

# Byron Area Schools

## **PARENT/STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**



***“HOME OF THE EAGLES”***

## **FORWARD**

The Byron Area Schools Athletic Handbook has been put together for athletes and parents of Byron Area Schools. This handbook is to be used as a set of expectations for all athletes. It is the desire of the Byron Athletic Department that all athletes have a quality experience in athletics. Good sportsmanship is expected from athletes, coaches and fans that participate in or attend events. The coaching staff is dedicated to providing a quality experience to Byron students. Student welfare and safety are a top priority as athletes participate in the spirit of competition.

If you would like more information regarding Byron Athletics, please contact the Byron Athletic office at (810) 266-5137.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS**

The interscholastic athletic program is a vital and integral part of the total educational program. Its purpose is to make positive contributions to the development of the participants, spectators, school, and community. Research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school.

As an integral part of the educational process, the athletic program should always conform and support the objectives and standards of the school. The total educational curriculum should be reflected in the athletic program. Athletes should strive for educational excellence, playing excellence, as well as staying within the boundaries of good sportsmanship.

## **MISSION OF THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT**

To provide quality individual and team training in support of the Philosophy of Athletics, by attracting, developing, and retaining quality students and coaches.

## **BYRON ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide a positive image of school activities at Byron Area Schools.
2. To provide students with opportunities for physical, mental, and emotional development.
3. To experience team play, along with loyalty, cooperation and fair play.
4. To create a desire to exceed and excel.
5. To practice self-discipline and emotional maturity while learning to make decisions under pressure.
6. To develop an understanding of the value of extracurricular activities in a balanced educational experience.
7. To demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times.
8. To develop leadership qualities and skills.

## TEN EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

1. Help your child to grow and learn from success and failure in the athletic environment through positive encouragement.
2. Have your child at practices and games.
3. Practice with your child at home.
4. Come to the games as often as you can.
5. Cheer positively.
6. Allow the coach to coach.
7. Let the officials officiate.
8. Compliment your child.
9. Communicate with the coach.
10. Remember that this is your child's game.

## MID-MICHIGAN ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE

Byron Area Schools is a member of the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference. Members include the following: Byron, Chesaning, Durand, Montrose, Lakeville, Mt. Morris, New Lothrop, and Ovid-Elsie.

## THE BYRON INTERSCHOLASTIC PROGRAM

Byron Area Schools offers a varied program of interscholastic athletics. The purpose of this program is to aid in the development of leadership, cooperation, sportsmanship, competitive spirit, and physical well-being. It is desired that all Byron students have the experience of participating on one or more of the following athletic teams:

### **Boys Fall Sports (approximate start date - High School: 1st/2<sup>nd</sup> week of August, Middle School: 1st Week of School)**

Cross Country	Middle School & Varsity
Football	Varsity
Equestrian*	Varsity
Soccer	Varsity
Trap*	Varsity

### **Boys Winter Sports (approximate start date HS/MS: 2<sup>nd</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> week in November)**

Basketball	Middle School, J.V. & Varsity
Wrestling	Middle School & Varsity
Bowling	Varsity

### **Boys Spring Sports (approximate start date HS/MS: 2<sup>nd</sup> week in March)**

Baseball	Middle School, J.V. & Varsity
Golf	Varsity
Track	Middle School, Varsity
Bowling*	Middle School

**Girls Fall Sports (approximate start date –High School: 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August, Middle School: 1st Week of School)**

Volleyball	Freshmen, J.V. & Varsity
Cheerleading	Middle School & Varsity
Cross Country	Middle School & Varsity
Golf	Varsity
Basketball	Middle School
Equestrian*	Varsity
Trap*	Varsity

**Girls Winter Sports (approximate start date HS/MS: 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> week of November)**

Basketball	J.V. & Varsity
Bowling	Varsity
Gymnastics*	Varsity
Volleyball	Middle School

**Girls Spring Sports (approximate start date HS/MS 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March)**

Soccer	Varsity
Softball	Middle School, J.V. & Varsity
Track	Middle School & Varsity
*Bowling	Middle School

\* Equestrian, Trap, Gymnastics, and Middle School Bowling are club sports.

**BYRON AREA SCHOOLS STUDENT/ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS**

The following ten expectations are what a Byron student-athlete should encompass:

1. Follow all training rules, school rules and regulations, including those of MHSAA.
2. Exhibit good sportsmanship towards the opponents, officials, teammates and fans.
3. Work to excel in academics.
4. Put team goals ahead of personal goals.
5. Be a role model for all students before, during and after school.
6. Have pride in yourself, your team, your school, and care for your facility.
7. Respect, but never fear the opponent.
8. Work harder than the competition both in and out of season and never quit.
9. Be on time and prepared for practices, meetings and games.
10. Accept the results, learn from the mistakes, focus on the goal and never give up.

**MHSAA ELIGIBILITY RULES**

**Enrollment** - To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must be enrolled in a high school no later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1<sup>st</sup> semester) or fourth Friday of February (2<sup>nd</sup> semester). A student must be enrolled in the school for which he/she competes.

**Age** - A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contests must be under nineteen (19) years of age, the exception to that is a student whose nineteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> of a current school year.

**Physical Examination/Medical Consent Form** - No student shall be eligible to represent Byron, for whom there is not a physician's statement on file, in the offices of the Superintendent, Principal, or the Athletic Director for the current school year. This statement must certify that the student has passed a physical examination and is physically able to compete in athletic practices and contests. (A physician's statement for the current school year is interpreted as physical examination given after April 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous school year). A signed medical/participation consent for all athletes must accompany the record of the physical examination. Parents must fill this form out and return it to the coach prior to the first practice. Byron Area Schools will adhere to the direction of the MHSAA for any variation to this policy.

**Transfers** – When a student moves into a district and wishes to participate in sports, they must follow the MHSAA transfer rules. (Please check with the Athletic Director on all transfers)

**Awards** - A student may accept, for participation in athletics, a symbolic or merchandise award, which does not have a value or cost in excess of \$40.00. Awards for the athletic participation in the form of cash, merchandise certificates, or any other type of negotiable documents are never allowed. A violation of this rule may lead to ineligibility.

**Dual Team Membership** – All students wishing to participate in dual sports must complete a "Dual Sport Participation Agreement". Coaches affected should discuss the following:

- A. How will this affect the academic work of the athlete?
- B. Which team will have priority if there are conflicting game times/practice times?
- C. Is this what is best for the student-athlete?

**Final Approval must be made by the Athletic Director**

### **SPORTS PASSES**

Sport passes are sold from the athletic office. These passes offer a substantial saving over the cost of buying separate tickets for each event. Senior Citizens are admitted free of charge for Byron residents.

### **NCAA COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY RULES**

If you want to practice and play your freshman year at a NCAA Division I or Division II college, you must satisfy the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 14.3, and you must be certified

by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Check with your Counselor to obtain a Clearinghouse form and to ascertain Bylaw 14.3 requirements. **It is the athlete's and the parent's responsibility to meet NCAA requirements.**

### **A GUIDE FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS**

Many college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization founded in 1906 that has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid. The NCAA has three membership divisions:

**Division I:** With schools such as Michigan State, University of Michigan, Central Michigan, Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Oakland University.

**Division II:** With schools such as SVSU, Grand Valley State, Northern Michigan, Michigan Tech.

**Division III:** With schools such as Alma College, Hope, and Calvin.

Institutions are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships. If you are planning to enroll in college as a freshman and you wish to participate in Division I or Division II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

**Please see your counselor as early as possible in your high school career.**

### **EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

Some athletic equipment is supplied to athletes, in each sport, by the Byron Area School District. This equipment is on loan for that sport season. Students are responsible for the care of this equipment. If damage or loss occurs, the student may be held liable for the replacement cost of the equipment.

### **INSURANCE**

Byron Area Schools does not assume financial responsibility for medical, hospital or ambulance expenses incurred because of athletic injuries. Athletics is a voluntary program in which the student may participate if he/she so desires, but the student does so at his/her own risk of injury. Inherent risks of injury may include paraplegic, quadriplegic injuries or death.

### **COLLEGE RECRUITMENT**

In the event that a college recruiter contacts a student, the student will contact his/her coach and the athletic department. Inform the coach and Athletic Director of such a contact as soon as possible. Athletes interested in playing college athletics should contact their counselor during their junior year regularly.

### **SQUAD SELECTION PROCEDURE**

#### **I. 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 at Byron, we

encourage our coaches to keep as many student/athletes as they can without unbalancing the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. Coaches, when developing individual sport policy should strive to maximize the opportunities for our student/athletes without diluting the quality of the program.

## **II. Limitation of Team Membership Policy**

The coaches of respective sports and the Athletic Director will determine minimum and maximum team membership limits. When the "Squad Reduction Policy" is utilized, the coach should keep the Athletic Director informed concerning the method and time of "cuts".

## **III. Squad Reduction Policy**

### **A. Responsibility**

1. Choosing the members of any athletic team is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. All squad size will be reviewed by the Athletic Director prior to implementation.
2. There is no such thing as a final team cut. The athlete's membership on any team is always subject to proper behavior and the following of specified team guidelines.
3. Sub-varsity and Middle School coaches shall follow the policies as established by the head coach in that particular program when selecting team members.
4. Prior to try-outs, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:
  - a. Extent of the try-out period
  - b. Criteria used to select team
  - c. Approximate number to be selected
  - d. Overall team member expectations.

### **B. Procedure**

1. When a squad cut becomes necessary, the process should include these important elements:
  - a. Have completed a minimum number of practices.
  - b. Be allowed, when possible, to compete in a scrimmage situation.
  - c. Be informed by the coach of the cut and the reason for it.
2. Coaches should take the opportunity to discuss alternative possibilities for participation in the sport or other sports.

## **TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

1. Once an athlete has decided upon a sport he/she wishes to try, he/she may not change to another sport without permission from the coach of the sport he/she is dropping.
2. If an athlete wishes to change from one sport to another, he/she must do so prior to the first game of that season.

3. If an athlete is dropped from a team for disciplinary reasons, he/she is not allowed to try out or participate in another sport during the same season.
4. Athletes are **required** to be in school when school begins on the morning following a previous night's game. Coaches and parents should impress this upon their athletes.
5. Athletes must travel to and from away contests with the team when a bus is utilized.
6. During Out of School Suspension (OSS), students are suspended from participation in all extra-curricular activities, including athletic practices and contests through the next day. Suspended students are not permitted on school grounds without permission from the Principal.
7. If a coach suspends/drops an athlete from his/her team, the coach must notify the Athletic Director by the next morning stating the reasons for the action.

### **TEAM RULES AND POLICIES**

Prior to the season, all coaches are required to turn in to the Athletic Director their team rules and policies for review. A copy should also to be given to each team member.

### **VACATION POLICY**

Some teams may hold voluntary practices during school recognized holiday breaks. Athletes must provide written permission from parents to coaches stating their reason for not attending practices or games. Coaches are encouraged to keep practices to a minimum during vacation days.

### **WEIGHT ROOM**

This room is for the students and staff of Byron Area Schools. People who use this room must abide by the following rules or they will be dismissed. This room will be open only when supervision from a coach or staff member is available. Please use care when using this room and the equipment in it. The user assumes risk.

1. Athletes are not permitted in the weight room without a coach.
2. Coaches must supervise all activities.
3. Coaches and athletes are responsible for making sure the weight bars are cleared, weights are stacked, the weight room is clean, the stereo and lights are turned off and doors locked when leaving.
4. No gum, glass, drinks or food are allowed in the weight room (other than water).
5. Appropriate apparel (shirt/shorts/shoes) must be worn at all times.
6. Spotters must be used for all lifts over the head and body.
7. Use weight belts for safety—especially those involving lifts with the lower back.
8. Anyone behaving in an inappropriate manner may be removed from the weight room and have their privileges suspended.
9. To be used only at approved times by the A.D. or other administration.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

1. The Athletic Director will arrange for most transportation to away contests.
2. The bus or van schedules will be issued to the athlete.

3. Athletes will not board the bus at any time until the coach is present. Everyone will board the bus together. Coaches should verify before leaving that all athletes, coaches and managers are present.
4. Athletes must travel to and from away contests with the team when a bus is utilized. The Athletic Director may approve athletes leaving with parents when prior notice is given to the AD or in extenuating circumstances.
5. No bus will leave unless the coach or a chaperone is on the bus.
6. It will be the responsibility of the coach and athletes to make sure all refuse is picked up and deposited in a container when leaving the bus.
7. Athletes are to remain in their seats when on the bus. This means no walking around, standing up and banging on the ceiling, hanging out of the window, yelling out of the bus or making any obscene gestures from inside the bus to a passerby.
8. Any athlete violating the transportation policy may be disciplined, including removal from the team.

### **VOLUNTEER/ASSISTANT COACHES**

1. A volunteer coach must be approved by the A.D. and Superintendents office.
2. Coaches and volunteers must have a district approved background check completed before they can coach/volunteer.

### **PARENT/COACH/ATHLETE COMMUNICATION**

#### **Parent/Coach Relationship**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are able to communicate the benefit of extra-curricular activities to children. As parents, when your children become involved in the athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communications from the coach.

#### **Communication You Should Expect From Your Child's Coach**

As a parent, you should expect to receive the following information from the coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all the players.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation.
6. Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation.

## **Communication Coaches Expect From Parents**

The coach of your child's sport expects to receive the following communications from parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance, if possible.
3. Specific concerns regarding a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your child becomes involved in athletic programs at Byron High School/Middle School, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his/her life. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with a coach is encouraged.

## **Appropriate Concerns To Discuss With Coaches**

1. Expectations for your son/daughter during practices and games.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child.
4. Academic support and college opportunities.

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

## **Items Not Appropriate To Discuss With Coaches**

It is inappropriate to discuss the following topics with coaches:

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

## **If You Have A Concern To Discuss With A Coach, This Is The Procedure You Should Follow:**

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be used to help promote a resolution of the issue:

1. Call to set up an appointment with the coach. The coach should be the first point of contact, not the AD or other Administration.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director at 810-266-5137. He can help set up the meeting for you.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.
4. Use the 24/48 hour rule. Wait to discuss a situation with a coach until 24 hours after the contest but no later than 48 hours.

### **What Can A Parent Do If The Meeting With The Coach Did Not Provide A Satisfactory Resolution?**

1. Call and set up an appointment to meet with the Athletic Director at 810-2665137 to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined if the situation is still unresolved.

### **Coaches Communication with Athletes:**

Coaches will be expected to communicate with athletes in a professional manner. Coaches may communicate with athletes via group texts, team sports apps, or Facebook groups. Athletes and coaches should do their best to not communicate with each other individually via text, or through other social media apps such as snapchat, instagram etc.

## **GENERAL RULES FOR ALL ATHLETES**

The Code of Conduct supersedes any rule established by the athletic rules. If an athlete violates the Code of Conduct, he/she shall be dealt with as any other student. He/she may receive further punishment if such act is also in violation of athletic rules. To participate in interscholastic sports in the name of Byron Area School District is a privilege and an honor, not an inherent right. Those who feel that they cannot be bound by rules imposed on athletes should not participate.

The athletic rules may be enforced in situations where the problem rests only in the realm of the athletic department. (Example Rule 9: An athlete who fails to return home from any away game on the provided team bus is not in violation of the Code of Conduct, but is breaking the athletic rule and would be dealt with accordingly.)

### **Philosophy:**

Representing Byron Area Schools in interscholastic athletics is a privilege extended to all students. Any student will be afforded the opportunity to try out for athletic teams.

Each athlete will be provided with a copy of the Athletic Handbook, upon request, and any team rules established by the coach and his/her team. Athletes must comply with all State regulations of the Michigan High School Athletic Association and the Board of Education.

### **Locker Room Usage:**

Byron Area Schools are not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items that are left unattended in the locker rooms. Male and female athletes shall use a locker room or bathroom facility to prepare for games or practices.

## **Academic Eligibility Requirements For Athletes.**

### **Guidelines:**

Eligibility will be pulled for all student-athletes starting the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) week of each marking period and run weekly through the remainder of the season. Any student failing more than 1 course will be deemed academically ineligible for that week. Any student remaining ineligible for three (3) consecutive weeks will be removed from the team. The Athletic Director will be in charge of running eligibility each Friday and communicating with the athletes and the coaches for any ineligible students.

- a. An ineligible student will not participate in any interscholastic contest while ineligible.
- b. Eligibility is based on a per class basis not per credit.
- c. It is the coach's responsibility to pick up eligibility on Friday afternoons.
- d. Teachers are not to change eligibility during the week unless a mistake in determining grades has been made.

### **Semester Eligibility:**

If a student receives a failing semester grade in two or more of their classes, they will be ineligible for 60 calendar days of the next semester. The counseling office will provide a list to the Athletic Director of students that fall under these criteria. Students may elect to credit recovery courses to regain eligibility. The student athlete in credit recovery courses will only be eligible upon successful completion of the credit recovery OR 60 calendar days have passed AND are still eligible under the weekly eligibility.

- Grades from correspondence courses, night school and summer school will be accepted in place of grades that are D or lower providing the course content is similar.
- The cost incurred by a student taking correspondence, night school or summer school will be borne by the student or parents.

### **Social Media Policy:**

Byron Area Schools respects a student's right to freedom of speech, and will not monitor a student's social media platforms, but if something is brought to our attention that may be inappropriate, disciplinary action may be taken. Unacceptable social media posts include posts about illegal activities, posts that are sexually explicit, unsportsmanlike behavior, use of inappropriate language especially posts regarding their status as a student athlete.

### **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Philosophy:** As representatives of Byron Area Schools, athletes are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times. This standard applies to both school and community activities. Schools and communities are judged by the actions and behavior of their students, and their athletes. It is a privilege to compete in athletics, and our athletes must subscribe to certain rules and regulations. These rules and regulations have been instituted for the betterment of the athlete. Athletes are required to follow all MHSAA, Mid-Michigan Activities Conference, and Byron Area Schools rules and regulations. Not following these rules could result in suspension or dismissal from a team. In order to participate in any athletic event, the athlete must be mentally and physically at his/her best. We, therefore, insist that you, as an athlete, follow these training rules that have been adopted by the Byron Area School Board. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish regulations and procedures to deal with violations which are verified. The school reserves the right to investigate and enforce violations which occur on or off school grounds during the school year.

1. Any athlete in possession of, or using, tobacco, alcohol, behavior altering drugs, or any National Collegiate Athletic Association banned drugs will be suspended for  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the season. The  $\frac{1}{2}$  season may be reduced to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the season if the athlete enrolls in and completes a help program. An example would be a person caught on a tobacco violation would enroll in a smoking cessation class.
2. Stealing or other conduct unbecoming of an athlete will result in suspension for  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the season. The  $\frac{1}{2}$  season may be reduced to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the season if the athlete enrolls in and completes a help program.
3. If an infraction cannot be fulfilled in the current season, the suspension will carry over into the next sport the athlete plays.
4. A second offense will result in the athlete being suspended for one calendar year. A third offense will result in the loss of high school eligibility.
5. Athletes must abide by the training rules from the time that they turn in their first physical.
6. Each athlete will be required to wear the uniform prescribed by the school for each sport.

7. When sports are being conducted concurrently, an athlete may not quit one sport and go out for another without permission of coaches of both sports.
8. Any athlete who destroys school property or equipment will pay for damage and may be required to appear before the athletic council.
9. Athletic transportation will be arranged by the school to all contests away from home. Athletes are encouraged to ride to and from all away events on the bus with the team. Possible exceptions must be cleared in advance with the coach and approved by the athletic director.
10. Any athlete suspended from school is also suspended from an athletic team, including practice sessions.
11. Each athlete is responsible for uniforms and equipment issued to him/her. He/she must return all equipment at the close of a sport or make arrangements for financial settlement. (Fair wear and tear expected). Awards will be withheld until above responsibility has been fulfilled.
12. An athlete will not be allowed to compete in an athletic contest or practice if he/she has been absent that day in any class. However, students may participate if they attend at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  day, and the absence is due to a funeral, court appearance, medical appointment, or circumstance deemed excusable by administration. The student must have proper documentation turned in to the attendance office **prior** to the practice or contest.
13. Athletes in school are expected to be at practice unless excused by the coach. Failure to go to practice may result in suspension from the squad.
14. Athletes guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct may be suspended from a team. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis after careful consideration of the particular circumstances.
15. Each athlete must successfully pass a physical examination and a record of the same must be on file at the Athletic Director's office before he/she will be allowed to practice. Physicals must be signed by the athlete and a parent agreeing to all MHSAA and school rules.
16. Athletes must pay the applicable registration fee prior to competing in a contest. Registration fees are as follows:

High School:           \$150.00 one-time fee to participate in athletics.

Middle School: \$50.00 per sport.

Family Cap: \$350.00 per year

Club sports participants do not pay the school registration fee (although, some club sports charge a fee to cover their costs). The following teams are considered club sports: HS Equestrian, HS Gymnastics, and Middle School Bowling.

17. Athletic games and practices scheduled on a day when school is cancelled will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### **A FINAL WORD**

A player's commitment to their game is reflected in everything they do; how they apply themselves academically, personal behavior on and off the playing surface, and commitment to the team goals, are on display. Players or parents who require additional information regarding the procedures in this Student Athlete Handbook are encouraged to contact the Athletic Director or the Head Coach.