



POLAND SCHOOLS
2025-2026
PARENT-STUDENT
ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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Dear Student Athletes and Parents,

You are receiving this handbook because your student has indicated a desire to participate in the interscholastic athletic programs in the Poland Local Schools. We are very pleased that your student has made this decision, and we hope that his or her experiences will be positive as well as educational. Participation in athletics gives students the opportunity to learn leadership skills, to gain self-confidence, self-discipline, organization, decision-making skills, and encourages them to set goals. A comprehensive program of student activities is vital to the educational development of our students.

Once students have chosen to participate, there are often many questions that you and your son or daughter may have regarding the athletic program. In order to assist in making the athletic experience a more positive one, this handbook has been assembled to answer questions about the guidelines and philosophy of the athletic program. We hope that this will be of assistance, and we encourage you to use it as a reference throughout the year. If you have additional questions please feel free to contact myself or any of the building administrators.

Sincerely,

Brian Banfield

Brian Banfield
Athletic Director
Poland Seminary High School

PHILOSOPHY

It is the basic educational philosophy of the Poland Local Schools to prepare our students to become productive, contributing citizens of our community and society. We believe that a comprehensive program of student activities enhances and is vital to the educational development of our students.

Within this context, it is the purpose of the school's athletic program to foster and promote:

- Age appropriate physical, social, and psychological development
- The idea of competition, teamwork, and sportsmanship while achieving the goals of success and participation.
- The development of self-confidence, self-discipline, organizational skills, and goal orientation.
- The concept of an integral relationship between a sound mind and a sound body leading to a lifetime appreciation of physical fitness and good health habits.
- A positive feeling of school loyalty and pride which can be shared by all participants, other students, parents, coaches and the community as a whole.
- The development of self-esteem and self-concept. Regardless of the role students play on a team, they should complete their experience in athletics feeling good about themselves.
- Respect for all participants, coaches, officials, spectators, and parents.
- The notion that athletes are ambassadors of the Poland Local Schools and at all times should promote sportsmanship and character.

Finally, the interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted in accordance with Board of Education policies and all applicable laws. The athletic program takes great pride in winning; however, it does not condone "winning at all costs" and discourages any and all pressures which might tend to neglect good sportsmanship. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted in such a way as to justify it as an educational activity.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC TEAMS

FALL

Cheerleading
Boys Cross Country
Girls Cross Country
Football
Boys Golf
Girls Golf
Boys Soccer
Girls Soccer
Girls Tennis
Girls Volleyball

WINTER

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball
Cheerleading
Boys Swimming and Diving (Club)
Girls Swimming and Diving (Club)
Boys and Girls Wrestling

SPRING

Baseball
Boys Lacrosse (Club)
Girls Lacrosse (Club)
Softball
Boys Tennis
Boys Track
Girls Track

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC TEAMS

FALL

Cheerleading
Boys Cross Country
Girls Cross Country
Football
Girls Volleyball

WINTER

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball
Cheerleading
Boys and Girls Wrestling

SPRING

Boys Track
Girls Track

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Poland School District is a member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and adheres to all guidelines thereof. See Local Board of Education Policies regarding Athletic Eligibility.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

A player must:

- In Grades 9-12 once a student turns 20 anytime during the school year eligibility is finished.
- In Grades 9-12 a student must have received passing grades in a minimum of five one-credit courses, or the equivalent, in the immediate preceding grading period
- To maintain eligibility, 7th-8th grade students must have received passing grades in a minimum of four classes in the immediately preceding grading period.
- Maintain a minimum 1.0 GPA.

To determine credit equivalency, multiply full year courses by a factor of 1; semester courses by a factor of 2. **Physical Education class does not count toward Athletic Eligibility.**

It is the responsibility of the student athlete to schedule adequate credits to remain academically eligible.

Students will remain ineligible until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period. The 4th nine weeks report is used to determine the eligibility for fall interscholastic activities. Summer School grades shall not be used for fall eligibility purposes.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

I. General Requirements

At Poland Seminary High School, students must be in attendance 4 consecutive periods of the day (50% of a day) in order to participate in an activity or attend the activity on that day.

1. This policy does not include activities scheduled on non-school days (such as Saturday, Sunday, vacations or holidays).
2. An “activity” is defined as any practice, performance, game, etc. for any school approved organization, including all teams, and cheerleading.
3. School-approved field trips (*and other absences considered school business*) are not considered absences from school for the purposes of this policy.
4. Exceptions for planned appointments and other emergencies shall only be granted on an individual basis by the principal.
 - a. Students will obtain permission by submitting a letter from their parents to the principal *forty eight (48) hours in advance of the absence.*
 - b. The principal or acting administrator will determine if permission is granted and will notify the student, parent, and coach.

II. Participation Conflicts

Poland Seminary High and Poland Middle School students are encouraged to participate in many school activities, and it is not uncommon for students to be involved in more than one curricular and/or co-curricular activity at a time. While such conflict is not encouraged or recommended, it does happen. When activity conflicts occur, students should notify the advisors, directors, and/or coaches of the conflicting activities as soon as possible so they can meet and arrive at a solution in everyone's best interests. Whenever possible, the staff discussions should attempt to remedy the scheduling conflict.

III. Risk of Participation

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

1. Maintain a continuing education program for coaches to learn the most up-to-date techniques and skills to be taught in their sport.
2. Instruct all athletes about the danger of participation in the particular sport.
3. Conduct a preseason parent/athlete meeting to fully explain the athletic policies and to advise, caution, and warn parents/athletes of the potential for injury.
4. Maintain safe equipment and facilities.

PRE-SEASON PARENT/ATHLETE MEETINGS

All coaches will conduct pre-season parent/athlete meetings. While 100% attendance by parents and athletes is our goal, we realize that said goal is not always attainable. All meetings will be held in advance of the official season starting date and prior to any team selections which may be made.

During such meetings, the following will be addressed by our coaches:

- Poland Schools Student & Parent Handbook.
- Athletic Academic Eligibility
- The criteria by which teams may be selected.
- The forms which must be completed in order for students to participate.
- Practice and contest schedules
- Questions from parents.

ATHLETIC CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

Within the Poland Schools, the following chain of communication is in effect:

STUDENT ATHLETES/PARENTS

ASSISTANT COACH

HEAD COACH

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

PRINCIPAL

SUPERINTENDENT

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athlete/parent should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is still no resolution, he/she would then follow the Athletic Chain of Communication as listed.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Poland Local Schools is a **privilege**, not a right. By choosing to represent our school community through athletics, each student-athlete agrees to uphold the highest standards of behavior, commitment, and personal responsibility both in and out of the competitive arena.

This code applies to all individuals involved in our athletic programs, including student-athletes, cheerleaders, team managers, and statisticians. The expectations outlined below are in effect **year-round — 12 months a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

Conduct Rules

1. Academic Eligibility

Maintain scholastic eligibility in accordance with OHSAA and Board of Education policies.

- Students must have passed a **minimum of five one-credit courses** (or the equivalent) during the previous grading period.
- These courses must count toward graduation requirements.

2. Substance Use Policy

Refrain from the use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or any electronic vaporizing devices.

- Violations will result in the **loss of athletic privileges** and require the student to complete an assessment at an approved treatment facility or tobacco awareness program before reinstatement.

3. Respectful Behavior

- Refrain from all forms of **bullying, hazing, and sexual harassment** in accordance with the Poland Seminary High School Student Handbook and District policies.

4. Conduct and Attitude

- Demonstrate good citizenship and respectful conduct **at all times**, whether on school grounds, at home, or at school-sponsored events.
- This includes travel to and from practices, games, and school functions.

5. Attendance Requirement

- Be in attendance for at least **four (4) class periods** on the day of an athletic event or practice.
- Exceptions may be granted by the building principal for excused absences (e.g., medical appointments, funerals, college visits).

6. Legal Issues

- Any arrest or legal infraction (excluding non-alcohol or drug-related traffic violations) may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of school administrators and the Athletic Department.

7. **Required Documentation**

No athlete may participate in any athletic activity (including pre-season workouts, practices, scrimmages, or contests) until all required forms have been submitted:

- Athletic Code of Conduct Acknowledgement
- Physical Examination Form
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Concussion Information Sheet
- Proof of Insurance Coverage or Medical Waiver

8. **Coach-Specific Expectations**

Individual coaches may implement additional rules and standards, with prior approval from the Athletic Administration and in compliance with OHSAA guidelines, to enhance team culture and accountability.

PENALTIES

A first violation of the conduct items 2, 3, 4 and 7 will result in denial of privilege of athletic participation for a minimum of 2 contests of the next contests scheduled for the season (the current season or, if the violation occurs at a time when the student is not participating in athletics, the next games in the next season in which the student participates including tournament play of the current season). During suspensions the student-athlete will not be present at the team's regularly scheduled competitive contests and/or events, including all post-season tournaments and games. If a student seeks help from a coach or administrator before being caught, that action will be taken into account before a consequence is rendered with the understanding that the problem does not subsequently occur.

A second violation will result in denial of participation in all Poland Schools athletic programs for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of participation-suspension.

A third violation will result in denial of privilege of participation in all Poland Schools athletic programs for one (1) year in the Poland Schools from the date of participation-suspension. Any member of the athletic program involved in the sale, manufacture or distribution of drugs will be permanently excluded from athletic participation in the Poland Schools.

Any participant excluded for the remainder of any sport's season forfeits his or her right to any athletic award and banquet.

NOTE: The Athletic Administration (composed of the Athletic Director, Assistant Principal and Principal) will conduct an investigation and a hearing for the student prior to any disciplinary action.

STUDENT & PARENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK SIGN-OFF FORM

We fully understand the above statements and choose to abide by them. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion or permanent exclusion from this activity under provisions of Ohio Revised Code #3313.66 and Poland Board of Education policy #5270 and #10,350.

THE POLAND SCHOOLS PARENT'S PLEDGE

In your role as a parent, you obviously love your child and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her, but an athlete can only have one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial. A positive parent/coach relationship will require the following promise:

As a parent of an athlete, I promise:

1. To acknowledge the authority of my child's coach to make decisions that he/she determines are in the best interest of the team and/or the athletic program.
2. To emphasize that "team" must take precedence over the individual.
3. To make sure my children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, I love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them.
4. To try my best to be completely honest about my child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.
5. To be helpful, but don't coach them. (to not compete with the coach.)
6. To teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve their skills and attitudes.
7. To emphasize the importance of academics and understand the academic requirements necessary for participation in interscholastic athletic activities.
8. To not compare the skill, courage or attitude of my child with other members of the team.
9. To make every effort to communicate honestly, openly and objectively with coaches *within the guidelines established in this handbook.*
10. To remember that a ticket to an athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or enter the playing area at any time. (BOE Policy #10960)
11. To encourage and support my student athlete's efforts to follow the team rules and athletic code. Remember that you signed a parent athlete pledge stating your support of the athletic code, its enforcement and penalties. This is a year-round responsibility and not limited to the athletic season.

THE POLAND SCHOOLS

COACH'S PLEDGE

The coach's pledge extends beyond knowledge of athletics and reaches into the life of each of his/her players. It is one of the most important responsibilities in the school and involves at least the same level of commitment that coaches expect of their players. Mutual respect and team membership is to be expected equally of player and coach.

As a coach in my school, I promise:

1. To uphold the dignity, honor, and integrity of the coaching profession.
2. To be accountable and responsible in a trustworthy manner.
3. To be a model of appropriate language and behavior.
4. To respect and dignify each of my athletes as an individual.
5. To be totally honest and objective in determining roles for team members.
6. To help my athletes develop the 10 qualities as defined in the Poland Schools Mission Statement for Athletics. (see page 1)
7. To promote the conditions and circumstances that encourage each athlete to realize their full potential.
8. To promote among all athletes and coaches a sense of team membership.
9. To reflect in my coaching the best and most recent thinking and strategy in my sport.
10. To develop goals and strategies necessary to achieve said goals.
11. To work, whenever appropriate with school personnel to guarantee the best interests of each of my student athletes.
12. To aid all athletes in their interests following high school.
13. To take an active role in the prevention of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use.
14. To be available to parents at times mutually convenient to discuss appropriate topics.
15. To be knowledgeable of and adhere to the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Rules and Bylaws.

SELECTING THE TEAM

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at all levels of the Poland Schools' athletics, it may be necessary in some sports to "cut" a squad. This may occur due to any number of reasons, but usually the nature and limitations specific to some sports.

Each coach has the ultimate responsibility and authority for selecting his/her team. The criteria for selecting the team is developed by the coach. It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's team for example, do not automatically make the upcoming team, nor does being a senior ensure that an athlete will make the squad.

Both parents and prospective team members should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every opportunity and consideration. Coaches will be sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and their parents, the possibility of not making a team will have been made clear at the pre-season parent/athlete meeting. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

EXPRESSING PARENTAL CONCERNS

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, parents are asked to refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Always follow the proper athletic chain of communication.
2. Never approach a coach at a time when the coach's responsibility is the supervision of his/her athletes (i.e. at practice or before or immediately after a contest. Neither is the proper time nor place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.)
3. Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coaches include the treatment of your child mentally and physically, ways to help your child improve, and concerns about your child's behavior.
4. Inappropriate concerns to discuss with the coaches include playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other student-athletes.
5. Call the school to schedule an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
6. Raise your concerns in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable and will bring an immediate end to the meeting.

7. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion which overrides logic and reason. Listening respectfully and respectfully may help you to understand an explanation which is given.

NON-VARSITY ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

We regard athletic participation at the non-varsity levels (junior varsity, freshman, and middle school) as integral to the success of our varsity programs. These teams exist to provide athletes an introduction to the ten key qualities, and the process necessary to acquire them (see Mission Statement), which are at the heart of our athletic program.

While we will always strive to be successful in all of our athletic programs, participation at these levels, in particular, is a key to maintaining student interest, fostering growth, and providing the foundation for future success.

Invariably, student involvement at these levels may be limited due to the nature of the sport and varying skill levels of its participants. However, coaches will put forth a concerted effort to put aside short-term goals in lieu of long-term progress of their team members.

POLICY FOR COMPETING IN TWO SPORTS AT THE SAME TIME

An athlete may participate in two sports during the same season if he/she meets the following criteria:

1. The Student is academically eligible to do so.
2. The Student declares a **primary** sport. Whatever sport is chosen this sport can't be sacrificed from a secondary sport.
3. The health and safety of the student athlete will be taken into consideration by parents, coaches and administration to prevent overuse injuries. Example: Running on the cross country team and playing soccer.
4. Both coaches agree and communicate with each other throughout the season.
5. Individuals on the teams are not affected in terms of participation and morale.
6. School attendance is not affected.
7. The Athletic Director and Principal have approved.

If approved to move forward, the athlete and both coaches will meet to set the schedule for the season.

The athlete agrees to be at both sports practices and contests as much as possible. The athlete will understand that failure to give 100% to either sport may impact both playing time and position on the team.

If the athlete fails to meet the above standards, the Athletic Director or Principal has the discretion to void the agreement and the athlete will go to the team they had designated as the primary.

If a situation would arise where an athlete who is involved in two sports has events on the same day, and one of the events is a state level competition the following protocol would be used so that the athlete is not forced to make a decision. A student athlete will compete in the primary sport when conflicting events are equal. i.e. both are regular season contests or both are state level contests. If a secondary sport is competing in a state level event and the primary sport has a regular season non conference title event, the secondary sport would be permitted to supersede the primary sport. Example: Secondary Sport is Track. A District Track Meet would be permitted to supersede a regular season non title Baseball game.

If both events were State level (regardless of that state level) or both regular season events, then the athlete would go to the sport that he/she had designated as **primary**.

POLICIES OF THE OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Given the recurring incidents drawing national headlines of irresponsible fan and player behavior in professional, collegiate, and high school contests, the Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Control adopted the following policies on December 9, 2014:

1. ATHLETES INVOLVED IN UNSPORTING BEHAVIOR WITH FANS

No member of any school-sponsored interscholastic athletics squad shall leave the “playing area” in which a contest is being conducted and enter the spectator area of the facility to engage in any type of conflict- verbal or physical. If a student athlete leaves the “playing area” and enters the spectator area or facility to engage a person, the minimum penalties shall be:

The student-athlete’s privileges to participate in interscholastic athletics shall be revoked and the student-athlete shall be ineligible for the remainder of the school year.

2. SPECTATOR CONDUCT FOR ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR EVENTS

Any person exhibiting unsportsmanlike, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior at an athletic or extracurricular event conducted by or through the Poland Schools may be ejected from the event by a Poland Schools' administrator or designee in attendance at or in charge of the event. Such person may, in addition, be denied attendance for up to one calendar year, subject to a hearing before the Board of Education, if requested. Unless and until the decision is reversed or amended by the Board, the decision shall remain in effect. Examples of unsportsmanlike, disruptive or disrespectful conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal harassment of participants, players, coaches, officials, spectators and fans from Poland Schools or other schools.
- Using vulgar or obscene language or gestures.
- Possessing or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance.
- Throwing objects/projectiles without authorization from school administration.
- Other inappropriate behavior deemed unsportsmanlike, disruptive, or disrespectful by an administrator in attendance or in charge of the event.

Penalties

A first violation of exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior and being ejected from a contest will result in suspension from the next **two** sporting events in that same sport.

A second violation will result in denial to attend any athletic events for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of the suspension.

A third violation will result in being denied attendance for up to one calendar year to all sporting events, also this person will be subject to a hearing in front of the Poland Board of Education.

CAMERA USE AT EVENTS POLICY

The Board welcomes the attendance of parents and other members of the community at athletic and other student activities and events, but, at the same time, the Board desires to take all reasonable action to ensure that such activities are conducted in an atmosphere that preserves and protects the health, safety and welfare of the student participants.

Therefore, individuals using any type of camera equipment including, but not limited to, video, film, digital or phone cameras can expect to be questioned by school personnel. If there does not appear to be legitimate or appropriate reasons for the use of the camera equipment, the equipment will be confiscated, the individual removed from the premises or the event and law enforcement are contacted.

PRE SEASON PROGRAMS (open gym, strength and conditioning)

1. Participants must have a current physical on file as well as ALL completed forms on Final Forms.
2. Participants must adhere to all established OHSAA policies.
3. Participants must adhere to all guidelines established by the sponsoring coach(es) with regards to behavior, dress, care of facilities, and equipment.
4. Participants must adhere to adopted school policies with regards to school attendance.
5. While participating in weight training all athletes must be supervised by their respective coach, have a prescribed workout plan, and adhere to all rules, and regulations.

Student-athletes who wish to participate in a pre-season activity of an upcoming sport (open gym, weight training, conditioning, etc.) while currently a participant of an in-season sport, should communicate with their in-season coaches to establish guidelines for that participation.

PRACTICE SESSIONS

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators, and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

It is the coach and Athletic Director who are responsible for scheduling practice time. Between the two, every effort will be made to ensure that student athletes are provided ample

opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful within the framework of common sense.

In the event that school is canceled due to weather conditions, athletic practices may occur after regular school hours provided that the Superintendent or Athletic Administrator has approved the practice based on the fact that weather and or road conditions are safe.

TRAVEL

1. All student-athletes must travel to and from all scheduled scrimmages and contests in transportation provided by the athletic department when warranted unless the parent(s) make previous written arrangements for an exceptional situation with the head coach.
2. Student-athletes must adhere to all transportation guidelines as established by the Board of Education.
3. A student-athlete who misses a scheduled bus trip to an out of town event or contest will not be permitted to participate in said contest unless there are extenuating circumstances.
4. Student-athletes must adhere to all behavioral expectations set forth in the Student Handbook.

EQUIPMENT ISSUE AND RETURN

Students who are issued equipment/uniforms for the purpose of interscholastic participation will have that equipment recorded on a standard sport **Equipment Issue Form**. Each student will sign said form at the time of equipment issue. From that moment on, responsibility for the care, safeguarding, and return of any issued equipment falls on the shoulders of the student. Should the student fail to return any issued equipment at the conclusion of participation in any sport; the student is financially responsible for the replacement of any missing equipment. Should such a situation arise, the student in question shall be reported to the Athletic Director. His/her name will be placed on the Debt List and final report cards and transcripts may be withheld until the situation is rectified.

SENIOR NIGHT POLICY

Sport specific Senior Night Recognition Ceremonies will be limited to fifteen minutes prior to varsity contests. Head coaches will distribute the standard Senior Night Bio Form to all senior athletes in advance of the ceremony and public address remarks will be limited to the information provided on the standard form.

Seasonal Senior Night Recognition Ceremonies may be extended beyond fifteen minutes and may be limited to student and parent introduction by the public address announcer.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION AND PHYSICAL EXAM INFORMATION:

All athletes must have a valid physical and athletic participation forms completed using the FinalForms system prior to the first day of tryouts or practices. All forms should be completed using the FinalForms system on the Poland Local Schools website. No athlete will be permitted to participate without these forms being completed. In the event of an emergency, coaches will have copies of the emergency medical forms. In addition to the Poland Local Schools and OHSAA required forms, students and parents must complete the required forms regarding the concussion statement and Lindsey's Law Sudden Cardiac Arrest protocols.

REQUIRED FORMS FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

In order for a student to participate in the athletic programs of the Poland Schools, the following forms must be completed, signed electronically by all parties and have a current physical on file in the Athletic Department.

1. The Student & Parent Athletic Handbook Sign-Off Form
2. A Pre-Participation Physical Examination Form
3. OHSAA Authorization Form
4. Waiver form/Insurance
5. Emergency Medical Authorization Form
6. OHSAA Eligibility Checklist for High School Student Athletes
7. Concussion Information Form
8. Lyndsay Law Sign Off Form