New Albany-Plain Local Schools Extracurriculars & Athletics Handbook

Effective May 29, 2026 for the 2026-2027 School Year

New Albany-Plain School District

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Table of Contents
Extracurricular & Athletics Handbook

Table of Contents
Extracurricular & Athletics Handbook 1

Section I – Purpose, Values & Philosophy 4

Our Purpose 4

Our Values 4

Philosophy of the Extracurricular Program 4

Section II – Organizational Structure & Communication 5

Memberships 5

OHSAA 5

OCC 5

NAPLS District Organization 5

Student Advocacy 6

Communication Protocol 6

Section III – Participation Requirements and Academic Eligibility 7

Participation 7

GPA Standards 7

GPA Waiver Process 10

Enrollment Eligibility 10

Required Forms 10

Attendance, Scheduling, Multiple Participation, and Equipment 11

Pre-Participation Meeting 12

Tryouts (Athletics) and Applications (Activities) 12

Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) for Athletes 12

Section IV – Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities 14

Code of Conduct 14

Violation Penalties 14

Conduct Unbecoming 15

Substance Abuse (Tobacco) 15

Substance Abuse (Drugs and Alcohol) 15

Hazing and Bullying 16

Fighting/Assault/Physical Contact 16

Social Media 16

Criminal Behavior 17
Violations of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities 17
Administrative Review 17
Section V – Coach & Advisor Expectations 18
Head Coach/Advisor Responsibilities 18
Assistant Coach/Assistant Advisor Responsibilities 19
Section VI – Parent/Guardian & Spectator Expectations 20
Parent/Guardian Expectations 20
Spectator Expectations 20
Violations of Spectator Expectations 20

Section I – Purpose, Values & Philosophy

Our Purpose

The purpose of the New Albany-Plain Local Schools is to create a culture of accountability that achieves the best academic and developmental outcomes for each student. Grounded in the belief that extracurricular activities are an extension of the classroom, our co-curricular, extracurricular, and athletic programs provide meaningful opportunities for students to learn, grow, and develop life skills that extend far beyond the classroom. We are committed to delivering an education-based experience that supports the overall well-being of the whole student—academically, developmentally, athletically, socially, and ethically.

Our Values

The New Albany-Plain Local School District is committed to fostering an environment of kindness, dignity and respect.

Philosophy of the Extracurricular Program

- **Academics First:** Academics are the student's first responsibility.
- **Character Development:** Programs are focused on character building, leadership, and the development of life skills including teamwork, perseverance, resilience, self-discipline, and integrity.
- **Citizenship:** Good citizenship is paramount and will be continuously taught and practiced. While the concept of sportsmanship is traditionally associated with athletics, the concepts of good citizenship expand on sportsmanship and include integrity, honesty, fairness, and honor, which apply to all extracurricular activities and their associated competitions.
- **Privilege, Not a Right:** Participation in extracurricular activities and athletics is a privilege, not a right, and is contingent upon meeting high standards of conduct and eligibility.
- **Winning is Important, But Not the Only Goal:** While striving for success is vital, the welfare and development of the student precedes the outcome of the contest or competition.

Section II – Organizational Structure & Communication

Memberships

New Albany-Plain Local Schools is a member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) and the Ohio Capital Conference (OCC). As a member of the OHSAA and OCC, New Albany High School and Middle School athletic programs are governed by the bylaws and regulations of each organization in addition to Board of Education Policies and Administrative Guidelines.

OHSAA

The OHSAA outlines specific academic, enrollment, and attendance regulations for all member schools, which are available on the OHSAA website, www.ohsaa.org. Specific rules and regulations are supplemented within this handbook, but student-athletes and families should familiarize themselves with the OHSAA regulations as well.

OCC

The Ohio Capital Conference (OCC) has 32 member schools organized into six athletic divisions. Our athletic teams compete for championships within the OCC and the league provides recognition for student-athletes via All-League honors. For more information on the OCC, please visit www.ohiocapitalconference.org.

NAPLS District Organization

To maintain a professional and growth-oriented environment, all stakeholders must adhere to established communication pathways. This structure empowers students through their own advocacy and ensures all interactions remain constructive and respectful.

Chain of Communication: To resolve concerns efficiently, stakeholders are expected to follow this established hierarchy:

- **Clubs & Activities:** Student to Advisor to Principal to District Administration
- **Athletics:** Student-Athlete to Head Coach to Athletic Director to Principal to District Administration

Student Advocacy

The primary goal of the extracurricular program is the development of life skills. Consequently, all communications regarding a concern must begin between the student and the advisor/coach. We encourage students to advocate for themselves and seek direct feedback or clarity before parental/guardian intervention occurs.

Communication Protocol

To ensure that emotions do not override productive dialogue, the following protocols are mandatory:

- **The 24-Hour Rule:** Parents and guardians must wait 24 hours after a contest, competition, performance, or practice before contacting a coach or advisor via email or phone. Coaches/advisors are instructed not to engage in substantive discussions immediately following a contest or competition.
- **Appointment Only:** Initial contact following the 24-hour period must be for the purpose of scheduling a formal appointment. The student is encouraged to be present during these meetings.
- **Professional Conduct:** All conversations must remain civil. The use of profanity, raised voices, or rude behavior will result in the coach/advisor ending the meeting immediately and referring the matter to the Athletic Director or Principal for other extracurricular activities.

Section III – Participation Requirements and Academic Eligibility

Participation

Participation in extracurricular activities and athletics is a privilege, not a right, and is contingent upon meeting specific academic, health, and procedural standards. While the standards defined in this Handbook set the minimum requirements, individual clubs (such as National Honor Society, SOAR, and others) may maintain higher entry standards for their application-based programs. All athletic teams, clubs, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities use the minimum academic standards below.

Each activity will have a designated school or grade band for participation. If not specified by grade level, an athletic team or club is limited to students in the grade levels of the building at which the team or club is based. There are certain grade-level based activities, such as Middle School Theatre (6-8) or 5th/6th grade Orchestra, that are open to students in a specific grade band. These grade bands will be noted by each school from which the students may participate when making club/activity lists. Unless specifically requested by the advisor and approved by the Principal, a student outside the grade band of the club/activity cannot participate in any club/activity. OHSAA regulations prohibit students from participating in athletic teams outside their grade band.

GPA Standards

In addition to the Ohio High School Athletic Association requirements that students pass the minimum of five credits (High School) or four credits (Middle School) in the preceding quarter, New Albany-Plain Local Schools requires students to obtain a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) in the immediately preceding grading period to participate in competitions or performances within any extracurricular activity. Courses taken in the summer do not count towards eligibility requirements for any extracurricular activity. For students in grades three or below, there is not a GPA standard as letter grades are not awarded.

For activities in the Fall and Winter seasons of the 2026-27 school year, the following minimum GPA requirements will be followed. These activities are defined as those in which the competition/performance season begins prior to **January 26, 2027**.

Grade Level at Time of Participation	**Minimum GPA Requirement**
Intermediate School (4th-6th Grade) Middle School (7th & 8th Grade)	1.5
High School (9th Grade)	1.5
High School (10th Grade)	1.75
High School (11th Grade)	2.0
High School (12th Grade)	2.0

Beginning with grades at the end of Quarter 2/Trimester 2 during the 2026-27 school year, the following minimum GPA requirements will be followed for all Spring semester activities (defined as the competition/performance season starting **on or after January 26, 2027**) in order to be eligible for competitions & performances.

Grade Level at Time of Participation	**Minimum GPA Requirement**
Intermediate School (4th-6th Grade) Middle School (7th & 8th Grade)	2.0
High School (9th Grade)	2.0
High School (10th Grade)	2.0
High School (11th Grade)	2.0
High School (12th Grade)	2.0

GPA Waiver Process

New Albany Middle School students may request a one-time written waiver of the GPA requirement in the table above for one grading period during their two-year career. Additionally, New Albany High School students may request a one-time written waiver of the GPA requirement in the table above for one grading period during their four-year career. To utilize this waiver process, the student must still have passed a minimum of five one-credit equivalent courses (high school) or four one-credit equivalent courses (middle school). Students utilizing a one-time waiver will have a student support plan created in partnership with the school and their family. The OHSAA requirements cannot be waived at any time. In extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent in her/his sole discretion may permit an additional waiver of the GPA requirement.

Enrollment Eligibility

Students enrolled in the New Albany-Plain Local School District are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics, subject to the GPA requirements above. Additionally, students who reside in the New Albany-Plain Local School District and attend specific other schools as defined in Section 3313.5314 and 3313.57 of the Ohio Revised Code may participate in extracurricular activities offered by NAPLS. This includes students who are homeschooled, attend a joint vocational school such as Eastland-Fairfield Career Technical Schools, or attend a charter school, a STEM school, or nonpublic school, so long as the school the student attends does not offer the sport/activity and the student meets all other eligibility requirements of NAPLS students.

Required Forms

All required documentation must be submitted via Final Forms for clearance prior to participation:

- **For all students:**
    - Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities
    - Additional forms to be included as necessary
- **For students participating in athletics:**
    - Current Physical Examination Form (valid for 13 months)
    - Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities
    - Concussion/Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Sheet acknowledgement
    - Acknowledgement of Risk of Injury
    - Additional forms to be included as necessary

Attendance, Scheduling, Multiple Participation, and Equipment

Attendance: Students must attend school for at least half of the school day (minimum of four periods or 50% of enrolled classes) on the date of an event to participate, practice or compete. Exceptions require prior approval from the Principal or Athletic Director.

Schedule Conflicts: When a student has a conflict between participation in two events for NAPLS cocurricular or extracurricular activities, the student should work with the coach/advisor of each activity to collaboratively resolve the scheduling conflict, in conjunction with the Principal or Athletic Director, as needed.

Religious Observances: Students who miss a day of school for a planned Religious Observance are still eligible to participate in extracurriculars/athletics on the same day. Additionally, if a student will miss a practice/game/group activity due to a Religious Observance, the student should communicate in advance with the coach/advisor. Students will not face any adverse impact, such as loss of playing time, for attending a Religious Observance. Each school year, NAPLS identifies specific dates in which practices, games, and other extracurricular activities are limited or prevented; this calendar is shared with all coaches and advisors and is shared with all parents annually.

Dual Athletes: While students are typically limited to participate in a single sport in a season, in some instances it may be possible for an athlete to participate in two sports simultaneously. The student-athlete and their family should work directly with the two coaches involved and the Athletic Director to plan for the student's participation in both sports. A student-athlete competing on two teams is expected to fulfill all obligations for each team according to the plan developed.

Quitting/Leaving a Team or Activity - if a student quits a team or activity during the course of the season or school year, the coach/advisor may exclude them from further participation for a period of up to one additional year, at which point the student is eligible to try out/apply again.

Equipment: Students are individually responsible for all school-issued equipment. Items must be returned promptly at the end of the season. Failure to return equipment will result in the student being billed for replacement costs and remaining ineligible for their next sport/activity until the matter is resolved.

Pre-Participation Meeting

All students and families participating in co-curricular, extracurricular, or athletic activities must participate in a pre-participation meeting. At the meeting, parents/guardians and students will review policies regarding participation, state-required training materials, and have the opportunity to learn about our extracurricular program. Multiple meeting dates/times are available to accommodate student and family schedules. Each student and at least one parent/guardian must participate in a pre-participation meeting prior to the start of each athletic season or, for clubs and activities, once a school year, even if they attended during a prior athletic season that school year or in prior school years.

These meetings, hosted by the school administration, will meet the pre-participation requirement for all athletic teams and clubs/activities referenced in this section. Individual teams/groups participating in competitions/performances may host an additional, group-specific meeting for parents and students for specific information relating to their club/activity/sport.

Tryouts (Athletics) and Applications (Activities)

Athletic teams hold tryouts within specific start-of-season windows designated by the OHSAA. Tryout dates are communicated through the Athletic Department prior to the end of the previous season. Students who have a planned conflict, such as a family vacation, during the tryout date(s) for a team should contact the Head Coach of the team prior to the end of the previous season to make tryout arrangements. Urgent unplanned absences, such as illness, should be communicated to the Head Coach or Athletic Director as soon as possible to make arrangements for tryouts.

Some extracurricular activities utilize an application process for membership to determine eligibility based on specific standards set in compliance with local, state, and national organizations (e.g. National Honor Society, Key Club International) at the club/activity level. These application deadlines are set by the advisor of the specific activity and communicated to students via the announcements. Late applications are not accepted. Other activities (such as Theatre) hold tryouts/auditions for their activities. Similar to the athletic tryouts above, if a student has a planned conflict during tryouts/auditions, they should communicate with the advisor of the activity as close to the announcement of dates as possible. In an urgent unplanned situation, such as illness, the student should communicate with the advisor or Principal as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) for Athletes

In late 2025, the OHSAA approved bylaws permitting student-athletes to earn money through Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) opportunities. These opportunities must follow specific requirements for

students to maintain their eligibility. Therefore, all student-athletes must communicate directly with the Athletic Director if they plan to pursue NIL opportunities. Failure to do so will result in automatic loss of eligibility for participation in athletics. Students and families are encouraged to review the OHSAA NIL Resource Center (www.ohsaa.org/Eligibility/NIL-Resource-Center) for more information.

Section IV – Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities emphasizes good citizenship, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior. Students participating in extracurricular activities and athletics serve as high-profile ambassadors for the school and community.

Scope: The Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Violations are cumulative throughout a student's high school career, and penalties may carry over into succeeding seasons or school years. Every student participating in a co-curricular, extracurricular, or athletic team/club/activity is governed by the Student Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities.

Violation Penalties

- Any student in violation of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities will be removed from leadership positions (e.g., captain, officer) and is barred from holding any leadership roles for a minimum of one calendar year.
- For athletics: if a violation occurs during the course of an athletic season, the athletic suspension will be calculated on the total number of contests, not the remaining contests. If fewer contests remain than calculated, the suspension will extend into the next season. If occurring in the off-season, the suspension will be served in the next season the student participates.
- For activities/clubs: if a violation occurs during the school year, the activity/club suspension will be calculated on the total number of competitions/performances, not the remaining competitions/performances. If fewer competitions/performances remain, the suspension will extend into the next school year. If occurring outside the school year, the suspension will be served in the following school year.
- Students may not serve a suspension by joining a new sport or activity in which they have not previously participated.
- Disciplinary actions may include verbal/written reprimands, reduced participation/playing time, or permanent dismissal.
- Students serving an Alternative Learning Center (ALC) or out-of-school suspension (OSS) are automatically ineligible to practice or compete for the duration of the ALC or out-of-school suspension; coaches/advisors may apply additional consequences.

Conduct Unbecoming

The administration, advisors, and coaching staff reserve the discretionary authority to determine if a student's behavior brings dishonor or discredit to the activity, team, or district. This "conduct unbecoming" standard applies regardless of whether the act occurs on or off school grounds, and may result in consequences ranging from warnings to permanent denial of participation. This regulation applies at all times regardless of season or location and whether or not school is in session.

Substance Abuse (Tobacco)

Per Board Policies 5512 and 7434, tobacco products include e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and e-liquids. The sale or distribution of tobacco products may be escalated to a higher violation, even if it is the student's first offense.

1. **First Violation:** 50% reduction of the season's contests (athletics) or school year's competitions/performances (clubs and activities). This may be reduced to 20% if the student is assessed by a certified professional agency. **Assessment must be completed before resuming competition.**
2. **Second Violation:** 100% reduction of the season's contests (athletics) or school year's competitions/performances (clubs and activities). This may be reduced to 50% if the student completes professional substance abuse counseling at their own expense. **Counseling must be completed before resuming competition.**
3. **Third Violation:** Permanent prohibition from activity/athletic participation. An appeal for reinstatement may be made after one calendar year contingent upon substantiated rehabilitation.

Substance Abuse (Drugs and Alcohol)

Per Board Policy 5530, this includes the use, possession, or evidence of consumption of alcohol, drugs, or mood-altering chemicals. The sale or distribution of these products may be escalated to a higher violation, even if it is the student's first offense.

1. **First Violation:** 100% reduction of the season's contests (athletics) or school year's competitions/performances (clubs and activities). This may be reduced to 40% if the student is assessed by a certified professional agency and follows all recommendations. **Assessment must be completed before resuming activity/athletic competition.**

2. **Second Violation:** Prohibition from participation. This may be reduced to a **one calendar year** suspension if the student completes professional counseling at their own expense. **Counseling must be completed before resuming competition.**
3. **Third Violation:** Prohibition from activity/athletic participation with no opportunity for appeal.

Voluntary Self-Referral A student seeking help for a first-time violation prior to an active investigation or report may be granted leniency. No activity/athletic consequences will be applied if the student is assessed by a certified professional agency and follows all recommendations. Assessment must be completed before resuming competition. This is a one-time option and is considered a first-time infraction for the purpose of any future violations. A voluntary self-referral is not available for sale or distribution offenses.

Hazing and Bullying

New Albany explicitly prohibits harassment, intimidation, or bullying (Board Policy 5517.01) as well as hazing (Board Policy 5516). This includes any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act—including electronically transmitted acts—exhibited toward another student more than once that causes mental or physical harm or creates an intimidating or abusive environment. Hazing, including any form of initiation that creates a risk of harm, is strictly forbidden regardless of the participant's willingness.

Fighting/Assault/Physical Contact

Fighting, Assault, and Physical Aggression: Threats, intimidation, and physical aggression are strictly prohibited. Physical aggression against any official, coach/advisor, teammate, opponent, or spectator is considered exceptional misconduct. Consequences may include immediate dismissal from the team/activity, long-term denial of participation, and mandatory referral to law enforcement.

Social Media

Students participating in extracurricular activities and athletics are prohibited from posting content that exhibits or implies inappropriate behavior toward teammates, participants, coaches, opponents, or officials. Inappropriate online material affects the perception of the school and the student's future opportunities with the NCAA or potential employers.

Criminal Behavior

Students participating in extracurricular activities or athletics that are charged with a criminal offense (excluding minor traffic violations) must report the incident to the Principal or Athletic Director on the first day they return to school, **or before participating in any extracurricular/athletic activity if the incident occurs during a school break or summer.** Failure to report results in immediate loss of eligibility. While charges are pending, the student will serve a minimum 20% interim suspension from season contests (athletics) or school year's competitions/performances (clubs and activities). Felony charges (pending the outcome of the case) or convictions result in immediate ineligibility.

Violations of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, violations of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities do not have the same Due Process rights as discipline for infractions involving removal from school. However, students who are accused of violating the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities may request an informal meeting with the Athletic Director (athletics) or Assistant Principal (clubs and activities) to answer questions or share information about the alleged infraction. Discipline under the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities will be issued in writing and a copy of the discipline will be forwarded to the student, the student's parents/guardians, and the coaches/advisors of the activities in which the student participates.

Administrative Review

After discipline is issued for a violation of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities, a student or their parent/guardian may request an administrative review of the decision. While not a formal appeal hearing, the student or their parent/guardian may submit a written request stating the reason(s) for reconsideration of the discipline issued or for the denial of an appeal for reinstatement following a substance abuse violation. The Principal or another administrator will conduct the Administrative Review. Following the Administrative Review, the student and parent/guardian will receive a written disposition.

Section V – Coach & Advisor Expectations

Consistent with the purpose and philosophy of this handbook, the district outlines the expectations of coaches and advisors so that everyone, including students and parents/guardians, understand what is expected of our coaches and advisors. This instills further transparency within our extracurricular program and ensures that all activities, including athletic teams, clubs, and other groups are held to the same high standards.

Head Coach/Advisor Responsibilities

1. **Leadership & Culture**
    - Establish program vision aligned with district values and promote an inclusive team/group culture.
    - Set and enforce expectations for behavior, sportsmanship, and citizenship.
2. **Student Development**
    - Teach activity/sport-specific skills while emphasizing character and teamwork.
    - Prioritize student safety, wellness, and academic eligibility.
3. **Staff Leadership**
    - Recruit, supervise, and mentor assistant coaches/advisors; ensure certification compliance.
4. **Communication & Collaboration**
    - Maintain professional dialogue with students, families and school personnel; follow district protocols.
5. **Operations & Compliance**
    - Manage logistics (scheduling, equipment, OHSAA compliance) and financial practices.
6. **Program Development**
    - Lead skill development and build alignment with youth and middle school programs throughout the calendar year.
7. **Student Recognition**
    - Each athletic team will have a clearly-defined process for awarding athletic letters and other team awards that is communicated at the pre-season meeting.
    - Each extracurricular activity advisor will establish a process for awards and honors (if applicable) that is communicated at the pre-season meeting.
    - Processes for selecting captains, officers, and other leadership positions within a team/activity will be directed by the coach/advisor and communicated at the pre-participation meeting.

Assistant Coach/Assistant Advisor Responsibilities

- Assistant Coaches and Assistant Advisors are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct, eligibility, and program expectations as head coaches/advisors.
- Assistant Coaches and Assistant Advisors are responsible for implementing the Head Coach's/Advisor's vision and philosophy for their program, sport, or activity.

Section VI – Parent/Guardian & Spectator Expectations

Parent/Guardian Expectations

Parents/guardians and spectators are expected to partner with the school district through the following commitments:

- **Preparation:** Ensure all physicals, medical forms, and training requirements are submitted via Final Forms prior to participation.
- **Logistics:** Schedule appointments outside of practice times; understand that work and vacations are not excused absences.
- **Support:** Encourage best effort and enjoyment; help enforce team/club training rules and academic standards.

Spectator Expectations

Conduct in the Stands:

- **Respect Officials:** Refrain from harassing participants, coaches, or officials. Respect all officials' decisions.
- **Playing Area:** Entering the playing area or throwing objects will result in immediate ejection and a potential ban from future events.
- **Sportsmanship:** Use of foul language or abusive behavior will not be tolerated. The administration reserves the right to prohibit attendance to maintain the integrity of the school environment.

Violations of Spectator Expectations

Consistent with Board Policy 9160, students, parents/guardians, and other spectators who violate the conduct expectations or possess, use, or distribute tobacco, alcohol, or other controlled substances at a school event may be removed by the administration and/or barred from future attendance at district events. Refunds are not issued when a spectator is removed from an event.

This handbook will be reviewed annually to determine what changes, if any, are needed. Annual updates, if any, will be Board approved and readily communicated with students, families, and staff.