

WILLIAMSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to define and clarify the athletic policies and procedures of Williamston Community Schools. The success of the athletic program depends on the understanding and cooperation of the administration and faculty as well as parents and students in carrying out the basic athletic policies of the Williamston Community Schools' Board of Education.

With the exception of extra local rules as defined in this handbook, WCS athletes are governed by the rules and regulations presented in the current handbook of the Michigan High School Athletic Association and adopted by the Williamston Community Schools' Board of Education by an annual resolution.

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I. THE ADMINISTRATION OF ATHLETICS

A. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

1. The Williamston Community Schools' Board of Education believes individual students will benefit through opportunities to grow physically and intellectually through their experience in self-discipline and their contribution to team effort made possible through competitive inter-school sports activities.
2. The purpose of school athletics is both educational and recreational. The athletic program should encourage participation by as many boys and girls as possible and should be carried on with the best interest of the participants as the first consideration.
3. It is recognized that a well-organized and well conducted athletic program is a valuable educational benefit and a potent factor in the morale of a school student body and an important phase of good community/school relations.

B. OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATION

1. To broaden and develop strength of character.
2. To develop team concepts and positive attitudes.
3. To develop leadership.
4. To develop sportsmanship.
5. To develop pride.
6. To learn to accept constructive criticism.
7. To develop basic skills unique to each sport.
8. To encourage all coaches to play all athletes whenever possible, especially at middle school, freshman and junior varsity levels.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

1. Superintendent
 - a. Role- The superintendent should be considered the chief executive officer of the board of education.
 - b. Responsibilities- All individuals employed by the district are responsible directly or indirectly to the superintendent of schools.
2. Principal
 - a. Role- The principal reports to the superintendent.

- b. Responsibilities- The principal is in charge of the functions and activities of the high school.
- 3. Athletic Director
 - a. Role- The athletic director reports to the principal.
 - b. Responsibilities- The athletic director is in charge of high school athletic programs. He also makes sure all coaches and volunteers have proper knowledge of WCS, MHSAA and League policies, and have proper training in blood-borne pathogens.
- 4. Program Coaches
 - a. Role- Program coaches report to the athletic director.
 - b. Responsibilities- Program coaches are in charge of their program, along with making sure all of their coaches know the responsibilities and the job description of their particular sport.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. SPORTSMANSHIP

- i. 1. Good Sportsmanship- A school and community is frequently known by the action of its members at athletic contests. Everyone wants a winning team, but good sportsmanship is more important. We expect our teams to always give their best, and it is only fair to expect the same of all those who follow our teams.
- ii.
- iii. No fair-minded and thinking player, coach, or spectator will lose his self-control and

become abusive in action or word. Courteous treatment of our students, teams, opposing teams, all spectators, and the game officials in accordance with the Golden Rule is a good guide for all of us.

iv. *Failure to exhibit good sportsmanship may result in reduced participation.*

B. SPORTS/CLUBS

1. High School

Fall:

*Volleyball
Girls Golf
Football
Boys Soccer
Girls Swim and Dive
Boys Cross Country
Girls Cross Country
Sideline Cheer
Boys Tennis
Equestrian**

Winter:

*Girls Basketball
Boys Basketball
Wrestling
Competitive Cheer
Boys Swim and Dive
Ice Hockey*
Gymnastics**

Spring:

*Girls Soccer
Baseball
Softball
Girls Track and Field
Boys Track and Field
Girls Tennis
Boys Golf
Girls Lacrosse*
Boys Lacrosse*
Bass Fishing**

E-Sports

2. *Middle School*

Fall (Aug-Oct):

Volleyball

Boys Cross Country

Girls Cross Country

*Equestrian**

Winter (Oct-Mar):

Boys Basketball (Oct-Dec)

Girls Basketball (Jan-Feb)

Wrestling (Jan-Mar)

*Swim**

E-Sports

Spring (Mar-May):

Boys Track and Field

Girls Track and Field

*Tennis**

*Bass Fishing**

**These activities are organized through the athletic office, but are completely self-funded.*

C. POLICY FOR SQUAD SELECTION

1. Philosophy- In accordance with our overall athletic philosophy and our desire to see as many student-athletes as possible participate in the athletic program while enrolled in Williamston Community Schools, coaches are encouraged to keep as many student-athletes as they can without affecting or compromising the integrity of their sport. Obviously time, space, facilities, personal attention and individualized instruction, along with other factors, are necessary for team development and will affect squad size. However, when developing the individual sport policy in this area, coaches are encouraged to maximize the opportunities for our student-athletes without diluting the quality of their program.
2. Limitation of Team Membership Policy (High School) - The coaches of the respective sports will determine minimum and maximum team membership limits, taking into consideration the philosophy listed above.
3. Limitation of Team Membership Policy (Middle School) - The athletic director or designated administrator, in conjunction with the coaches of the respective sports will determine minimum and maximum team membership limits, taking into consideration the philosophy listed above.

Responsibility

- The choice of the membership of any athletic team will be determined by the coach of that team. Membership may be reviewed by the athletic director or other administrators as appropriate.

- There is no such thing as a final team cut. The athlete's membership on any team is always subject to proper behavior as outlined in specified team guidelines.
- Lower level coaches shall follow the policies as established by the head coach of their program when selecting team members.
- Prior to tryouts, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:
 - a. The cutting procedure including time lines, the specified tryout period and criteria used to select team members.
 - b. The practice commitment required of each athlete who makes the team.

Tryout Procedure

- When a squad cut becomes necessary, the process should include these important elements. Each athlete should:
 - a. Have completed a minimum number of practices specified for the tryout period.
 - b. Be permitted, whenever possible, to compete in a scrimmage situation.
 - c. Be at all tryouts or provide written communication to the coach in advance for missing the tryout period due to extenuating circumstances.
 - d. If permission is granted for an alternative tryout, the athlete must go through a similar criteria process as other team members.
- If an athlete is cut, the coach will inform him or her personally as to the reason for the cut and the skills or techniques that they can work on for the next season. There will be no posting of lists until after all individuals have been personally notified.
- Coaches should take the opportunity to discuss alternative possibilities for participation in the sport.
- If a coach foresees difficulties arising because of squad cuts, he or she will discuss the situation with the athletic director ahead of time.

Middle School Team selection

- For basketball and volleyball, the teams at each grade level, when possible, will be divided into an 'A' team and a 'B' team. Program coaches will determine the placement of each member of the team.
- Playing time in competition may vary due to a variety of circumstances such as academic status, failure to attend practices, disciplinary action, lack of effort at practice, poor attitude, etc...

C. WCS ELIGIBILITY

1. An athletic physical valid for the current school year must be turned in to the school before a student may participate in any practice, tryout, or competition. The Athletic Registration Fee for the current school year must be paid before an athlete may be officially listed on a roster of any team and thus become eligible to compete in an athletic event.
2. Student athletes must be passing all classes when the official eligibility check is processed by PowerSchool. A student that is failing one class will receive a one-week grace period, per class, per season. The student will be eligible to compete during the grace week. If they fail to raise the grade by the next official check, that student will then be deemed ineligible. Multiple failures during an eligibility check will result in being ineligible for the week.
3. Official grade checks will be processed on Monday morning. Grades will be determined by the current grade listed in PowerSchool. Ineligible students would be unable to compete Monday through Sunday.
4. Any student whose semester grades fall below a 2.0 G.P.A. for each of two consecutive semesters will become ineligible. Eligibility may be reinstated if the student's next semester G.P.A. rises above 2.0.
5. Students with unique academic problems will be given special consideration in regard to eligibility.
6. Wilson Talent Center grades do not affect weekly eligibility. Monitoring will be done on a semester basis.
7. Parents may appeal semester eligibility decisions to the athletic director who, in turn, may comprise a committee to include two or more of the student's teachers, and his/her counselor. The purpose of the committee will be to determine whether or not the student is working to his/her capabilities. Standardized test scores will be used heavily to help the committee determine whether or not eligibility should be restored.
8. A special education student, through the IEPT (independent educational plan team) process or a student with a 504 plan, may receive special accommodations. This must be supported by the entire team or 504 committee and should be indicated on the student's IEP or in the 504 plan. A copy of the IEP or 504 must be forwarded to the athletic director. Criteria to be considered by the IEP or 504 plan

- is, “Is the student working to their potential, yet still unable to meet the WCS eligibility guidelines?”
9. A student athlete may enroll in summer school to retake any class (up to two) in which they received a semester grade below a 2.0. The class(es) must be the same or equivalent to the class(es) in which they did poorly. A GPA (for athletic purposes only) will then be calculated taking into consideration the new summer school grade(s).
 - a. Student athletes will be allowed to take up to two classes per summer.
 - b. This policy only impacts GPA for athletic eligibility. All original grades will remain on the student’s transcript.
 - c. If a student athlete receives a summer school grade for a class that is determined not to be the same or equivalent to the class in which he/she received below a 2.0, the class will be added to his/her other classes, then averaged.
 - d. The athletic director will determine if summer school classes are the same or equivalent to the class(es) being replaced.
 10. If a student athlete is not eligible at the beginning of a sports season and commits an athletic handbook training rule violation, he/she will serve their consequence when they become eligible.
 11. A student athlete must be in compliance with all requirements in Section 1 of the current MHSAA Handbook. www.mhsaa.com
- *Verifiable classes are those classes in which grades can be tracked on a weekly basis. For example, dual enrollment classes are graded by semester. Those, and other similar classes, do not calculate in the class count for weekly eligibility purposes.

D. ATTENDANCE

Participating student athletes are required to be present in school all day to participate in a contest or practice. The following exceptions will apply:

1. A student athlete is allowed two excused absences (called in and verified by a parent) per semester where they are allowed to still practice or compete on the day of a competition.
2. Doctors appointments with proper documentation
3. Funerals verified by a guardian
4. Participating student athletes that are absent the day before a Saturday contest, and that absence has not been excused, will not be allowed to participate in the Saturday contest.

Exceptions will be considered if submitted in writing, to the athletic director, in advance of the event.

E. SAACC

Please see the WHS Student Athletic and Activities Code of Conduct for rules regarding good conduct, citizenship, sportsmanship, and training. Also, note the following:

1. A student who is serving a penalty for a violation and then withdraws from Williamston Community Schools will have the penalty status reviewed by a Coaches Council should he/she re-enroll.
2. A student entering Williamston Community Schools and currently serving a penalty from their departing school will have their status reviewed by a Coaches Council before competing.
3. More specific team rules may come from the coach of a sport each season. A coach may add to, but not delete from this policy. Coach's rules shall be in writing and distributed to players.

F. GROSS MISCONDUCT

1. Gross misconduct by an athlete will result in immediate suspension. A Coaches Council will be convened to discuss the circumstances and make a recommendation to the athletic director as to the status of the athlete's current and future eligibility. The Coaches Council will use good judgement and will consider issues as outlined in #3 above. The athletic director will then provide his/her final recommendation to the high school principal.
2. Some examples of conduct requiring Coaches Council action would be, but are not limited to:
 - a. Major violations under game conditions.
 - b. Sale or distribution of illegal drugs including Anabolic Steroids.

- c. Involvement in or having a record of a felony (criminal) conviction.
 - d. Admittance to or conviction of any unlawful conduct in regard to the Public Acts of the State of Michigan. Examples of such conduct are theft, substance abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, physical abuse, etc.
3. Coaches Council recommendations of continued suspension from athletic eligibility shall be guided by the following, with the purpose of reinstating the athlete at some future date if possible:
 - a. The surrounding circumstances.
 - b. Former gross misconduct infractions.
 - c. Former training rules infractions.
 - d. Past positive behaviors as demonstrated in class, as a spectator or in game situations.
 - e. Completion of any required rehabilitation as established by a court, the school board of the Coaches Council.
 - f. In the judgement of the Coaches Council, can/will the athlete be a positive representative for Williamston Community School and the Williamston community when competing?
4. The suspended athlete and his/her representatives (no more than two additional) will have the option to briefly meet with the Coaches Council before deliberation to state their position (limited to 2 minutes per representative). The Coaches Council will then deliberate in private to determine their recommendation.
5. The recommended length of suspension will be at the total discretion of the Coaches Council who will not be required to conform to the process as outlined in the "Training Rules" section. The nature of the "gross misconduct" area requires a different approach and complete flexibility.
6. All student athletes are subject to the direction and authority of school district personnel and are governed by all applicable rules and regulations of the Williamston Community Schools when at school-sponsored events, off-campus events, and when traveling to and from these events.

G. EQUIPMENT

Each athlete will be responsible for turning in his or her equipment at the end of the participating season. If any equipment is lost or stolen, it is the responsibility of the athlete to pay for the missing articles. The athlete will not be allowed to participate in the next sport season if equipment is not turned in or paid for.

It is the responsibility of coaches to keep records of their equipment and report any names to the athletic director if an athlete violates this policy.

H. SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

1. Threatening Weather Watch
 - a. Practice should be held on campus under close supervision. All athletes should be kept within an area where they can be called in if necessary.
 - b. When games are started or are in progress when the watch is in effect, the coaches and officials will monitor the change in weather and if it becomes at all questionable, the contest will be suspended.
2. Lightning and Thunder
 - a. When lightning is visible or thunder is heard, practices or contests will be suspended and all athletes and coaches will take cover for 30 minutes from occurrence.
 - b. The occurrence of lightning and thunder are not subject to interpretation or discussion--**LIGHTNING IS LIGHTNING. THUNDER IS THUNDER.**
3. Warnings: Thunderstorm or Tornado
 - a. If already practicing or playing when a thunderstorm warning is issued, use good judgement.
 - b. If at practice or competing when a tornado warning sounds, please take cover immediately. All athletes will be directed to a safe location under supervision of the coach or coaches. Visiting teams will be encouraged to take cover at the site of the host school. All athletes will be kept in a safe place until the "all clear" is issued.
4. Good Judgement
 - a. Always use good judgement when dealing with the weather. Take no chances with lightning or thunder.
 - b. If there is a doubt-- **we will cancel.**

I. MANAGING HEAT AND HUMIDITY

On March 22, 2013, the Michigan High School Athletic Association adopted a model for managing heat and humidity. For the health and safety of athletes, a very specific protocol has been set forth to monitor the temperature and humidity to determine the Heat Index.

J. SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The superintendent is empowered to close the school district schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather conditions or other emergencies which threaten the health or safety of students and personnel.

1. There may be times when school is closed due to inclement weather at the start of the school day, but by mid-day weather conditions may improve permitting games or practices to be held. Each situation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The athletic director and principal will collaborate with the Williamston Community Schools Transportation Director, the Superintendent, State Police, and the National Weather Service to determine if events can take place.
2. In case school has been canceled or dismissed early due to hazardous conditions, the athletic teams will follow the procedures below as they relate to practice and scheduled home athletic events:
 - a. Coaches will check with the athletic director for permission to practice or continue the game.
 - b. Practices may not take place before noon.
 - c. Practices are optional and athletes will not be penalized for not attending.
 - d. Games will be played if weather permits.
 - e. In the case of Middle School events, if school is canceled or closed early, all athletic events, including all practices, are canceled for that day as well.

The Williamston Athletic Department prides itself in creating safe, competitive interscholastic activities for our student athletes. Students' safety will be the highest priority when determining whether or not to hold practices or contests when schools have been closed.

K. DUAL SPORT PARTICIPATION POLICY

WCS believes that an athlete should commit themselves to and concentrate on only one sport each season, thus, students are generally limited to participation in a single interscholastic sport activity per season. Students may participate in two sports during a season only with the approval of the athletic director, both coaches involved, and the parents of the athlete. This dual participation will include a clear and detailed plan for attendance and participation in the practices and games of each sport. It will be signed by the player, parents, coaches, and athletic director.

1. Prior to participation in either sport, the athlete will be required to designate a primary sport. This means that the athlete must attend all practices and contests of the designated primary sport before being allowed to participate in the secondary sport.

2. The athlete must be in good academic standing and continue to be during the course of dual sport participation. If the athlete's academic performance noticeably decreases from their normal performance, and can be attributed to the dual participation, the student may be required to withdraw from the secondary sport.
3. If the athlete wishes to participate in the non-primary sport when there is a conflict, it may only be done with the approval of both coaches and the athletic director.
4. If it becomes obvious that the athlete cannot fulfill the obligations of the primary sport or that by limited participation in the secondary sport a question of the ability to safely participate is raised, the athlete may be required to withdraw from the secondary sport.
5. A student shall not be granted dual sport participation if it results in the loss of opportunities for other athletes; i.e., another student is cut or not selected for a team.

L. DROPPING OUT OF A SPORT

WCS believes that it is a valuable life lesson for a student to make and keep a commitment to an activity for the entire season. If for any reason an athlete feels the need to terminate his/her association with a team, it must be communicated with the athletic director and coach. Appropriate measures will be taken to retain the athlete. If the athlete leaves the team without being released by the athletic director, then he/she will forfeit one third (1/3) of the next sports season in which he/she participates. This applies if the athlete terminates his/her association with the team after cuts have been made, or one week before the first scheduled contest.

M. TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SPORT WITHIN THE SAME SEASON

WCS believes that it is a valuable life lesson for a student to make and keep a commitment to an activity for the entire season. If an athlete has participated in an athletic contest for the sport in which they are involved, they will not be allowed to transfer from one sport to another during the same season. If, however, the athlete, his/her parents, both coaches of the sports involved and the athletic director all agree upon making an exception to this rule, such a transfer may be allowed to take place.

N. UNDERSTANDING CONCUSSION

Public Acts 342 and 343 of 2012 (Concussion Law) were created and the web site established by the Michigan Dept. of Community Health (MDCH) to create concussion awareness and compliance with the law.

O. PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

It is very difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgement decisions based on what they believe to be best for all of the students involved. While there are certain things which can and should be discussed with your child's coach, there are other things which must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time
2. Strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student athletes

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, the procedure you should follow is:

1. Set up an appointment with the coach.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the athletic director at 655-2142 ext. 7008. He/she will make arrangements for the coach to meet with you.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for parent, athlete and the coach. Meetings of this nature are often not fruitful.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

1. Call and set up an appointment with the athletic director at 655-2142 ext. 7012 to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.

P. TRANSPORTATION WAIVERS

Williamston Community School's policy regarding transportation states that athletes are expected to travel to and from athletic events in school buses when they are provided. We realize that emergencies and extenuating circumstances sometimes require other arrangements. In the event those extenuating circumstances exist, a Transportation Waiver form must be picked up in either the front office or student services. This form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian, the coach, and a school administrator prior to the day of the activity. At no time will we allow students to drive themselves or ride with anyone other than parents to and from activities without the approval of the administration.

Q. NCAA ELIGIBILITY

Please Note: The NCAA does accept credit (no letter grade) courses for core course requirements, but computes the grade as the lowest academic grade possible, D-. Any specific questions regarding NCAA qualifications should be directed to either the guidance office or the athletic office.

R. MISCELLANEOUS

It is strongly advised that all athletes have medical insurance. The school is not responsible for payment of medical services. Williamston Community Schools is a member of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. By accepting membership on a team at WCS, the student agrees to abide by all rules of eligibility and competition of the MHSAA and WCS.

III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & ATHLETIC REGISTRATION FEE

A. ATHLETIC REGISTRATION FEE

The Athletic Registration Fee has been implemented by the Williamston Community Schools' Board of Education to help maintain budgetary requirements in our athletic programs. Although our athletic programs have been impacted by necessary budget cuts, the registration fee will allow us to maintain current levels without a serious reduction in programs. It is the position of the Board of Education that no athlete should be denied the opportunity to participate in our athletic programs as a result of financial need. Therefore, financial hardship will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, at the request of the athlete's parent/guardian, through the athletic office. **The fee must be paid before an athlete may be officially listed on a roster of any team and thus become eligible to compete in an athlete event.**

High School Participation Annual Fee: \$200 per student
Middle School Participation Annual Fee: \$100 per student
District wide Family cap: \$400

**Please note that club sports may have additional fees.*

- ❖ Please make your check or money order payable to "Williamston Community Schools". Your canceled check will serve as your receipt. You may also pay by credit card at the Athletic Office. **We are sorry, but cash will not be accepted.**
- ❖ If the athlete is selected for the team (is not cut), the registration fee will be forwarded to the athletic office for deposit and processing.
- ❖ If the athlete is not selected for the team (is cut), the registration fee will be returned by mail to the address listed on the application.
- ❖ Athletes who experience a documented season-ending injury will receive a pro-rated refund if no prior sport has been participated in or the athlete will not be participating in another sport for that school year.
- ❖ The Athletic Registration Fee will not be refunded or pro-rated for withdrawal from the team, for lack of playing time, for an athlete who is ineligible or becomes ineligible during the season, for an athlete who is removed from a team for disciplinary reasons, when canceled contests cannot be rescheduled, or when a full allotment of games cannot be scheduled.

Williamston High School invites you to take advantage of a unique learning experience by participation on an athletic team. This learning experience is a privilege and unique because it offers educational opportunities that are not readily available in the classroom.

Here at Williamston, we emphasize the participation aspect of the program. By participation, our student athletes learn the necessary skills to work effectively with others, solve problems, and be productive and contributing members of society by developing the following employability skills:

Teamwork Skills - Learning to work with people in authority, to develop team and individual goals, to function in changing work settings and work groups, to use a group to solve problems, to communicate, to work with and respect different ethnic groups and to exercise give-and-take to achieve group results.

Personal Management Skills - Learning to be punctual, to value sportsmanship, to be responsible, to demonstrate self-control, to react appropriately in competitive, stressful situations, to represent the school and community with pride, to follow written or verbal directions, and to be a leader or follower depending on what is necessary for each situation.

Academic Skills - Athletes are required to meet specific academic standards for continued participation, therefore requiring them to perform in the classroom as well. Through athletic participation they learn to apply skills learned in the classroom to real life situations. Athletes will learn to think, act and react logically.

Please call the Athletic Department if the Athletic Registration Fee will cause a financial hardship for your family. Payment installments or other arrangements can be made to make this more affordable. All information will remain confidential.

ATHLETIC PASSES

Family District* Annual Pass	\$135.00
Single Adult District* Pass	\$ 75.00
Student District* Annual Pass	\$ 35.00
Middle School Events Only	\$ 45.00

****District passes allow attendance at high school and middle school athletic events.***

Annual passes are not valid at all state-sponsored tournaments and individual tournaments.

ADMISSION FEES

ALL VARSITY AND NON-VARSITY CONTESTS

Adults	\$ 5.00
Students	\$ 5.00
Grades K-6	\$ 5.00
Under Age 6	Free
Seniors (60+)	Free

*****WE STRONGLY URGE YOU AND YOUR STUDENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FAMILY OR STUDENT PASS*****