

BlackRiver Athletic Department Philosophy

The Black River athlete will: Have FUN, Learn the sport, Love the sport, Be challenged and pushed beyond their comfort zone, Become a better person, and Compete to win.

Welcome to Black River Public School Athletic Department

The Black River Public School Athletic Department believes that a well-developed athletic program is integral in the educational progress of students and serves to enhance social, physical, and educational development. The athletic program is an extension of the academic program and all athletes are urged to strive for excellence in both the classroom and in the athletic venues. Being a part of a team has many benefits and rewards.

The central goal of this athletic program is for the student-athlete to learn the importance of integrity, respect, discipline, hard work, and how to deal with success and adversity. These teachings build good character and confidence, along with being the driving force for our student athletes to take this into their future life and become more productive members of the community.

Participation in BRPS Athletics however is a privilege and not a right; and that privilege is earned by each participant through his or her adherence to the rules and policies set forth by Black River and the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

Black River offers the following High School and Middle School sports:

FALL SPORTS:

7th, 8th, Freshmen, JV, and Varsity Girls Volleyball

7th, 8th, JV and Varsity Boys Soccer

6th, 7th, 8th, and Varsity Boys and Girls Cross Country

High School Boys Tennis co-op with Holland Christian

WINTER SPORTS:

7th, 8th, JV, Varsity Boys Basketball

7th, 8th, JV, Varsity Girls Basketball

High School co-ed Downhill Skiing co-op with Grand Haven

Varsity Hockey co-op with West Ottawa and Holland Christian

SPRING SPORTS:

7th, 8th, JV, Varsity Girls Soccer

Varsity Boys Baseball

6th, 7th, 8th, Varsity Boys and Girls Track

Varsity Girls Softball co-op with Saugatuck

Philosophy of Each Level

Varsity - Play to win, but done so correctly, hold athletes accountable to be: present, on time, to work hard in practices and games, to be good sports, and to be academically eligible. Skill development is important, but strategy and game planning is done to win. Playing time is not equal and some athletes may not play in each game. Have FUN!

Sub Varsity - All athletes should get to play in each game as long as they attend practice, work hard, and are eligible. Playing time is not equal. The more talented players will get more playing time. Skill development is a very high priority. Work with the varsity coach on skills they want the athletes to have. Have FUN!

Middle School - All athletes should play in each game as long as they attend practice, work hard, and are eligible. - The more talented, harder working players will get more playing time. Skill development is the main goal, dribbling, passing, layups, ball handling, correct form, defense. Have FUN!

MHSAA Rules of Athletic Eligibility

In order to be eligible to represent Black River in athletic contests a student-

1. Must be enrolled by Monday of the fourth week of the semester.
2. Must be under 19 years of age prior to Sept 1.
3. Shall not be enrolled more than eight semesters. The last two semesters must be consecutive.
4. Shall not compete for more than four seasons (years).
5. Shall not have been a member of any other team of the same sport during the season.
6. Shall not have played for money, played under an assumed name, or with players who were playing for money.
7. Must have a Grade Point Average of 2.0 or above and not be failing any class.
8. *Must pass all classes the previous semester*
9. Must not accept any award exceeding \$40.00 in value.
10. Must pass a physical examination and have approval of parents for participation in athletic practices and contests.

Athletic Code

General Rules

It is understood that the Head of School or Athletic Director may suspend a student from athletic events at any time (12 month policy) when a student's conduct may have a detrimental effect upon the image of Black River Public School.

- A. Conduct of all student athletes, both in and out of school, shall be above reproach, and shall not bring discredit to the athlete, the team, school, parents and community.
- B. Students may not threaten or attack the safety of persons or property (school or personal) physically or verbally. This includes theft or destruction of school or personal property.
- C. Student athletes may not have in their possession and /or use any form of nicotine, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or other non-prescribed drugs.
- D. ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

- a. An athlete must be present in school for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school day in order to participate in practice. Exceptions granted by the Head of School or Athletic Director.
- b. An athlete must be present in school for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school day on the day of a competition in order to compete in that competition. Exception granted by the Head of School or Athletic Director.
- c. An athlete who in on suspension from regular school attendance may not practice or take part in interscholastic competition during said suspension.
- E. All rules are in effect from the date enrolled in Black River until graduation.

Disciplinary Action

Discipline for infractions for the General Rules shall be handled by the Athletic Director in consultation with Coach involved. Reports of the infraction shall be reported to the Athletic Director immediately. The athlete has the right of appeal. Appeals shall be handled by a review board made up of the Head of School, Dean of Students, a student and citizen appointed by the Head of School.

- A. First offense of A,B, or C above of the General Rules, suspension from 25% of the scheduled games in that sport. The student shall be suspended from the prescribed number of games immediately and successively after the rules infraction has occurred.
- B. Second offense for A, B, or C of the General Rules shall be suspension in that sport for 50% of the scheduled games. The student shall be suspended from the prescribed number of games immediately and successively after the rules infraction has occurred
- C. Subsequent offenses shall be a suspension for one (1) calendar year from the date of the offense.
- D. All suspensions will be carried over and fulfilled in their next full season of athletic participation.
- E. This athletic code begins with your entry in interscholastic participation at Black River and finishes with your graduation.
- F. The athlete will practice with the team throughout the suspension unless otherwise decided by the Athletic Director and Coach.

Eligibility:

Starting the fourth week of each semester (to allow teachers to have several grades in the grade book), the Athletic Director will check the grades of all in season athletes each Friday morning. If an athlete has an F or a current GPA below a 2.0, they are deemed ineligible to participate in all athletic contest the following Monday through Sunday. All in season coaches are informed of their athletes grades. If an athlete is deemed ineligible, they will receive a notice at school from the Athletic Director. The same notice will be sent home to the parents of any athlete who is deemed ineligible. If an athlete thinks there was an error in the grading process, they can ask the teacher of the class in question if there was a mistake. If there was a mistake, the teacher needs to sign the eligibility notice acknowledging the error and the athlete needs to return the notice to the Athletic Director by noon the following Monday in order to become eligible again. The eligibility process is not in place to remind students to submit all their late work and teachers are directed not to sign off on the eligibility notice if late work was

submitted in order to become eligible. If an athlete is deemed ineligible on Friday morning and there are no errors in grading, they are ineligible for the entire next week, even if they improve their grades midweek. It is the coaches decision as to allow an ineligible athletes to participate in practices or use the time to work on school work. All ineligible athletes will still attend contests and may dress and warm up with the team, but cannot participate.

Attendance at Games and Practice:

Student athletes are expected to attend all team events. A student who accumulates 3 unexcused absences (practice, games, film session) during a season may be removed from the team and not be allowed to participate in any other sport during that season. 3 strikes and you are out!

A student athlete may be excused for the following: illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and excused absences from school. If interpretation is needed, it will be done by the coach and athletic director.

**Each individual team/coach may have their own consequences for any absence, excused or unexcused.

Awards:

Following a completed season, each athlete will receive a participation certificate for that sport and team. Varsity athletes will receive a BR varsity letter (one time only) and a sport specific pin (one pin for each varsity season). Awards will be distributed at the end of the season awards night.

12 Season River Rat Award:

Any student-athlete who tries out or completes a sports season in each of the three seasons (fall, winter, spring) for each of their four years of high school, they will receive the 12 Season River Rat Award. This will be presented at the spring senior awards assembly.

Student-athletes must remain in good standing with the athletic department throughout their high school career (no athletic code violations). This award is one of the most difficult and most prestigious awards that a BR student-athlete can earn.

Plaques:

Each coach will present 3 plaques to deserving team members. These plaques will be awarded at the end of the season awards night.

Parent/Coach/Athlete Communication Standards

Communication All Athletes and Parents Can Expect from Coach:

- Coaches contact information: Each coach will distribute his/her email address and phone number to prospective players and parents once hired by BRPS. Information is also available at www.blackriverpublicschool.org/athletics
- Team Itinerary: practice/tryout times and location, game times and location. Much of this information is distributed to the student-athletes and available at www.blackriverpublicschool.org/athletics
- Team rules, coaching philosophy, policies, and consequences that are team specific and also regulations adopted by the school.
- Injuries. Parents can expect immediate communication from the coach when an injury occurs that requires medical attention.
- Behavior problems. Coach will communicate with the athlete in person and also contact the parents of an athlete when the athlete develops unusual patterns of behavior such as unexplained absences, moodiness, attitude problems, etc.

Communication Coaches Appreciate from Athletes and Parents:

- Schedule conflicts: Coaches like to know ahead of time (as soon as possible) about unavoidable absences, tardiness, or the need to leave early. This information should come directly from the athlete if possible.
- Emotional Stressors: Coaches appreciate knowing about any unusual event in the life of an athlete that may cause added stress.
- Volunteering: Each coach can use help in a number of ways (working games, hosting team dinners, end of year celebrations, pre/post game snacks, etc) . If a parent is interested in helping, please let the coach know.

General Guidelines for Effective Communication:

1. All communication, be it positive or negative, constructive or destructive should be directed to the athlete's coach first. Most matters can be resolved through direct communication between athlete, coach, and/or parent.
2. If it is not a matter of life or death or extreme urgency, give it a rest (or at least sleep on it). Communication is more effective when all parties have a level head. See conflict resolution process.
3. Communication should be open and honest. Stay to the point and be direct. Keep in cordial.

Appropriate Topics of Discussion:

1. Concerns about the athletes behavior on/off the field
2. Ideas, ways or methods to help the athlete improve
3. Treatment of the athlete physically, emotionally, socially and/or mentally.

Inappropriate Topics of Discussion:

1. **Playing time
2. Team tactics or strategy
3. Other coaches, officials, or opponents
4. Other teammates

**It is sometimes difficult to accept that an athlete is not getting as much playing time as he/she or the parents had hoped. Coaches are professionals and make decisions based on what they believe is best for the success of the entire team. If it is believed that an athlete deserves more playing time, the athlete should ask the coach what they can do to improve to help the team succeed.

Black River Athletic Conflict Resolution Process

- All complaints MUST be heard at the lowest possible level BEFORE intervention by a higher authority can occur.
- A 24-hour “cooling off” period must be granted before any complaints are initiated.

Step 1 Start with the Source

The player or parent will speak directly to the coach. A cooling off period will be granted for all parties before resolution is sought. This meeting should be done in private, away from practice sites and game arenas, and should be conducted face to face. Students who do not feel comfortable speaking solely to the coach may request a parent to be present, however, the athlete must be present and will lead the meeting.

Step 2 Move to the Program Head

This step is necessary only if the issue is in regards to a sub varsity or assistant (i.e. an assistant coach, JV coach, etc.). If going to the source does not resolve the problem, then the head of the program should be notified and he/she should attempt to facilitate a solution. If the “source” is the head of the program, move to step three.

Step 3 Contact the Athletic Director

If an agreeable solution is not reached in step 2, the Athletic Director will conduct a meeting between the parties in an attempt to find a resolution.

Step 4 Contact the Head of School

If an agreeable solution is not reached in step 3, the Head of School will conduct a meeting between the parties to find a resolution.

Transportation

It is our goal that each of our athletes has Black River provided transportation from Black River to all away contests and return trips from the away contests to Black River. If Black River cannot provide transportation to or from a game or match, the Athletic Director will let the coach know. The Coach will let the players and parents know and together all parties will work to find a solution to get our athletes to and from our events safely. For events on non-school days (mostly Saturday) Black River will supply transportation from Black River to away games/meets, but unless a teams coach is also the bus driver, no return transportation following the contest to Black River will be provided. When applicable, all athletes are expected to ride the bus to and from athletic events.

Disqualification Rule

If an athlete is disqualified from a contest for unsportsmanlike behavior (or any other reason), they are to serve the consequence for that sport according to the MHSAA - usually sit out the next contest. If an athlete gets disqualified from 3 contests during his/her high school career, they are done with all Black River Athletes for the remainder of their high school career. 3 strikes and you are out!

Officials

Being a high school official is a challenging and often times, a thankless job, but our games and meets cannot take place without officials. Officials are professionals who work very hard to get each call correct and they do not need any help from spectators. At Black River we want officials to want to officiate our games and we want them to want to return to BR because they had a great experience. Please do your part to respect the officials at each athletic event. Officials shall be treated with the utmost respect by players, coaches, and spectators. If you feel you can do a better job of officiating, please sign up to be a high school official at www.mhsaa.com. We can always use more high school officials.

Assumption of Risk in Athletic Participation

Participating in high school athletics provides many positive life lessons, there is also a chance that serious injury can occur. Although serious injury is rare in high school athletics, it does happen and playing in competitive and often times contact sports does increase the chance of minor as well as serious injury. Please understand that every precaution is taken to keep our athletes safe, some injuries are unavoidable and once you set foot on the practice field or game field, there is an assumption of risk that an injury may occur. Black River does have supplemental insurance to help with medical costs for athletes who are injured during practices and games. An incident report must be filled out to receive this insurance. Athletic Director has these incident reports.

Equipment/uniform Turn In

School equipment issued to an athlete during a season is the athletes responsibility. He/She is expected to return any equipment at the conclusion of the season. Each coach will set up a time for the athletes to turn in their uniforms/equipment. Athletes will return any uniform/equipment to the coaches only. Uniforms/equipment shall not be dropped off in the main office or the athletic office.

If a uniform/equipment is not returned in a timely manner following the season or not returned in a similar condition to that which it was distributed, the athlete is responsible for paying for the uniform/equipment. If an athlete fails to return any school property, uniforms, or equipment (or pay for replacements), they will not be given any other BR uniforms/equipment until the equipment is returned or their debt is paid. Their diploma can be withheld until equipment is returned or paid for.