



Student Athletic Handbook

Sycamore High School

sycamoreaviators.org

gmcsports.com

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Sycamore Athletic Department Mission Statement

The mission of Sycamore Athletics is to provide a positive athletic experience for our student athletes throughout the community with a focus on building student-athlete character, leadership, and sportsmanship.

Sycamore Athletic Department Beliefs

- We believe student-athletes are the highest priority
- We believe athletics are an integral part of the school’s educational program
- We believe in an organized effort to foster character, leadership, and sportsmanship for all athletes
- We believe in creating a cohesive athletic department across the district
- We believe teamwork strengthens the development and success of our athletic programs
- We believe qualified coaches are vital to the success of all our athletic programs
- We believe in open communication and respect for all stakeholders
- We believe positive parental support can enhance student athlete growth
- We believe athletics can help prepare student athletes for success in life after high school

Varsity Sports

Varsity Sports		
Fall	Winter	Spring
Cheerleading Boys’ Cross Country Girls’ Cross Country Football Boys’ Golf Girls’ Golf Boys’ Soccer Girls’ Soccer Girls’ Tennis Girls’ Volleyball Boys’ Water Polo Girls’ Water Polo	Cheerleading Academic Team Boys’ Basketball Girls’ Basketball Boys’ Bowling Girls’ Bowling Chess Team Dance Team Winter Track Boys’ Swimming & Diving Girls’ Swimming & Diving Boys’ Wrestling Girls’ Wrestling	Baseball Boys’ Lacrosse Girls’ Lacrosse Softball Boys’ Tennis Boys’ Track & Field Girls’ Track & Field Boys’ Volleyball



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to give student athletes and other interested persons a guide to the operation of the interscholastic athletic programs of Sycamore Community Schools. All student athletes that are a member of a sport offered by Sycamore Community Schools are governed by the Student Athletic Handbook. The athletic program of Sycamore Community Schools is a cooperative effort with the Board of Education, the Administration, and the Athletic Department. The opportunity for participation in a wide variety of student-selected activities is a vital part of the student's educational experience.

The conduct of student athletes is governed by the "Student Code of Conduct" as established by the Sycamore Board of Education, the Sycamore Athletics Student Handbook, and any other policies established by the Sycamore Athletic Department. Athletes are also responsible and shall be informed for specific rules and regulations as established by the coaches of each specific sport.

Student athletes and parents/guardians must understand that it is a privilege to participate in a Sycamore athletics program. A condition to participating in Sycamore athletics programs is to follow the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures established by the district for implementation of its athletic program. It must also be understood that athletes who violate the rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures shall face disciplinary action.

SPORTSMANSHIP

One of our goals is to develop athletes who demonstrate good sportsmanship. We believe that the basic rules of good sportsmanship consist of:

- Showing respect for all school employees at all times
- Showing respect for opponents at all times
- Showing respect for officials and their decisions
- Knowing, understanding, and following the rules of the contest
- Maintaining self-control at all times
- Recognizing and appreciating skill in performances regardless of affiliation

We believe that being a spectator is a "privilege" and not a "right". It is a privilege to watch an educational process where teams demonstrate what they have learned in the athletic classroom. Spectators will be held accountable for good sportsmanship. Failure to meet these expectations may result in removal from any events on a temporary or permanent basis.

All athletes are required to register for their sport in **FinalForms** prior to the start of the season. The registration process includes electronically acknowledging all Sycamore and OHSAA Rules and Regulations and Acknowledgement of Risk. The athlete and parent is required to sign all required forms in Final Forms **before** the athlete is permitted to participate in the sport. An up-to-date physical must also be on file in order to participate.



SYCAMORE COACHING STANDARDS

This document is designed to provide all Sycamore coaches with a common coaching frame of reference. These points of emphasis are to be considered guidelines in teaching interscholastic sports within the Sycamore Community Schools:

- Sycamore coaches are tasked with creating a positive and safe athletic environment and culture for all of our athletes
- Student athlete learning and teaching should be the center of all Sycamore interscholastic athletics. Sycamore coaches are expected to "teach" the fundamentals of the sport.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to be exemplary role models both in and out of the athletic arena and leaders of young people in every sense of the word. Reinforcement of sportsmanship is critical.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to communicate with the parents of their student athletes on a consistent basis. All parent phone calls or emails are expected to be returned within 24 hours.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to hold preseason parent meetings to communicate team policies, coach's philosophy, substance abuse policy information and all other logistical information specific to the program. This is where the ground rules for parental communications are outlined.
- Student athletes should be coached from a constructive perspective. Demeaning the efforts of a young person does not reinforce learning and has no place in Sycamore. Student athletes should never be ridiculed at any time, especially in front of their peers.
- Profanity by any coach directed at a specific student athlete is unacceptable.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to create interactions with Junior High and youth programs at Sycamore
- Sycamore coaches need to be sensitive to the diversity of our student athletes. Multi-cultural and socioeconomic differences give athletes a wide variety of perceptions. Casual remarks or comments made in front of a diverse group of athletes may be offensive or hurtful to some young people. Coaches are strongly encouraged to be sensitive to all the athletes under their direction.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to be consistent with discipline. Inconsistency leaves a coach open to charges of favoritism and undermines the morale of the squad.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to be punctual and prepared for all practices, meetings, and contests.
- Sycamore coaches will provide proper supervision during all practices, games, and transportation
- Sycamore coaches are expected to dress appropriately for practices and games. The professional dress of a coach sets the tone for the team and the athletic program.
- Sycamore coaches are expected to be familiar with District Policies on depositing / fundraising and general monetary accountability procedures.
- When teams are selected through tryouts, Sycamore coaches must ensure that athletes who have been cut are given the opportunity to understand what their deficiencies are and what they can do to improve
- Sycamore coaches should be familiar with basic Ohio High School Athletic Association bylaws regarding eligibility contest restrictions and non-contact periods.
- Coaches will remain up to date on all certifications required by the OHSAA
- Coaches will know the appropriate Emergency Action Plan for their sport as well as how to access and utilize an AED
- Failure of a coach to follow the above guidelines could lead to discipline, up to and including dismissal of the coach from the coaching position.



THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Role of Parents in High School Athletics

Parents are expected to understand that athletic events are learning experiences for student-athletes. Parents are to be a positive role model through their own actions and by censuring those around them at events where behavior is unbecoming. A ticket to a contest is a privilege to observe athletic tests of skills, not to verbally assault others or be obnoxious. Any spectator exhibiting unacceptable behavior can be removed from a contest at the discretion of the site manager, officials or police at the event. This could result in future removal from athletic events. Unacceptable behavior includes but is not limited to, bad language, harassing athletes, coaches, officials or other spectators and any physical altercation. Parents are expected to exhibit exemplary sportsmanship at all times. Any parent or spectator is prohibited from using any controlled substance before and during games and afterwards on or near the site of the event.

Communicating With Your Children

1. Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach them. It's tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the athlete to be flooded with advice and critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying" to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them develop the feeling for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
5. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents, so you must not withdraw. Remember there is a person who is thinking, feeling, sensitive, free spirit out there in that uniform that needs a lot of understanding, especially when their world turns bad. If they are comfortable with you win or lose, then they are on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
6. Don't compete with the coach. If your child is receiving mixed messages from two different authority figures, he/she will likely become disenchanted. Criticism of the coach to your child puts the athlete in a terrible "No Win" situation.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitude of your child with other members of the team.
8. Get to know the coach(es). Then you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting. Many items and athletes will define all coach criticism as being "yelled at".
10. Make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear and discomfort.



Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all players in the program
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements (fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- Procedure should your child be injured

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
- Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches: The treatment of your child, mentally and physically, ways to help your child improve, concerns about your child's behavior
- Issues that are NOT appropriate to discuss with coaches: playing time, team strategy, play calling, other student athletes

Appropriate Procedure for discussing concerns with coaches:

- Do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These are emotional times for all parties involved and do not promote resolution.
- The very first step in discussing a coaching concern is for the student athlete to meet with the coach.
- If a resolution has not been met, the next step would be for the coach, student athlete, and parent to meet
- If a resolution has not been met, the next step would be to setup a meeting with the Athletic Director and determine next steps
- If the concern still has not been resolved, the complainant should then refer the concern to the principal in writing. At that time another meeting will be arranged at the convenience of the complainant and coach directly concerned. The coach has the right to be at all meetings with or without a representative as they so determine. Any decision determined by the principal is final.
- Anonymous complaints are disregarded, per Board of Education policy

The Parent Pledge

By consenting to this handbook, you consent to the "parent pledge" as laid out by the Ohio High School Athletic Association. As a parent, I acknowledge that I am a role model. I will remember that school athletics are an extension of the classroom, offering learning experiences for students. I must show respect for all players, coaches, spectators, officials and support groups. I will participate in cheers that support, encourage and uplift the teams involved. I understand the spirit of fair play and that good sportsmanship is expected by our school, our conference and the OHSAA. I hereby accept my responsibility to be a model of good sportsmanship that comes with being a parent of a student-athlete. Violations of this pledge could result in removal from single and/or future events.



STUDENT ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

- Athletes must follow all OHSAA rules set forth in their constitution, by laws, and regulations.
- Athletes must abide by the school rules, Sycamore Code of Conduct, and this handbook. *If an athlete is suspended from school, the student may not participate in any school activity during the suspension and in some instances, may be asked to leave the team.*
- Athletes must exhibit sportsmanship at all times.
- Athletes must respect teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials.
- Athletes must abstain from the use, sale, or possession of tobacco, alcohol, vape pens, or other drugs.
- Athletes must follow team rules and should communicate with their coach in regards to questions, conflicts, or playing time. Athletes must understand that school sponsored sports come first over games and practices of outside teams.
- Athletes may not use vulgarity, profanity, or other abusive language.
- Athletes must respect the property of this and other schools.
- Athletes must accept the responsibility of representing Sycamore High School. That responsibility exists at all times. The decisions made at practice, in the classroom, on the bus, at contests, and in the community will be observed by others and that behavior should reflect positively on the team, the athletic department and the entire school.
- Athletes are responsible for the uniform and equipment issued to him/her. It is important to periodically check equipment for damage and immediately report any unsafe conditions to the coach. Do not loan equipment or uniforms to others, and be sure that all items are locked or secured at all times.
- Equipment and uniforms may only be worn during games, practices, or pep rallies unless approved by the coach
- Locks, uniforms and equipment, as provided, must be returned to the coach prior to that season's award program. If all items are not returned, the student may not participate in the awards program or participate in any other sport until the items are returned or restitution has been made.

In keeping with Board policy and the guidelines of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, student athletes are expected to fulfill their role in providing for an athletic program that is based on exemplary sportsmanship and behavior. Any athlete whose conduct is judged to reflect discredit upon themselves, the team or school will be subject to disciplinary action.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF MISCONDUCT BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Violations of the Sycamore Athletic Substance Abuse Policy
- Missing team practices or team meetings (unexcused and/or excused)
- Insubordination to game or school officials
- Violations of policies as set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association Bylaws and Constitution
- Violations of the Sycamore Student Code of Conduct as set forth by the Sycamore Board of Education
- Non-alcoholic or drug violations of the Ohio Revised Code which are criminal in nature and cited as a charge other than a minor misdemeanor
- Violations of team rules and policies as established by specific sports



Discipline of Athletes

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Student athletes must recognize the daily commitment to the following in all settings, including the classroom and in school:

- Striving to improve skills and improving oneself and the team as a whole
- Working to represent oneself and the school in a positive manner at all times
- Promoting honor, integrity and good sportsmanship as keys to success both on and off the field

If student athletes do not meet the standards of the Sycamore Athletic Handbook or of the Student Code of Conduct, consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Conference with parent/guardian(s)
- Loss of practice or playing time
- Community service agreement
- Suspension from athletic events
- Removal or expulsion from the team
- School Consequences

The disciplinary process (except for team rules violations) shall be conducted by the building Athletic Director. Before disciplinary action is imposed, the building Athletic Director shall provide the student athlete with the opportunity to explain their behavior. The Athletic Director and/or coach may issue consequences that fail to meet the expected standards of behavior, including conduct that fails to meet the expected standards of behavior in the classroom or school setting as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The building Athletic Director shall provide notice to the student of intent to discipline regarding his or her participation in extracurricular activities including the reason for the discipline. The building Athletic Director shall provide the student and his or her parent or legal guardian with written notification of the discipline, reason/s for the discipline, and details of the discipline. Any appeal of the disciplinary action shall be made through the building principal, and the principal's decision is final.

Students who are suspended out of school or expelled from school or have been subject to emergency removal from school pursuant to a violation of the Student Code of Conduct are also automatically denied participation in extracurricular activities during removal. No additional due process is available to the student regarding their extracurricular participation. Failed drug screens are not appealable.

Daily Attendance Expectations

A student must be in attendance at school for at least one half of the regular school day (a minimum of 4 periods) in order to participate in practice, a meeting, or a contest on that same day. Special circumstances, however, may be appealed to the Athletic Director.



School Discipline

When a student athlete is involved in school discipline, the coach will be notified by the administration. If the discipline (such as detention, Saturday School, or suspension) leads to missing practices or contests, then proper disciplinary action will be in accordance with the specific rules of the organization with a minimum of being denied participation from the next scheduled practice or meeting. If a student is suspended (in school or out of school), they are not permitted to participate in athletic activities for the duration of their suspension. Missing practices and/or contests during a suspension could lead to further disciplinary action for the respective sport of the student athlete if they are in season, including dismissal from the team.

"Do Right Rule"

The Sycamore Athletic Department, along with its coaches, makes the assumption that all Sycamore Student-Athletes, as representatives of Sycamore Community Schools, know the difference between "right and wrong." Student-athletes are ALWAYS expected to make the "right" decision as it relates to matters of behavior, discipline or academics, on the field, in the classroom, in our community, and on social media. If a student-athlete makes a "wrong" decision in relation to behavior, discipline, or academics, then Sycamore will assume that it was a conscious decision on the part of the student-athlete to do so. The coaching staff and Athletic Department personnel will hold the student-athlete accountable for this willful "wrong" decision. The "Do Right Rule" is in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year, throughout a student-athlete's full career at Sycamore.

Quitting a Sport

Any Sycamore student athlete who participates on an interscholastic team and either tries out and makes the team or is on a team that does not "cut" and then participates in a contest, including a scrimmage, who chooses to "quit", not due to injury or medical condition, prior to the end of that sport season will be denied participation in another sport, including off-season conditioning, until season that was begun has been completed. In addition the student athlete voids all rights to end of the season participation awards and points earned toward 3000 point club for the sport that they quit. Special circumstances, however, may be appealed to the Athletic Director.

LOCKER ROOM RULES & EXPECTATIONS

1. Rough housing of any kind is not permitted in the locker room.
2. The harassment or hazing of others is not permitted. Incidents are to be reported to the coaching staff immediately.
3. No glass containers will be permitted in the locker room.
4. All spiked or cleated shoes (plastic or metal) must be put on and taken off outside the building. All spiked or cleated shoes (plastic or metal) are not permitted in any part of the school building.
5. Equipment must be removed from all lockers by the end of the first school day following the conclusion of each sports season.
6. Students should ensure their locker is locked at all times. Never leave a locker unattended or unlocked. Sycamore Community Schools accepts no responsibility for any items lost or stolen.



TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

1. Athletes will be released to their parents at the game site only under special circumstances. Friends or neighbors cannot be released at a contest site to anyone other than their own parents.
2. While riding in school vans, Ohio law requires that everyone wear a seat belt - no exceptions.
3. Noise is a definite safety factor. Keep all conversations, radios, and victory celebrations to reasonable, safe noise levels.
4. Students will remain in their seats at all times.
5. State law dictates that there is no food to be eaten on school buses.
6. Make sure the bus is in the same condition as when the trip began. Please take your trash with you at the conclusion of the trip.
7. Littering is a fineable offense. It reflects poorly on our entire program. Do not throw anything from the windows of your bus.
8. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and his/her directions must be followed the same as any teacher or coach. The driver is solely concerned with your safe transportation to and from the contest.
9. Insubordination toward the school bus driver will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the misconduct section of training rules.
10. As an Athletic Department, we are dependent upon the cooperation of our Transportation Department, if we are to meet our various scheduling demands. We want to foster a positive working relationship with the Transportation Department by making every effort to be cooperative and courteous.
11. If district transportation is not provided, parents are responsible for arranging transportation for their student athlete to and from practice and competitions.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Possessing, handling, selling, soliciting, purchasing, concealing, smelling of, or using illegal drugs (including counterfeit), narcotics, prescription drugs (except as prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner), alcoholic beverages, or tobacco products (including e-cigarettes, vape pens), including all paraphernalia of any kind, or any other substance restricted by the Sycamore High School Code of Conduct is prohibited.

Beginning with the date that the athlete and parent(s) sign/acknowledge the below outlined Substance Abuse Policy, this policy will be in effect for the athlete for a calendar year. There is no "off-season" as far as adherence to the substance abuse policy is concerned. This policy is in effect "365 days a year/24 hour a day"

Student athletes will be held accountable for the Substance Abuse Policy on the above described year-round basis. Cumulative accountability through his/her interscholastic career will run from grades nine through twelve (9-12). For example, a violation during 9th grade followed by a violation in the 11th grade would constitute a second offense circumstance. Violations will lead to a denial of participation and/or removal from an interscholastic athletic program.



An athlete, who feels that he or she has a substance abuse problem, may personally report this circumstance to the athletic director, coach, or a member of the school teaching staff. The athlete must submit to a professional assessment and complete an educational substance abuse awareness program consisting of three hours of counseling, but may continue to participate in athletics. Regardless of assessment findings, three hours of counseling sessions will be required as part of the reinstatement process. All self-referral information will remain confidential. If the assessment indicates treatment, the athlete must follow through with the program to remain on the squad. Parent(s) may also make referrals on their own student athletes. Procedurally, parent referrals will be treated as self-referrals.

A self-referral or a parent referral cannot be made in an attempt to circumvent an active investigation into a Substance Abuse Policy violation. One “self-referral” is permitted during an athlete’s interscholastic career at Sycamore. A “self-referral” counts as the first substance abuse violation. A second subsequent violation of the Substance Abuse Policy will result in a denial of participation for one calendar year.

Self-referrals cannot be made when there has been evidence of police intervention surrounding a violation of the Substance Abuse Policy.

E-Cigarettes/vape pens are and will be considered a violation per the Sycamore Athletic Department Substance Abuse Policy.

Substance abuse policy is in effect for all student-athletes grades nine through twelve (9-12). By definition, any member of a Varsity sport (labeled at the top of this handbook) are under this policy. A student athlete who violates the policy and the violation is substantiated by building administration or a law enforcement officer through a full investigation will be immediately denied participation under the following guidelines:

CONSEQUENCES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY VIOLATIONS

FIRST OFFENSE: POSSESSION AND/OR USE

Student athlete is denied participation in Sycamore’s interscholastic athletic program for 20% of the total of regularly scheduled interscholastic contests. Scrimmages are not considered regular season contests. The OHSAA maximum number of regular season contests permitted for each sport is used as the percentage benchmark in determining the number of contests in which the athlete will not participate. Note: Fractions of athletic contests will be rounded up. For example, in an 18 game regular season schedule, the penalty would be 4 games. Participation denial penalties will extend into OHSAA playoff and OHSAA tournament contests in order to attain the specified number of contests to be denied. OHSAA playoff games and tournament game possibilities are not counted in the initial 20% contest denial calculation.

To be eligible for reinstatement in the interscholastic athletic program the following requirements **must be met:**

- The student athlete may be required to submit to a professional drug/alcohol assessment. Proof of assessment completion must be provided to the athletic director. The professional assessment agency must be accredited and acceptable to the school district. Any costs incurred for assessment or testing are the responsibility of the student’s parent(s)/guardians.



- If the assessment indicates treatment procedures, the athlete must follow the prescribed program to be eligible for athletic reinstatement. Parents are permitted to seek qualified “second opinions” of professional assessments.
- With a drug/alcohol violation, the student athlete is required to attend three substance abuse counseling sessions. Given that counseling sessions may extend over a period of time longer than the number of contests dictated by the 20% denial of participation, to proceed with the reinstatement process, the student athlete will need to provide proof of enrollment in a specific counseling program. If at any time the athlete discontinues the counseling program, he/she will be immediately denied participation in the athletic program. This denial of participation will include all subsequent seasons until the reinstatement program is completed.
- All proof of program attendance must be reported to the athletic director and is the responsibility of the student athlete.
- With a tobacco violation, the student athlete will be denied participation for 20% of the total interscholastic contests for the season and may be required to attend a smoke/tobacco cessation program. Upon completion of the smoke/tobacco cessation program, the student athlete may then request an appeal hearing for athletic reinstatement.
- All proof of program attendance must be reported to the athletic director and is the responsibility of the student athlete.
- **For all Substance Abuse Policy violations, the final phase of athletic reinstatement will require a hearing with the student athlete, his/her parent(s), and the Athletic Director.** It is the athlete’s responsibility to schedule the appeal hearing with the Athletic Director.
- If the first offense occurs after the end of the athlete’s season, but prior to the awards program, the athlete will be denied participation in the awards program. The student athlete will receive his/her awards only upon successful reinstatement to interscholastic athletics.
- Student athletes under denial of participation for Substance Abuse Policy violations may practice and travel with the squad but not dress for any interscholastic contests.
- If the violation occurs after or before the athlete’s sporting season, but during the effective calendar year of policy coverage, the athlete must fulfill all facets of the program of reinstatement before his/her sporting season. If it is a first offense violation, the student athlete is permitted to try out for an interscholastic squad. If the athlete makes the team, the athlete will be denied participation as outlined in the 1st Offense above at the beginning of the next sport season
- If the athlete is a multi-sport athlete and the first offense occurs with less than 20% of the regular season contests remaining, the outstanding percentage of the contest penalty will be carried over to the next interscholastic season of participation.
- Positions of leadership (i.e. captain) are forfeited by violation of the Substance Abuse Policy.
- Financial responsibility of the professional assessment and counseling sessions lies with the parent(s) of the student athlete.
- A student who has tried out and been selected for a high school squad (grades 9-12) is considered to be a high school athlete at that time. Their first substance abuse violation will be counted as their first offense toward their high school record.



SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES: POSSESSION AND/OR USE

Student athlete is denied participation in Sycamore’s interscholastic athletic program for one calendar year from the date of the infraction. The “second offense” penalty will be enforced regardless of the time interval between the first offense and the second offense. The student athlete is accountable for adherence to the Substance Abuse Policy continuously from grades nine (9) through twelve (12). Junior school students entering the ninth grade will have previous substance abuse offenses expunged from their athletic record. Second offenses can be any combination of drug or alcohol or tobacco substance abuse violations (*For example: one alcohol violation + one tobacco violation = a second offense and the consequences as defined under policy guidelines*).

- In order to be reinstated to the interscholastic program after one year of denial of participation, the student athlete must complete all aspects of the reinstatement criteria as outlined in the “first offense” section.
- It is the student athlete’s responsibility to communicate with the athletic director concerning all aspects related to the completion of the reinstatement criteria.
- If the second offense occurs after the end of the athlete’s season but prior to the awards program, the athlete will be denied participation in the awards program and will not receive interscholastic awards.
- Financial responsibility for all professional assessment and counseling sessions lies with the parent(s) of the student athlete.

SELLING OF ALCOHOL OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Student athletes will be denied the privilege of participating in the interscholastic program and practices for one calendar year from the date of the infraction. For reinstatement to Sycamore’s interscholastic athletic program, the student will be required to successfully complete all facets of the reinstatement program. This could include submitting to a professional assessment, attending three counseling sessions, and appearing before the interscholastic appeals board. A second offense involving the sale of alcohol or controlled substances will result in a **permanent** denial of participation in Sycamore’s interscholastic athletic program.

HAZING (Board Policy JFCF/JFCF-R)

The Board does not tolerate hazing, harassment, intimidation or bullying of any student on District property or at any school-sponsored event, regardless of whether the event occurs on or off District property (including on school buses and other school-related vehicles). Students who engage in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school. The Board's commitment to addressing such prohibited behavior involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which hazing, harassment, intimidation, dating violence and/or bullying will not be tolerated by students, staff or administration. Hazing means doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. Throughout this policy the term bullying is used in place of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation is an intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once. The intentional act also includes violence within a dating relationship. The behavior causes mental or physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student. This



behavior is prohibited on school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity. Students found responsible for harassment, intimidation or bullying by an electronic act may be suspended. Discipline procedures will not infringe on any student's rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. When the behavior is sexual harassment, the Title IX sexual harassment grievance process will be followed, if applicable, prior to imposing any discipline that cannot be imposed without resolution of the Title IX process.

Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing, bullying and/or dating violence does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

The District includes, within the health curriculum, age-appropriate instruction in dating violence prevention education in grades 7 to 12. This instruction includes recognizing warning signs of dating violence and the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Prohibited activities of any type, including those activities engaged in via computer and/or electronic communications devices or electronic means are inconsistent with the educational process and are prohibited at all times. The District educates minors about appropriate online behavior including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

No administrator, teacher or other employee of the District shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing and/or bullying activities. No students, including leaders of student organizations, are permitted to plan, encourage or engage in any hazing and/or bullying. Administrators, teachers and all other District employees are particularly alert to possible conditions, circumstances or events that might include hazing, bullying and/or dating violence. If any of the prohibited behaviors are planned or discovered, students are informed by the discovering District employee of the prohibition contained in this policy and are required to end all such activities immediately. All hazing, bullying and/or dating violence incidents are reported immediately to the principal/designee and appropriate discipline is administered. When employees have actual knowledge that the behavior is sexual harassment, they must contact the Title IX Coordinator.

The Superintendent/designee must provide the Board President with a semiannual written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the District's website, to the extent permitted by law.

The administration provides training on the District's hazing and bullying policy to District employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students and by November 30 annually reports to the Ohio Department of Education compliance with this requirement through the consolidated school mandate report. If the District reports noncompliance the Superintendent/designee must provide a written explanation to the Board within 30 days explaining this noncompliance and a written plan of action for accurately and efficiently addressing the problem.

Additional training is provided to elementary employees in violence and substance abuse prevention and positive youth development. District employees, students and volunteers have qualified civil immunity for damages arising from reporting an incident of hazing and/or bullying. Administrators, teachers, other employees and students who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be liable for civil and criminal penalties in compliance with State and Federal law. No one is permitted to retaliate against an employee or student because they file a grievance or assist or participate in an investigation, proceeding or hearing regarding the charge of hazing and/or bullying of an individual.

Please see Board Regulation JFCF-R at <https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/sycamore/board.nsf/public?open&id=policies#> regarding the process to be used for a complaint of hazing, bullying or harassment.



ATHLETIC PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

Final Forms

All Students must be registered. and fill out paperwork on Final Forms at <https://sycamore.finalforms.com>. Sycamore has found that this system created a more manageable, accurate, and efficient database of information on our student-athletes. We also feel that this system greatly decreased the amount of repetitive paperwork that parents will fill out throughout the athletic year, as forms will only be required to be filled out ONCE per school year!

If you do not have all paperwork complete on Final Forms on Day 1 of practice/tryouts, you will not be able to participate! Forms that will be completed are as follows:

- A completed physical form must be on file with our Athletic Trainer and imputed into Final Forms
- All Parent & Student Forms must be completed on Final Forms including an Emergency Medical Authorization form

Pay-to-Play

Once a student athlete has officially made a team, there is a \$75 pay-to-play fee. Student athletic fees are non-refundable. This fee is due each season for each student athlete - there is no family cap. Fees are due by the first contest for each individual sport. Student athletes that are on free/reduced lunch will have their fees waived. All fees are paid through FinalForms.

Communication

The athletic values of Sycamore Community Schools shall be communicated to student athletes, parents, and supporters through various means, including, but not restricted to, the student athlete handbook, preseason parent/player meetings, and the district's athletic website.

OHSAA Eligibility Guidelines

In order for a student to participate on an athletic team, the Ohio High School Athletic Association eligibility standards must be met. Athletic eligibility is based upon academic performance in each individual nine-week grading period. Semester grades are not considered for eligibility purposes.

In order for a student-athlete to be eligible by OHSAA standards the student athlete must pass (5) solid subjects in the grading period preceding their respective season. Failure to meet quarterly eligibility will result in ineligibility for the following academic quarter. It is the responsibility of the student athlete and their parents to ensure the student is enrolled in at least 5 (five) and perhaps 6 (six) full-credit courses to ensure athletic eligibility. As a reminder, physical education and proficiency courses do not count toward athletic eligibility.

Failure to comply with the grading period eligibility requirements results in extracurricular interscholastic ineligibility for the next grading period. Athletes cannot re-establish athletic eligibility by taking summer school courses. District policy states that you must maintain a minimum 1.0 GPA on a quarterly basis.



Per OHSAA Bylaw 4-4-3, the eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. Eligibility or ineligibility for the first grading period commences with the start of the fall sports season. A student coming off ineligibility may become eligible after the fifth calendar day immediately following the end of the grading period provided those grades can be obtained and verified by the Athletic Director.

RISKS OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

Despite having protective equipment and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when participating in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and will occur. In extremely rare cases, death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. We will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our student athletes.

Athletic Equipment and Uniform Responsibilities:

As an athlete participating in interscholastic athletics in Sycamore Community Schools, students have the following responsibilities concerning school issued uniform(s) and equipment items.

1. It is extremely important that equipment provides a student the protection for which it was designed. It is the student's responsibility to examine their equipment for damage on a daily basis. Damaged equipment must be repaired before competition or practice. Students cannot be adequately protected with defective equipment. All equipment problems should immediately be brought to the attention of a coach for resolution. Do not use damaged or faulty equipment.
2. Equipment and uniforms are issued to individual students and the student is responsible for the security of these items. They should not loan their equipment or uniform to others. Keep all items under lock. All school-issued items will be numbered for inventory purposes. Equipment or uniform items that are lost or stolen are the student's financial responsibility. Athletes will be placed on the student fine list and report cards withheld until restitution is made to the Athletic Department.
3. Care should be exercised in laundering uniforms. Read the manufacturer's label for washing instructions. At the completion of a season, please launder all school-issued practice and game uniforms prior to off-season storage.
4. Participation in future athletic activities will not be permitted until all equipment is returned or assessments are paid.

Concussion/Traumatic Brain Injury Policy

An athlete who displays signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, traumatic brain injury (TBI) or head injury while participating in a practice or competition must be removed by the athlete's coach, referee, or athletic trainer and not return that day. The athlete must be assessed by a physician (MD or DO) or other licensed healthcare professional, who is in referral from, consultation or collaboration with, or supervised by a physician in order to return to athletic participation. Sycamore Community School's Athletic Trainer(s) and Team Physician(s) will have the final decision on all return-to play situations involving any form of a HEAD injury, regardless of a Physician's note.



Standard Procedures:

- Athlete will be evaluated on site, if PRESENT, by Certified Athletic Trainer or Team Physician
- Athlete will be removed from continuing activity for at least 24 hours after incident
- If symptoms are significant, athlete may be sent home with parents or to hospital if needed
- Athletes may not begin back into sport until 5 day return to play protocol, or as determined by the Sycamore Community Schools Athletic Trainer, has been completed
- Athlete may not begin return to play protocol until symptom free for at least 24 hours
- If symptoms return athlete will have to restart protocol when symptoms are no longer present
- All athletes will be required to perform 5 day return to play protocol, under the supervision of Sycamore Community School's Athletic Trainer(s) and Team Physician(s), regardless of physician's note
- Once return to play protocol has been completed athlete will then be released to play, per OHSAA regulations

Athletic Medical Procedures

It is your responsibility as an athlete competing in interscholastic athletics in Sycamore Community Schools to understand and comply with the following medical and injury procedures:

1. Before you may compete or practice, you must have all formwork completed and submitted via Final Forms. Specifically, these forms are a completed physical examination form, an emergency medical authorization form, and your general student information form with risk acknowledgement.
2. In the case of an athletic injury, it is your responsibility to notify your coach of the situation immediately so the best course of care can be undertaken as soon as possible. If there is any question as to whether you are injured or not, take the time to see the athletic trainer for an evaluation. Don't attempt to continue to compete or practice with an injury of an undetermined severity and/or extent. Doing so could possibly cause further injury and considerably lengthen recovery.
3. If your injury requires a visit to a physician's office, we must receive a written release from that office in order for you to return to competition.
4. You have a personal responsibility to follow through on prescribed rehabilitation. You must make a commitment to complete the rehabilitation instructions faithfully.
5. While injured, you are expected to attend all practices and contests unless excused by your coach. Even though you may be out of action, you are still a part of the team. You will still be able to pick up on new strategies and techniques by observing practice sessions. It is very important that you do not let an injury adversely affect your attitude in the classroom.
6. The Ohio High School Athletic Association carries a "catastrophic injury insurance program".



ATHLETIC AWARDS SYSTEM

Freshman Award

Freshman numerals will be awarded to athletes qualifying for an award by active participation and fulfilling all responsibilities set by the coaching staff of that sport. As only one set of numerals may be issued, the second and third freshman sport award winners will receive an insert representing that sport. If a Varsity award is earned as a freshman, the athlete may receive both the Freshman and the Varsity award. Points are awarded according to the points system outlined below.

Junior Varsity Award

The Junior Varsity award is a 5 inch gold block "S" with a green "JV" imprint and is awarded to athletes qualifying for an award by active participation and fulfilling all responsibilities set by the coaching staff of that sport. As only one JV letter is awarded, the second and third JV sport award winners will receive an insert representing that sport. The sophomore year is the last year a JV letter is awarded. Points are awarded according to the points system outlined below.

Varsity Award

The Varsity award is a 7 inch green block "S" and is awarded to athletes qualifying for an award by active participation and fulfilling all responsibilities set by the coaching staff of that sport. All athletes are eligible for this award. The first varsity award in each sport is the Varsity "S". Each additional varsity award is a 3 inch chenille bar with a sport insert. Numerals may be presented to a Varsity letter winner if not previously awarded. Points are awarded according to the points system outlined below.

Senior Award

This award shall be presented to a senior for competing in interscholastic athletics at Sycamore High School, earning a Varsity letter during their senior year and earning a Varsity letter one other year or a second Varsity letter their Senior year. Final approval of the recipients is voted on by an awards committee.

Presentation of Awards

Individual sport awards may be presented at the conclusion of each sport season. A special athletic awards assembly is held each spring to present senior awards and to recognize other all sport achievements.

3000 Point Club

An outstanding athlete at Sycamore who accumulates a total of 3000 points and is graduating from Sycamore High School shall be recognized by being awarded an individual plaque. Only points earned through athletic competition shall be counted toward qualifying for the 3000 Point Club. To qualify, an athlete must compete during their senior year and other years from the list of sports below or, by mutual agreement, be excused by that sport's coach. Points can be earned by participating in football, soccer, volleyball, cross country, water polo, wrestling, basketball, swimming, diving, gymnastics, baseball, softball, golf, track & field, cheerleading, lacrosse, winter track & field, bowling, and tennis.



Points are earned according to the following list:

- Varsity Starter 215-325
- Varsity Alternate 0-250
- JV Starter 126-175
- JV Alternate 0-125
- Freshmen Starter 101-125

Bonus points are awarded at a maximum of 125 for Varsity and 50 for JV and Freshmen. Bonus points during the regular season are limited to team results. Individual bonus points may be earned at the district tournament level and beyond. The maximum points that can be earned as a varsity team member is 450; a JV team member is 225; and a freshmen team member is 175.

- 5 points for each game won over the number lost (Ind. or Team)
- 50 points for League Championship (Team)
- 25 points for All League (Ind.)
- 50 points for Sectional-District-State Championship (Team or Ind.)

Managers/Trainer Awards

Letters are 5 inch gold for JV with green "MGR" or green 7 inch letter for varsity with gold "MGR". Freshman awards will be numerals. Points listed are the maximum in each sport that managers and trainers may earn, not including bonus points that the team earns.

- 250 points needed for Varsity award
- 175 points needed for Junior Varsity award
- 125 points needed for Freshman award

CREDIT FLEXIBILITY

Students should speak with counselors and Credit Flex Facilitators to evaluate the impact of accessing Credit Flexibility on athletic eligibility. To be eligible to play interscholastic high school sports, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school in five full credit courses during the immediately preceding grading period (semester, quarter, six-weeks, etc.). A student enrolled in Credit Flex courses must, at the conclusion of the high school's grading period, be "passing" all Credit Flex courses used to establish athletic eligibility. The student may not yet have completed the courses, but it must be determined that the student was "passing" the course(s) at the time the grading period ended. If it is determined that the student is not passing, no credit toward the five credits (or equivalent) required for eligibility can be awarded. Students who anticipate continuing participation in sports at the college level should carefully consider the possibility that the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center may not include some Credit Flexibility options as part of the qualifying core courses required for Division I and II eligibility. For potential college student athletes, the NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through the Credit Flexibility policy (e.g., online/distance learning, independent study, one course taken over two years). The NCAA does not allow "credit by exam" (or Mastery Assessment) courses to be applied to core course eligibility requirements. If a student expects to play college sports, he/she must check with your counselor to ensure that any credits taken through Credit Flex will meet the NCAA Eligibility Center standards.



NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

The Counseling Department at Sycamore High School will coordinate all eligibility materials for the NCAA. If you need additional assistance, please contact the Athletic Director for further guidance. Parents are strongly encouraged to review the NCAA Eligibility Center approved and non-approved course lists with their student athletes. It is highly advisable that the parent(s) of each student athlete take an active role in monitoring the successful completion of the NCAA Eligibility Center approved courses. Not only on a yearly basis but also throughout the student's entire high school career. More information on the NCAA Clearinghouse can be found at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>