



# **Athletic Handbook**

Old Redford Academy Elementary School

Old Redford Academy Middle School

Old Redford Academy High School

Updated July 2025

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# Introduction

This Handbook incorporates by reference all ORA Board policies, procedures, administrative guidelines, and the current ORA Student Handbook. Any violation of ORA policy will result in corrective action as an athlete. The ORA Athletic Director reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a student from any athletic team if a student violates any eligibility guidelines, the Athletic Code of Conduct, or any action that is contrary to the spirit of this Athletic Handbook or the mission and philosophies of ORA.

Old Redford Academy Athletic Program complies with all Federal/Michigan laws and regulations. No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, sex, (including sexual orientation, sex characteristics, sexual stereotypes of gender identity or expression), pregnancy or related conditions, mental or physical disability, age, religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry or genetic information.

## STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS

When the coaching staff, athletes, and parents all work together for the well-being of the team, the season is successful. Please help us create the most enjoyable atmosphere possible for our athletes to have a pleasant experience. Coaches must coach, players must work hard and sacrifice for the team's success, and parents must encourage and support their children by attending games. As role models for our young athletes, parents should exhibit the following behaviors:

### Old Redford Academy Expectations for Parents of Athletes:

- See that your child(ren) attends school regularly, on time, and for the entire day as scheduled.
- Provide for your child(ren)'s general health and welfare as much as possible.
- Teach and model respect for yourself, your child(ren), and all members of the school community.
- Support the school's efforts to provide a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Know and support Old Redford Academy rules and policies and work within the existing structure of the school to address concerns. Advocate for your child(ren) and take an active role in the school community.
- Allow the officials to officiate whether you agree with a decision or not.
- Allow the coach to coach whether you agree with the coaching style or not.
- Ensure that your child attends practice and games.
- Keep all comments from the stands positive, including those directed towards individuals other than your own child.

- If a problem arises, communicate effectively with the coach prior to speaking with the athletic director or other administrators.
- Unless the coach is doing something that compromises the safety or well-being of your child, let them do the job without your opinions and insights. If there is a question that truly concerns you, then meet with the coach one-on-one and seek to resolve the situation.
- Please be prompt when picking up your children. If you are late more than two times to pick up your child, your child can be dismissed from the team.

## **Old Redford Academy Expectations for Athletes:**

- Respect yourself and others in the class, on school grounds, on buses, and at any school-related activity.
- Follow all team rules, school rules and regulations, and policies outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship towards the opponents, teammates, officials, and your coach.
- Make excelling in academics your top priority.
- Put team goals ahead of personal goals.
- Have pride in yourself, your team, your school, and care for your facilities.
- Attend practices on time and be prepared.
- Pass all classes with a B or better.
- Practice healthy hygiene habits.

## **Old Redford Academy Expectations for Coaches:**

- Teach players by precept and example.
- Respect school administrators and contest officials; provide support for them in cases of adverse decisions and refrain from critical comments in public or to the media.
- Demonstrate to athletes that the goals of the team supersede individual goals.
- Appropriate playing time and participation will be determined fairly by talent, ability, character, and attendance.
- Communicate effectively with parents, athletes, and the Athletic Director.
- Give the highest degree of attention to the athlete's physical well-being.
- Develop, communicate and model policies for athletes' conduct and language in the locker room, at practice, during travel, during competition, and any other appropriate times.

- Self-Aware Strategists- Understanding the big picture (values, strengths, weaknesses, etc.); linking long-term goals to daily choices
- Creative Problem Solvers- Iterating on your approach to overcome obstacles, conducting independent inquiry
- Restorative Relationship-builders- Proactively developing high-discipline, high-support relationships; doing “with” not “to”/“for”
- Collaborative Team Members -Contributing and recognizing others’ contributions; preparing strong views, but revising them easily
- Centered Souls -Being still, and taking in the virtuous Good; making space in the day to listen and reflect
- Courageous Role Models - Expressing the virtuous Good through one’s choices; being on the journey too, as a “real model”
- Seek to understand, don't say it but do it.

## ELIGIBILITY RULES

As outlined by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA)

1. Age - High School students become ineligible if they reach their nineteenth (19) birthday before September 1 of a current school year. Seventh-grade students must be under fourteen years of age before September 1 of a current school year. Eighth-grade students must be under fifteen years of age before September 1 of a current year. Those middle school students who will reach their fifteenth (15) birthday before September 1 of a current year may participate in the high school athletic program if approved on an MHSAA Eligibility Advancement Application. These students are limited to four years of high school eligibility, and all other regulations would apply as if that student were in high school.
2. Middle School students: A 7th-grade student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest limited to 7<sup>th</sup> graders must be under fourteen (14) years of age, except that a student whose 14<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year. An 8th-grade student who competes in any school athletic contests limited to 8<sup>th</sup> graders must be under fifteen (15) years of age, except that a student whose (15<sup>th</sup>) birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year.
3. Physical Examinations- Students must have on file, in the Athletic Department Office, a physician’s statement for the current school year (dated after April 15) certifying that he/she is physically able to compete in athletic practices and contests.

4. Enrollment- Students must be enrolled in school prior to the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st semester) or the fourth Friday of February (2nd semester). A student must be enrolled in the school for which she or he competes.
5. Semesters of Enrollment- Students cannot be eligible in high school for more than eight semesters and the seventh and eighth semesters must be consecutive. Students are allowed four first semesters and four second semesters of competition and cannot compete if they have graduated from high school. (High School Only)
6. Transfer Students- A student in grades 9 through 12 who transfers to another high school is not eligible to participate in an interscholastic contest for one full semester unless the student qualifies for immediate eligibility under one or more of fifteen published exceptions.
7. Undue Influence- The use of undue influence by any person directly or indirectly associated with a school to secure or encourage the attendance of a student for athletic purposes shall cause the student to become ineligible for a minimum of one semester.
8. Awards and Amateurism- Students cannot receive money or other valuable considerations for participating in MHSAA-sponsored sports or officiating in interscholastic athletic contests, except as allowed by the MHSAA Handbook. Students may accept, for participating in MHSAA sponsored sports, a symbolic or merchandise award, which does not have a value over \$25. Banquets, luncheons, dinners, trips, and admissions to camps or events, are permitted if accepted "in-kind". Awards in the form of cash, merchandise, certificates, or any other negotiable document are never allowed.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

Any student traveling to an away athletic contest/practice as a member of a team on a school chartered vehicle must return to the home school on the same vehicle after the contest/practice is over when the vehicle is scheduled as roundtrip transportation. The only exception is if a parent has made prior arrangements with the coach, then that student will be allowed to return home with the student's parent or guardian. Coaches are prohibited from transporting students in their personal vehicles without written consent from a legal guardian provided to the Athletic Director.

## **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Student-athletes are to attend school during the school day in order to participate in athletics on the same day or evening. Should there be a situation where a student cannot attend school (i.e. medical appointment) an excused absence note will be required to participate in the contest with approval from the Principal and Athletic Director. Any student-athlete who has been suspended from school may not participate in any team activities, including practice, for the duration of the suspension.
2. Attendance at practice sessions is essential to prepare athletes physically and mentally for athletic contests. All team members are required to be at all athletic practice sessions and contests at the times designated by the coach. Should situations occur where it is impossible

for a participant to attend due to illness, injury, and other required school or family commitments, the student will make prior arrangements with the coach for an excused absence.

3. Participants will only be excused from team practice during regular school vacation periods when taking part in a school-sponsored or parent-approved trip. It is the expectation of the coach and athletic administration that the student will notify the coach prior to the excused absence.
4. Student-athletes are expected to attend all contests barring any emergency circumstances. If a student will miss a contest, prior written notice from a parent/guardian is necessary.
5. Students must have good school attendance to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. This includes before, during or after a season. Students identified as having chronic attendance issues (missing more than 10% of the enrolled days) wishing to play sports or participate in extracurricular activities must have an attendance plan in place and showing progress.

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

### **As required by Old Redford Academy**

To be eligible for athletic participation, a student must meet the following grade requirements during the previous grading period:

- Maintain at least a 2.5 average on a 4.0 grading scale for the preceding grading period. Each course in which the student is enrolled will be used in the calculations of the grade point average during the period of attendance. All incoming students shall have the first quarter as a probationary period to become eligible or ineligible.
- Maintain passing grades in all core classes.

Ineligible students shall be helped to regain eligibility by offering them counseling, tutoring and/or other appropriate help. The Athletic Director or designee may grant ineligible students a probationary period of not more than one semester. Students granted probationary eligibility must meet the required standards by the end of the probationary period in order to remain eligible for participation. If a student decides to apply for an extra/co-curricular academic probation, the following process shall be followed:

1. Students may receive academic probation one time per year
2. Students may receive academic probation at the Quarter or Semester grading period.
3. A student wishing to apply for academic probation must have at least a 1.7 grade point average and no more than two F's.
4. A student wishing to use his/her Academic Probation is required to attend an academic intervention meeting with their parent/guardian within ten school days of the grading period. At the academic intervention meeting, the student and parent will enter into a contract with

the coach, the Athletic Director and the Academic Dean. Probation progress will be reviewed by the Athletic Director and academic probation may be revoked if adequate progress is not being made.

A student who is granted probation will be monitored by their respective athletic coach for the term of the grading period.

- Present weekly progress reports signed by each teacher.
- Earn a 2.0 or higher grade point average by the end of the grading period. The period of eligibility/ineligibility are as follows:
  - The period of eligibility/ineligibility must be of the same duration (quarter, semester).
  - The period of eligibility/ineligibility will begin on the day that progress reports or report cards are given. Any student who is ineligible due to any of the criteria above shall be ineligible to practice, perform, or participate in any way until the next grading period when the minimum eligibility requirements are met. However, when students are enrolled in a class related to the co-curricular activity, they may continue to attend and participate in the regularly scheduled class as well as team study hall sessions.

## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

Recognizing that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right, Old Redford Academy requires that the conduct of student-athletes be exemplary at all times. Participants are representatives of the Old Redford Academy network and their school and must conduct themselves appropriately at all times both while in school and out of school, this includes being respectful to staff, coaches, officials, as well as members of the opposing team. Student-athletes who violate this policy are subject to suspension or dismissal from the team at the discretion of school administrators, or coaches.

## **UNIFORM / EQUIPMENT POLICY**

It is the expectation of Old Redford Academy that all student-athletes are responsible for the care, security, and use of any uniforms/equipment issued to them while participating in school-sponsored sports. Failure to return the uniform/equipment or returning items damaged will result in the student-athlete being held financially responsible. The student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport or receive any awards, transcripts, etc. until the uniform is returned or the athletic department has been reimbursed. Theft of school equipment is larceny and Michigan law regards larceny as a felony.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

Student-Athletes are prohibited from the behavior listed below:

1. Posting derogatory language or remarks about teammates, coaches, other student-athletes, teachers, or administrators at this school or other schools. ]

2. Posting demeaning statements, inflammatory language, or threats to any other person, school, or organization.
3. Posting incriminating photos or statements depicting or insinuating violence, bullying hazing, sexual harassment, vandalism, stalking, underage drinking, or the selling, possessing, or use of controlled substances.
4. Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
5. Indicating knowledge of criminal activity including theft or damage to property.

If a student athlete is in violation of any of the prohibited behaviors mentioned above, they will be subject to suspension or removal from the program.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

All student-athletes are prohibited from the possession and/or use of any tobacco or nicotine product including tobacco products, tobacco-related devices, imitation tobacco products, lighters, vaporizers (including any substance used in vaporizers), electronic cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems or other substitute forms of cigarettes, clove cigarettes or other lighted smoking devices for burning tobacco or any other substance. Student-athletes are also prohibited from the use, possession, concealment, sale, delivery, or distribution of alcohol, drugs (including marijuana), and/or any mind altering substances and/or related paraphernalia. Students violating this policy will be automatically suspended from team activities. In addition, refer to the Old Redford Academy Student Handbook for additional consequences that will result due to the violation of these rules.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Individual athletes' goals are secondary to the success of the team as a whole. Not all athletes will receive an equal amount of playing time, be understanding of this fact and recognize that participation is a privilege.
- The coach, Athletic Director and school administration reserve the right to suspend/dismiss an athlete who violates this code of conduct, the school code of conduct, or whose attitude and or/behavior are unbecoming of an Old Redford Academy student-athlete.
- All parents are expected to adhere to the 24-hour "cooling off period" in order to allow themselves to communicate effectively and respectfully with the coaches. All complaints must be heard at the lowest level possible before intervention by a higher authority can occur.

## **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. Complaints must

be made within 10 days of the incident. For the sake of all parties, the entire process must be concluded within 30 days of the incident.

#### Conducting a Meeting:

- Introduce yourself and vice versa. There is to be no yelling, verbal or physical abuse by either side.
- When each person is speaking there is to be no interruption. Let each person complete his or her version of the situation before the other person speaks. When stating your concern be prepared with the facts in so far as you understand, or can ascertain them. Be clear about what you hope will happen as a result of your meeting.
- As you talk with the coach, or other authority, repeat back what you hear him or her say to be sure that you understand the important points. Stay calm and friendly as you talk and listen. Take notes.
- Assist in generating options to resolve the conflict. Make sure there is fairness to the proposed solutions.
- Before the session ends, have a plan that is clearly understood by all parties. A written document restating the final outcome, what happens if the situation reoccurs, and signatures indicating understanding is appropriate. This written plan will check for mutual understanding. Make a plan to touch base following the initial meeting.
- Remember that each party has a stake in making the plan work. We always assume that all parties have the best interest of the student-athlete in mind when concerns are discussed. Therefore, we make every effort to assure that the student is not penalized or placed in an awkward position as a result of voicing a complaint. Parents, rightly so, tend to have single focus and advocate for their own child. Coaches, on the other hand, tend to have multi-focus and must safeguard the needs of every player as well as the team as a whole. Parents and coaches, in order to communicate effectively, must respect the legitimate perspective of the other.

#### Step 1 - Start with the Source

The player 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 meeting should be conducted by the athlete.

#### Step 2 - Move to program head

This step is necessary only if the issue is in regards a subordinate or assistant (i.e. an assistant, 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 Athletic Director

If an agreeable solution is not reached, then the athletic director will conduct a meeting between the parties in an attempt to find resolution.

#### Step 4 - Contact Director of Operations

At this point in the process, individuals who still believe their disputes have not been resolved adequately can submit a written narrative of their complaint to the Director of Operations. A copy of this will be given to all concerned parties, who will be afforded the option of a written rebuttal. After the Director of Operations has reviewed the documents he can conduct a meeting in a final attempt to resolve the dispute.

#### Step 5 - Request non-partisan Athletic Council Meeting

This final step is appropriate only in extreme circumstances and shall follow the same process laid down for the Director of Operations.

- The Athletic Council consists of three non-partisan participants (Academic Dean, Behavior Interventionist or Principal).
- To ensure the council remains non-partisan, will be excused from the meeting and WILL NOT have any voting power.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACH AND PARENTS**

Old Redford Academy' interscholastic athletic program exists to provide a venue for students to learn and grow in ways that are not always possible in the classroom. Our ability to establish lines of communication will ultimately determine our success in providing a positive athletic experience. People feel valued and understood when they communicate effectively, even if complete agreement is not always achieved.

We are all concerned about our students' education. Learning to deal with your own difficult situations is part of the growth period. Learning to resolve a conflict or misunderstanding between an athlete and a coach is an important educational experience for the athlete. Parents should react slowly. Children tend to exaggerate at times, leave out part of the story, or present a skewed version of an incident.

Taking responsibility for your part in a conflict is a learned skill. It requires maturity and honest self-reflection. Athletes vent frustration at the dinner table expecting mom and dad to take their side of the issue. Parents, on the other hand, realize that they were not present at practice to observe how their child behaved, interacted with the coach, or assess his or her skill and effort.

Before reaching any conclusions, parents should always seek additional information. The most beneficial long-term assistance a parent can provide a child in awkward situations with a coach is to teach and model conflict resolution skills. Assist your child in resolving his or her own conflicts. A student learns and grows when he or she successfully resolves difficult interpersonal conflicts.

Parents are encouraged to assist their athlete in learning the valuable lessons that athletics can teach, even if those lessons are "tough" for everyone involved. Of course, a parent always retains the right to intervene on behalf of a child.

All parents can expect the following communication from their child's coach or the Athletic Director:

- Team Itinerary: Parents must be aware of all tryouts, practices, games, bus trips, meetings, banquets, team camps, conditioning sessions, and so on, as well as directions to away games as soon as possible.
- Team Rules: Parents value knowing not only the coach's philosophy, but also any team policies, including consequences, that the coach established to complement the code of conduct, rules, and regulations.
- Injury: Parents can expect to be immediately informed by the coach when an injury occurs that requires medical attention.
- Problem Behavior: Coaches should call parents whenever an athlete exhibits atypical behavior.
- Discipline: The coach will notify parents of any discipline that results in the loss of contest participation or removal from the team within 24 hours. Whenever possible, this contact will be made prior to the parent's attendance at the contest.

#### Communication Coaches Appreciate from Parents:

- Schedule Conflicts: If you cannot reach the coach directly, it is then appropriate to notify the main office to get a message to the coach
- Emotional Stressors: Coaches appreciate knowing about any unusual event in the life of an athlete that is causing the young person additional stress.
- Volunteers: Coaches need help with so many aspects of managing the program (fundraisers, work projects, team dinners, awards banquet, et cetera) that they are always glad to hear from parents who have ideas and are willing to work for the team.
- Forthrightness: Every coach wants to try to resolve a conflict before it is taken to the athletic director, principal or other higher authority or before it is discussed "in the stands."

#### Appropriate Concerns for Parents to Discuss with Coaches:

- The treatment of your child
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's physical health and welfare, academic progress, or violation of the code of conduct.

Please Note: Matters regarding other athletes are to be left to their respective parents)

#### Areas of Control that Belong to the Coach, Alone:

- Tryout procedures, team placement, team size and selection criteria. 2. Position(s) played, lineups and playing time.
- Offensive and defensive strategies play calling and style of play.
- Practice plans, drills and scrimmages.

- Coaching staff (upon approval of the Athletic Director).

## **INSURANCE COVERAGE**

ORA does not provide medical/dental insurance for its students. Athletes participate at their own risk and are responsible for their medical/dental costs to an athletic related injury. A valid physical examination form and proof of insurance must be submitted before the first day of team tryouts or the first day of practice, whichever comes first. ORA is not responsible for ambulance costs or any other medical or dental expenses.

## **LIMITATION ON LIABILITY**

Participation in supervised interscholastic athletics does include a risk of injury which may range in severity. Participants can and have the responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. Athletes must obey safety rules, report physical problems to their coaches, follow a proper condition program and inspect their equipment regularly.

ORA, the ORA Board, CS Partners, its employees, coaches, agents and volunteers do not assume any financial responsibility for any claims (including lost opportunities), demands, suits, damages, liability, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorney fees) incurred as a consequence either directly or indirectly from a student's participation in the Athletic Program.

Athletics are a voluntary program in which students may participate if they choose, but athletes do so at their own risk of injury. Athletics by their very nature are inherently dangerous and create the possibility of serious injury, including permanent paralysis and even death. By participating in the ORA Athletics program, you assume the risk of such serious injury.

# CODE OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

PARENTS & STUDENT ATHLETES

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give my consent for the student named above to engage in interscholastic athletics and understand the possibility that serious injury may result from participating in athletic activities. I further understand that the above student will be expected to adhere firmly to all established athletic policies of the school district and the Michigan High School Athletic Association. I recognize that as a result of athletic participation, medical treatment on an emergency basis may be necessary and further recognize that school personnel may be unable to contact me for my consent for emergency medical care. I do hereby consent in advance to such emergency care, including hospital care, as may be deemed necessary under the then existing circumstances and to assume responsibility for the expenses of such care. I authorize Old Redford Academy to use a photograph or video recording of my child for district news or web page publications. My signature acknowledges that I have read this entire document and I agree on behalf of the above-named student and myself to abide by all of its provisions.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As an athlete, I understand that I am expected to adhere firmly to all established athletic policies of Old Redford Academy and the Michigan High School Athletic Association such as those stated in this document. My signature acknowledges that I have read the entire athletic code of conduct, and understand that it is in effect 365 days a year, all day, every day, and everywhere. I agree to abide by all of the stated policies, procedures and codes of the athletic department. I also understand that there are additional policies I must adhere to which are not contained in this document.

Student-Athlete Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_