretation or application shall consult with the activities director and/or the superintendent.

**Assistance.** Students are encouraged to consult with their coach, an administrator, a counselor, or a teacher to obtain access to educational, counseling, and other programs and resources that may be available to help avoid misconduct that may result in discipline under this policy.

## **A Parent's Guide to Concussions**

### **WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness ("knocked-out") to suffer a concussion.

### **CONCUSSION FACTS**

- It is estimated that more than 140,000 high school athletes across the United States suffer a concussion each year. (Data from NFHS Injury Surveillance System).
- Concussions occur most frequently in football, but girl's lacrosse, girls' soccer, boy's lacrosse, wrestling, and girls' basketball follow closely behind. All athletes are at risk.
- A concussion is a traumatic injury to the brain.
- Concussion symptoms may last from a few days to several months.
- Concussions can cause symptoms that interfere with school, work, and social life.
- Athletes who have symptoms from a concussion should not return to sports because they are still at risk for prolonging symptoms and further injury.
- A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others may develop over the next several days or weeks. The symptoms may be subtle and are often difficult to fully recognize.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?**

#### Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

#### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD HAS HAD A CONCUSSION?**

An athlete who is suspected of having a concussion must be removed from play immediately, whether it is in a game or practice. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk of further injury, and even death. Parents and coaches are 7 stop playing:

### **WHEN IN DOUBT – SIT THEM OUT!**

Every athlete who sustains a concussion needs to be evaluated by a health care professional who is familiar with sports concussions. Parents should call their child's physician, explain what has happened, and follow the physician's instructions. A child who is vomiting, has a severe headache, or has difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions should be taken to the parent's doctor or emergency room immediately.

## **WHEN MAY AN ATHLETE RETURN TO PLAY FOLLOWING A CONCUSSION?**

No athlete who has suffered a concussion should return to play or practice the same day. Previously, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to return to activity in such a short time.

Concerns about athletes who return to play too quickly have led state lawmakers in Oregon and Washington to pass laws stating that **no athlete shall return to play on the day he or she suffered a concussion and the athlete must be cleared by an appropriate health care professional before he or she are allowed to return to play in games or practices.** The laws also mandate that coaches receive education on recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion.

Once an athlete is free of symptoms of a concussion and is cleared to return to play by a health care professional knowledgeable in the care of sports concussions, he or she should proceed with activity in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to readjust to exertion. On average, the athlete will complete a new step each day. The return-to-play schedule should proceed as below following medical clearance:

*Step 1:* Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.

*Step 2:* Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

*Step 3:* Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight training can begin.

*Step 4:* Full contact practice or training.

*Step 5:* Game play.

If symptoms occur at any step, the athlete should cease activity and be re-evaluated by a health care provider.

## **HOW CAN A CONCUSSION AFFECT SCHOOLWORK?**

Following a concussion, many athletes will have difficulty in school. These problems may last from days to months and often involve difficulties with short and long-term memory, concentration, and organization.

In many cases, it is best to reduce the athlete's class load after the injury. This may include staying home from school for a few days, followed by a lightened schedule for a few days or



perhaps a longer period of time if needed. Decreasing the stress on the brain soon after a concussion may reduce symptoms and shorten the recovery period.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

- Both you and your child should learn to recognize the “Signs and Symptoms” of a concussion as listed above.
- Emphasize to administrators, coaches, teachers, and other parents your concerns and expectations about concussion and safe play.
- Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she experiences such symptoms.
- Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she suspects that a teammate has a concussion.
- Monitor sports equipment for safety, fit, and maintenance.
- Ask teachers to monitor any decrease in grades or changes in behavior that could indicate concussion.
- Report concussions that occurred during the school year to appropriate school staff. This will help in monitoring injured athletes as they move to the next season’s sports.

### **OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

#### **Why is it so important that an athlete not return to play until they have completely recovered from a concussion?**

An athlete who has not fully recovered from an initial concussion is very vulnerable to recurrent, cumulative, and even catastrophic consequences of a second concussive injury. Such difficulties are prevented if the athlete is allowed time to recover from the concussion and return-to-play decisions are carefully made. No athlete should return to sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of a concussion are present and recovery is ongoing.

#### **Is a “CT scan” or MRI needed to diagnose a concussion?**

Diagnostic testing which includes CT (“CAT”) and MRI scans are rarely needed following a concussion. While these are helpful in identifying life-threatening brain injuries (e.g., skull fracture, bleeding, swelling), they are not normally used, even by athletes who have sustained severe concussions. A concussion is diagnosed based upon the athlete’s story of the injury and the health care provider’s physical examination.

#### **What is the best treatment to help my child recover more quickly from a concussion?**

The best treatment for a concussion is rest. There are no medications that can speed the recovery from a concussion. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television, and phones (including text messaging) may exacerbate the symptoms of a concussion. You should allow your child to rest as much as possible in the days following a concussion. As the symptoms decrease, you may allow increased use of computers, phone, video games, etc., but the access must be reduced if symptoms worsen.

#### **How long do the symptoms of a concussion usually last?**

The symptoms of a concussion will usually go away within one week of the initial injury. You should anticipate that your child will likely be out of sports for about two weeks following a concussion. However, in some cases, symptoms may last for several weeks or even months. Symptoms such as headache, memory problems, poor concentration, and mood changes can interfere with school, work, and social interactions. The potential for such long-term symptoms indicates the need for careful management of all concussions.

**How many concussions can an athlete have before he or she should stop playing sports?**

There is no “magic number” of concussions that determine when an athlete should give up playing contact or collision sports. The circumstances surrounding each individual injury, such as the way the injury happened and length of symptoms following the concussion are very important and must be considered when assessing the athlete’s risk for further and potentially more serious concussions. The decision to “retire” from sports is a decision best reached following a complete evaluation by your child’s primary care provider and consultation with a physician or neuropsychologist who specializes in treating sports concussion.

**I’ve read recently that concussions may cause long-term brain damage in professional football players. Is this a risk for high school athletes who have had a concussion?**

The issue of “chronic encephalopathy” in several former NFL players has received a great deal of media attention lately. Very little is known about what may be causing dramatic abnormalities in the brains of these unfortunate retired football players. At this time, we have very little knowledge of the long-term effects of concussions that happen during high school athletics.

In the cases of the retired NFL players, it appears that most had long careers in the NFL after playing in high school and college. In most cases, they played football for over 20 years and suffered multiple concussions in addition to hundreds of other blows to their heads. Alcohol and steroid use may also be contributing factors in some cases. Obviously, the average high school athlete does not come close to suffering the total number or sheer force of head trauma seen by professional football players. However, the fact that we know very little about the long-term effects of concussions in young athletes is further reason to carefully manage each concussion.

Adapted from [A Parent’s Guide to Concussion in Sports](#), National Federation of High School Associations.

Some of this information has been adapted from the CDC’s “Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports” materials by the NFHS’s Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Please go to [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches\\_Tool\\_Kit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm) for more information.

**AUTHORIZATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**WARNING: SERIOUS CATASTROPHIC AND PERHAPS FATAL INJURY MAY RESULT FROM ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION**

Many forms of athletic competition result in violent physical contact among players, the use of equipment that may result in accidents, strenuous physical exertion, and numerous other exposures to risk of injury. Students and parents must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution, or supervision will eliminate these risks. Students have suffered accidents resulting in death, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other very serious permanent physical impairment while playing sports. By granting permission for your student to participate in athletic competition, you, the parent or guardian, acknowledge that such risk exists. Students will be instructed in proper techniques to be used in athletic competition and in the proper utilization of all equipment worn or used in practice and competition. Students must adhere to that instruction and utilization and must refrain from improper uses and techniques.

I understand the statement above and I understand that by allowing my student to participate in athletic events, I assume the risk that he/she may be injured, perhaps severely.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDUCT CODE**

I understand that as a student representing the school district in activities, I am obligated to comply with the athletic handbook, including the code of conduct. **This means that I may not possess, use, or be at parties in the presence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or controlled substances at any time during the school term unless I am accompanied by a parent.** I understand that if I violate the code of conduct or other rules in this handbook, I may be suspended from participation in all co-curricular activities and/or school sponsored activities or events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I understand that my student is obligated by this handbook, including the statements above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date