

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce to student-athletes and their parents/guardians to the philosophy behind our program and the regulations and policies, which govern it. Although this handbook cannot include every policy and rule that applies to athletics, the most crucial and fundamental rules are contained within. It is our expectation that parents and students will read this handbook in a thorough manner. In this way, misunderstanding about our rules may be avoided. After having read the handbook, parents and students are required to sign the athletic permission form that is found on the last page of the handbook. Students who return this completed form have provided us with the indication that they understand and will abide by all policies and rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, our league and Gateway Regional High School.

SECTION TWO: PHILOSOPHY

Gateway Regional High School believes that athletics are an important part of a sound educational program and that PARTICIPATION IS A PRIVILEGE available to all eligible students. While physical skill and demonstrated ability are primary considerations in determining actual participation, we believe that all aspects of secondary school athletics are subordinate to the essential purpose for which schools exist and must be controlled by educational considerations. This privilege carries with it serious personal responsibilities to the school, the student body, the faculty, and the town that the athlete represents. Interscholastic athletics provides the “other half” of education. The program strives to develop in students’ positive values and habits so that personal growth and development occur. Improved skill levels, a heightened sense of cooperation and competition, self-discipline, and realization of the value of group goals are just some of the objectives of the athletic program. Successful competitive performance in combination with educational considerations provides the cornerstone for our athletic program. All athletes will be given the same opportunity to demonstrate their skill levels before teams are selected. The young man or woman who learns to cope with victory and defeat; to accept frustrations and disappointments as well as success; to spend long hours in practice with no guarantee that they will get in the game; to accept discipline and to work with fellow athletes, has learned about things that cannot be taught in the classroom. The program of athletics plays a unique role in joining the school and community. Civic pride and identification with Gateway Regional High School are results of athletic participation that can last a lifetime.

SECTION THREE: PARTICIPATION

Subject to restrictions on team size, the athletic program will be open to all students who are physically able to participate and who are eligible under local and state regulations. An unlimited participation policy will be used whenever possible. There are factors, however, which may indicate that the total number of players on a team be limited in order to maintain a high level of safety, coaching, playing time, and cost effectiveness. It is the judgement of the coaches that dictates the selection of participants during practice, technical, tactical, and game situations. All athletes are given fair and ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities prior to the commencement of league and non-league competition.

SECTION FOUR: MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE

School insurance for the medical treatment of sport-related injuries is applicable only after the parents’ health insurance if any, has been used. Our insurance is scheduled excess coverage and generally will not pay the full cost of treatment. The cost of medical benefit insurance on a total basis would be so costly as to effectively eliminate the program. While the coaching staff and other responsible school officials will do everything within reason to protect your child against injury including the provision of appropriate equipment, safe facilities, and training designed to reduce the impact of accidents, injuries will occur, and on a very rare occasion may be serious and disabling. If you are concerned about this possibility, you should discuss it with your child’s coach.

SECTION FIVE: GATEWAY REGIONAL JUNIOR HIGH & HIGH SCHOOL RULES

1) TRYOUTS & TEAM SELECTION

1.1- Any student interested in trying out for any team must attend tryouts. All students should plan ahead and understand the time commitments they will have to commit to, to be part of the program. If a student cannot attend tryouts, they must meet with the Director of Athletics (family outings and/or vacations, work, and other extracurricular activities are not reasons for missing tryouts).

1.2-The following is required that each student must complete, sign, and return to that Athletic Director before the student may tryout:

A current physical examination, by a physician, on file with the school nurse within 13 months of the first day of tryouts. Verification of passing a Physical Exam (within the last 13 months) is required to be on file with the school nurse before participation is allowed. (Outside exams are permitted but must state specifically that the student is allowed.)

Interscholastic Permission Form (Form 1 back of handbook)

Pre Participation Head injury/Concussion form (Form 2 in the back of the handbook)

Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet (Form 3 in the back of the handbook)

M.I.A.A Medical History Form- Side A (Form 4 in the back of the handbook)

Academically eligible (grades will be checked by Director of Athletics to ensure all athletes are eligible).

1.3- Each coach will explain his/her attendance policies and any other training and team rules. Your child will be required to follow all MIAA rules. In addition to the strict observance of these rules, your child will be expected to continue to meet all regular school obligations of citizenship and academic achievement. Coaches may make rules governing the conduct of players and the requirements of training and practice. These rules, which are not to be in conflict with any regulations of the high school or MIAA and must be approved by the Athletic Director and shared with players before they are in effect. Violations of these rules may result in temporary or permanent suspension from the team.

1.4- Not all students who wish to participate in interscholastic athletics may be able to do so. The size of a team is necessarily limited by the availability of supplies, equipment, and coaching staff. Cuts will be made, when necessary, on the basis of skill development, readiness for: competition, and observance of the rules. No child will be permitted to compete until in the opinion of the coach her or she is ready to do so.

1.5- Students cannot tryout for a team if they are academically ineligible.

1.6- Students cannot tryout for a team once the final roster has been handed to the Athletic Director.

1.7- Students may not change from one sport to another once the team roster has been submitted to the Athletic Director. No student suspended or dismissed from a team may transfer to another team during that season.

1.8- MIAA RULE 24.Captain's Practice

The term "Captain's Practice" usually means the team's captain(s) organizing and conducting, without adult supervision, out-of-season practice for that sport. The MIAA does not in any way sanction, encourage, or condone "Captain's Practice" in any sport. "Captain's Practice", depending on the member school's involvement, may be a clear violation of the rule defining season limitations. There is also a serious practical consideration. If it can be demonstrated that a school is allowing "Captain's Practice", the liability responsibility for an injured athlete may be quite serious.

1.9-MIAA RULE 45. Loyalty to the High School Team: Bona fide team members

A bona fide member of the school's team is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team sessions(e.g. practices, tryouts, competitions). Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity/event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. First offense: Student athlete is suspended for 25% of the season(see chart on rule 62). Second offense: Student athlete is suspended for an additional 25% of the season, and is ineligible for

tournament play immediately upon confirmation of the violation. See rule 96 for additional tournament restriction and rule 86 for waiver guidelines.

2) USER FEES

- 2.1- Any fees due (including all financial obligations to the school) must be paid in full before a student can be issued a uniform and/or compete in an interscholastic game.
- 2.2- Each student who becomes a member of a Gateway Regional athletic team (Varsity or Junior Varsity) will pay a \$132.00 fee per sport per season.
- 2.3- An athlete qualifying for reduced lunch will pay a \$100.00 fee per sport per season.
- 2.4- An athlete qualifying for free lunch will pay a \$66.00 fee per sport per season.
- 2.5- Any family with multiple athletes will be charged a maximum fee of \$700.00 (including parking fee) in any given school year.
- 2.6- Any family qualifying for reduced lunch with multiple athletes will be charged a maximum fee of \$525.00 fee per sport per season.
- 2.7- Any family qualifying for free lunch with multiple athletes will be charged a maximum fee of \$350.00 in any given school year.
- 2.8- At the time that the user fee and/or other financial obligation to the district is paid, the athlete will be issued a receipt to be given to the coach in order for a uniform to be issued.
- 2.9- Payment of these fees does not entitle an athlete to a specific amount of playing time. Playing time will be determined by each individual coach.
- 2.10- Any athlete who voluntarily leaves a team or is dropped from the team for disciplinary or eligibility reasons will not be granted a refund.
- 2.11- Students injured prior to the first contest in their sport who are forced to leave the team for the remainder of the season will receive a refund.
- 2.12- All of Gateway's interscholastic athletic teams and cheerleading squads are subject to these fees.
- 2.13- Hardship cases (financial aid) will be considered on an individual basis. In situations where a student's parents or guardian is unable to pay an authorized deposit or fee, the fee may be waived. Waived fees will be at the discretion of the athletic director, high school principal, and business office.

3) UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- 3.1- School equipment issued to your child for participation is his or her responsibility and must be returned promptly upon request. Reimbursement from the student will be expected for loss or destruction beyond ordinary wear and tear. Violations of this rule will render the student-athlete ineligible for further interscholastic competitions and intramurals. Seniors may not graduate until all uniforms and equipment are returned. The athlete must pay for all lost equipment.
- 3.2- Team uniforms are for games only. They are not to be worn for practices and/or gym class. Any athlete that wears any piece of their uniform for other than games, could be suspended for one game.
- 3.3- NO CLEATS ARE TO BE WORN IN THE SCHOOL AT ANYTIME! Any athlete that wears their cleats in the building could be suspended for one game.
- 3.4- No jewelry may be worn at practices or games. (exception-medical forms of identification, training equipment)

4. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1- Students will be required to pass the equivalent of five full semester classes out of seven full semester classes to obtain athletic per athletic season, and be known as a full qualifier. This is in difference to MIAA RULE 58.1 (which is inclosed for comparison). Students who pass the equivalent of four full semester classes out of seven full semester classes will be allowed to continue with a team in a non-game participant role, or partial qualifier. Students must have full qualifier eligibility to try out for a sport. Eligibility can only be gained or lost with the distribution of report card grades and is not affected by grades during the quarter.

MIAA RULE 58. Student Eligibility: Academic Requirements

58.1- A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (e.g second quarter marks and not semester grades determine third quarter eligibility) a passing grade, and full credit, in the equivalent of four traditional year long major english courses. A transfer student may not gain academic eligibility if he/she was not, or would not be, eligible at the sending school, unless transfer was necessitated by a move of parents and then eligibility would be determined by receiving schools eligibility standards. (See rule 57.7.1)

58.2- A student cannot at any time represent a school unless that student is taking courses which would provide Carnegie Units equivalent to four traditional year long major English courses.

58.3- To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have passed and received full credits for the previous academic year (FINAL GRADES) the equivalent to four traditional year long major english courses.

58.4- Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determined on the published date when the report cards for that ranking period are to be issued to the parents of all students within a particular class.

58.5- Incomplete grades may not be counted toward eligibility until they are made up following school policy.

58.6- A student who repeats work upon which he/she has once received credit cannot count that subject a second time for eligibility.

58.7- A student cannot count for eligibility any subject taken during the summer, unless that subject was pursued and failed during the immediately preceding academic year.

5. SUSPENSIONS

5.1- Any athlete suspended from school EXTERNALLY will not be allowed to practice, play, or participate in any team function during the time of suspension. The student will not be allowed to attend practice, travel with the team to any away game, or be on the bench at a home game. If the suspension includes a friday, the athlete will not be allowed to take part in any activity on the weekend. The athlete must participate in a practice session before competing in a game situation.

5.2- Any student-athlete that has INTERNAL SUSPENSION will not be allowed to practice, play. or participate in any team function during the suspension. The student will not be allowed to attend practice, travel with the team to any away game, or be on the bench at a home game. The athlete must participate in a practice session before competing in a game situation. Special exceptions may be granted by the Principal and Director of Athletics.

5.3- Any student suspended under MIAA rules will not be allowed to dress in his/her team uniform during their suspension.

5.4- THE GATEWAY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND FOR OTHER BEHAVIORAL CIRCUMSTANCES NOT LISTED.

6. HAZING & TAUNTING POLICIES

6.1- Hazing: any conduct of method of initiation into any team, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or method health of a student is not allowed! Such conduct is a crime under Massachusetts's law and will not be tolerated. Penalty for hazing is dismissal from the team.

6.2-Taunting Policy: Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting include but are not limited to “trash talk”, defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/ hers skills, effort, sexual orientation or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an alteration or physical response: intimidation outside the spirit of the game, including “in the face” confrontation by one player to another and standing over/ straddling a tackled or fallen player. In all the sports, officials are to are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul and disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest / day of competition. In addition, the offender shall be subject to existing M.I.A.A Expulsion Rules. A warning shall be given to both teams by game officials prior to the contest At all M.I.A.A contest sites and tournament venues, appropriate management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt players, coaches, game officials or the spectators are subjected to ejection.

7. ATTENDANCE

7.1- Students must attend at least a half day of school to participate in any team meeting, practice or game on that day

7.2- If a student is absent “un-excused” from school he / she is not eligible to practice or play and is also not eligible to travel with the team or be on the team bench

7.3- Any athlete who is absent “un-excused” from school on a day prior to a non-school day is not eligible to participate in a practice or game on the first non-school day following the absence. Excused absences must be verified by the High School Principal. Special exceptions may be granted by the principal and Director of Athletics. It is the philosophy of the athletic department that student-athletes are in school and at practice the day before a game.

7.4- Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled competitions (league or non-league) and practices during the course of the entire season. As a general rule, Sundays are will not be utilized by the athletic department for games. Rescheduling, however, (for any reason) may necessitate using Sundays. Athletes missing games or practices for religious reasons and/or family emergencies will not be penalized in any way.

7.5- Athletes must participate in their regular scheduled physical education classes or they will not be allowed to practice or play on that day.

7.6- Athletes who miss practices or games due to family outings, holidays, vacations, jobs, or participation in extracurricular activities other than athletics risk losing their position in the team lineup, playing time, and/or game suspensions. This also applies to non-mandatory school trips and events. It is against the region’s athletic policy to move games due to the absence of players due to non-mandatory school events or absences for personal reasons.

7.7-Due to the increased number of conflicts for athletic activities and other activities, athletic activities will be rescheduled for the following reasons: prom, semi-formal, graduation, weather related issues, and unplayable field/facility conditions. Secondary priority will be made for mandatory school events (such as NHS induction and mandatory band concerts). There will be no priority to change games due to non-mandatory field trips (in this case, junior varsity games may be canceled to allow for a varsity competition to take place).

8. TRANSPORTATION

8.1- Athletes must travel to and from contests in transportation provided by the school.

8.2- A parent/ guardian can take their child home from any away contest, but must see the coach first and sign-out their child.

8.3- Special exceptions may be granted through written parental consent (by all parties involved) provided to the athletic director at least one day in advance.

8.4-Should an emergency situation arise, the coach shall use his/her professional discretion. Any decision will be reported to the Director of Athletics.

8.5- Failure to abide by these rules may result in a one-game suspension.

9. INJURIES/CONCUSSIONS

9.1- Students must report all athletic injuries to their coach and/or athletic trainer.

9.2- If an athlete sees a medical professional for any injury or serious illness, they will need a medical release from that physician prior to further participation in a sport.

9.3- MIAA RULE 56. Student Eligibility: Physical Examinations/Medical Coverage/Concussions

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Administration (MIAA) Board of Directors adopted a policy concerning concussions. The policy reads, “***Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.***”

Appropriate professionals are physicians, physician’s assistants, or nurse practitioners.

The law also requires that student-athletes, marching band members, and their parent/guardians participate in annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury and associated health risks utilizing approved training materials and documentation of each person’s completion of such training. Two approved online courses are available.

Concussion in Sports: What you need to know is from the National Federation of State High School Associations and can be accessed at: [HYPERLINK “http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID-1500”](http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID-1500)

Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and can be accessed at: [HYPERLINK “http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion/HeadsUp/training/HeadsUpConcussion.html”](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion/HeadsUp/training/HeadsUpConcussion.html)

56.1- All students must pass a physical examination within “13 months” of the state of each season.

ANY STUDENT THAT HAS A PHYSICAL EXPIRE DURING THE SEASON WILL NEED TO GET A NEW PHYSICAL BEFORE IT EXPIRES. IF THE PHYSICAL EXPIRES DURING THE SEASON, THEN THE ATHLETE IS INELIGIBLE IMMEDIATELY UNTIL A NEW PHYSICAL IS ON FILE.

Physical examinations must be performed by a duly registered Physician, Physician’s assistant, or nurse practitioner. The Sports Medicine Committee recommended physical examination form is in the MIAA White Book.

PENALTY: A student in violation shall be suspended for the number of contests in which he/she participated in without a proper physical.

56.2- Whenever a medical person is on duty at an athletic event, he/she shall be responsible for both teams (unless the other team has its own medical person present). His/her judgement will be final with regard to the condition of a player after injury. Physical disqualification by the medical person renders the student ineligible. The penalty for playing an ineligible student is forfeiture.

56.3- Medical Alert Bracelets/Anklets are approved for wearing in all sports, provided they are taped to the body and marked in red.

56.4- Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be removed immediately from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

56.4.1- School and athletic leaders are reminded that football and ice hockey have rules regarding health-care professionals.

56.4.2- Each school must define the health care professional(s) and/or procedure(s) that must be satisfied before an athlete is allowed to return to participation. The individual(s) and/or procedure(s) must be in place for all student athletes, sports, and levels.

56.4.3- If a student athlete becomes unconscious during a practice or competition, that student must not return to participation without a written authorization to the Athletic Director from an appropriate health care professional (as determined by the DPH).

10. CHEMICAL HEALTH RULES-

10.1- MIAA RULE 62. Student (and Coach) Eligibility: Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

62.1- From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year of final athlete event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her doctor.

This MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render “guilt by association”, e.g many student athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate this standard. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements.

If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to an injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again.

I Minimum PENALTIES:

First violator: When the principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. During the suspension the disqualified student may not be in uniform and his/her attendance at the competition site is determined by the high school principal. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

Second and subsequent violations: When the principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

SECTION SEVEN: VIOLATION PROCEDURES-

The coach of each sport, the Director of Athletics, or Principal shall determine if a violation of the athletic rules and regulations has taken place. In all cases, infractions of the athletic code must be reported to the Director of Athletics. If disciplinary action is taken, (including temporary or permanent suspension, censure or reprimand) an athlete may have his/her case reviewed upon request.

Review Procedure:

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

SECTION EIGHT: LOCAL ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNING BODIES

ALL STUDENT- ATHLETES MUST ABIDE BY ALL SCHOOL RULES AND RULES SET BY OUR GOVERNING BODIES, MIAA (HYPERLINK "<http://www.miaa.net>") and PVIAC (HYPERLINK "<http://www.pviac.net>").

The superintendent of the schools is ultimately responsible for all phases of the Gateway Regional High School athletic program.

The Principal is specifically responsible for all school activities that affect students in his/her building. All local M.I.A.A authority and responsibility is vested with the principal.

The Director of Athletics is responsible for the actual administration and mechanics of operation of the program. Local rules and regulations cannot supersede M.I.A.A or league rules but may be stricter.

SECTION NINE: SCHEDULES, WEBSITES, & CONTACT INFORMATION

Schedules can be found on the High School website/ under Athletics or miaa.net .

Other websites with High School Information: www.miaa.net, www.pviac.net, and www.nhsf.org

Athletic Department Contact Information:

Mr. Matthew Bonenfant, Director of Athletics Ph: 413-685-1101 Fax: 413-667-8739 Email: athleticdirector@grsd.org

SECTION TEN: RELATIONS WITH BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

The Gateway Regional School committee recognizes that the endeavors and objectives of booster organizations and similar groups can be valuable means of stimulating interest in and endorsement of the aims and achievements of our public school system. Generally, actions initiated by booster organizations provide the atmosphere and climate to weld together desirable community-school relationships. Fund-raising by booster organizations will be limited to a service provided or a product received. Students will not be allowed to stand in their uniforms with a can or similar device to collect money.