Athletics Handbook

We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.
–Catherine McAuley

Adopted: March 2018
Updated: Summer 2026

Dear Student-Athletes and Families:

WELCOME

We would like to welcome you to athletics at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School (GMAHS). Our hope for you is that your experiences as a GMAHS athlete will provide you with lessons that go beyond the court, field, track, course, pool, and beyond each set, game, match, race, meet, competition, and season. With the right attitude and gratitude for sport, you can expect to gain lessons in any or all of the following:

- Perseverance
- Performance under pressure
- Meeting challenges
- Team work
- Patience
- Commitment
- Risk-taking
- Accepting responsibility for behavior
- Recognizing limitations
- Respect for self and others
- Self-control
- How to win and how to lose
- Tackling adversity
- Self-reflection/evaluation
- Problem-solving
- Time management
- Setting and attaining goals
- Communication
- Working within a system
- Self-motivation
- Resilience
- Pushing yourself to the limit
- Self-Discipline
- Working with others you don't necessarily like

The coaches and Administration of GMAHS are here to support your growth as a student and as an athlete to best prepare you for life as a Gwynedd graduate.

Sincerely,
The Athletics Department of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School

INTRODUCTION

This handbook outlines policies and procedures as well as serves as a guide for appropriate behavior and conduct for student—athletes participating in the athletic program at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School.

GMAHS is a member of the Athletic Association of the Catholic Academies (AACA), which is governed by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). With this in mind, student-athletes need to establish priorities that reflect the membership philosophies. The Athletic Department is funded by Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School in conjunction with fees collected for each sport. Attention is paid to the equitable distribution of financial support for all teams, with the exception of crew. Athletic scholarships are NOT offered.

All students are invited to tryout for any of the 14 interscholastic teams (Basketball, Crew, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Flag Football, Golf, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Indoor and Outdoor Track, and Volleyball) sponsored by the school. Scheduling for all teams is based on available competition with like institutions, with priority given to other PIAA programs.

Participation in athletics in conjunction with success in academics results from hard work, commitment and sacrifice. As a result, a healthy balance between athletics and academics is not only encouraged, but also expected. While athletic honors earned by individuals and teams are encouraged and important, academic honors are paramount—hence the reason *student* is listed first in *student-athlete*.

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The foundation of the Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School Athletics Program is mission-driven and therein celebrates and "empowers each student [athlete] to develop her unique talents and abilities and to become a competent and compassionate Christian woman." Participation in Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School athletics is a privilege which is designed to support and foster self-discipline, teamwork, respect for others, physical well-being, superior decision-making skills, healthy competition, and self-respect. Student-athletes are valued representatives of the GMAHS community and, as such, are expected to be excellent role models for peers and respected ambassadors of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School.

ELIGIBILITY

- Student-athletes must comply with all PIAA, GMAHS, and Athletic Department regulations regarding eligibility.
- Student-athletes must maintain a good academic standing to be eligible to participate in the athletic program (See "Academic Eligibility" for requirements).
    - The Director of Athletics will meet with student-athletes when academic difficulties arise, and temporary or permanent suspension from athletic events may result until the student achieves academic success.

- Prospective student-athletes must:
    - *Pass* the mandatory PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (CIPPE) prior to trying out and *turn in* all required completed CIPPE forms via Arbiter.
        - The CIPPE form cannot be authorized/certified earlier than May 1 and shall be effective, regardless of when performed during a school year, until the next May 31st.
        - For subsequent seasons beyond the first season of participation of each school year, student-athletes must complete and return via Arbiter the PIAA CIPPE Section 7 (Re-certification by Parent/Guardian) and, if necessary, PIAA CIPPE section 8 (Re-certification by a Licensed Physician of Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine).
    - Complete the ImPACT concussion baseline test each school year prior to participation (tryout/practice) in the first sport of the school year.
    - Pay the sports fee of $275 for 1st season, $200 for 2nd season, $125 for 3rd season, per athlete, per sport; the fee for swimming is $350 per season.
        - The fall season fee will be assessed to student Blackbaud accounts in September; the winter fee will be assessed to Blackbaud in January; the Spring fee will be assessed to Blackbaud in April
            - Payments must be made by the end of the season and/or prior to participation in the next sports season.
        - The fee for Crew is determined on a year-to-year basis based on the needs of the team.
            - The Fall Crew fee will be assessed to student Blackbaud accounts in October; the Winter Crew fee will be assessed to Blackbaud in January; and the Spring Crew fee will be assessed to Blackbaud in March
                - Payments for Fall and Winter Crew must be made by the end of the season and/or prior to participation in the next sports season; the Spring fee must be paid by May 15.
        - Please note, some teams also collect a "team fee":
            - A team fee is a voluntary financial contribution determined and collected by a team parent committee to help cover the costs of team-related activities that are not sponsored or funded by the school, but are considered important to the team's culture and experience. These may include expenses for events such as the end-of-season banquet, senior night food and gifts, team dinners, and similar activities that foster team bonding and recognition.
            - The team fee is separate from any official school or athletic department fees and is used solely to support these supplemental, team-driven events. Contributions are typically managed transparently by the designated parent coordinator to ensure funds are used appropriately for the benefit of the team.
        - Refund requests will be reviewed and issued on a case by case basis; generally, however, refunds will not be issued after the first contest of the season (by sport).
    - Turn in all additional paperwork required by the GMAHS Athletics Department by the first official practice date via Arbiter.
- In addition to the above requirements, transfer students must comply with PIAA mandates and fill out all appropriate paperwork requested by GMAHS and PIAA
    - Any athlete transferring into GMAHS or out of GMAHS (for ANY reason) after participating in a PIAA sport in their 10th grade year…
        - Should the initial transfer form be signed off by both principals acknowledging that the transfer was <u>not</u> motivated by athletics <u>AND</u> the transfer is approved by the District One Committee upon review, the athlete will be eligible for regular season play, but automatically *ineligible** for post-season play, per the PIAA by-law
            - * Should transfers be deemed by the school as "necessitated by exceptional and unusual circumstance(s) beyond the reasonable control of the student's family...", a waiver for post-season eligibility may be requested. The form, along with supporting documentation, must be submitted to the District One Committee, at least 30 days before the start of the post-season, for review.
                - Please note: The District One Committee is <u>not</u> permitted to grant a waiver for academic, developmental, spiritual and/or social reasons
    - Any athlete transferring into GMAHS or out of GMAHS, at any time, for *reasons materially motivated in some way by athletics,* may be deemed ineligible for all PIAA sponsored sports in which that student participated for one-year immediately preceding the date of transfer.
- Failure to comply with any or all of the above requirements deems a prospective student-athlete ineligible for tryouts/practices and/or contests.

ACADEMICS

A student athlete faces a demanding task. Balancing athletics with the rigorous demands of academia requires time management and the responsible establishment of priorities to satisfy both of these roles. Athletes who have excessive absences and/or are receiving temporary academic accommodations (e.g., medical-related) may not participate in athletic practices, games, or events

until approval is given by GMAHS Administration. Students may have to miss class for competition. Conflicts with exams, quizzes, etc., must be resolved between the student and the appropriate teacher. In the event that conflicts cannot be resolved, the student's primary responsibility is to academic obligations. Each athlete is accountable for all missed work due to athletic related absences. Instructors are under no obligation to make special arrangements. Coaches may not make demands that compromise a student's academic standings; athletes may not prioritize athletics over academics.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Student participation in activities is highly encouraged at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School. As many students as possible should make an effort to involve themselves in school affairs. However, such participation must not be a detriment to academic performance. To ensure a balance between academics and activities, the following regulations will be applied at progress reports and each semester marking period:

Academic Standing Guidelines

1. **Notification Level** (70-75): Students earning a grade between 70-75 for one or more classes on their progress report and/or semester report will receive a warning via the report. The Dean of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment will notify all concerned parties internally (school counselors and directors of activities).
    a. These students may continue to participate in all activities but are encouraged to seek additional academic support.
    b. School Counselors will follow up with the student
2. **Warning Level** - One Failing Class (69 or below): Students earning a grade of 69 or below in one class on their progress report or semester report are officially on probation (*without* removal from activities).
    a. These students have two (2) cycles to show progress.
    b. If no progress is evident by the end of the second cycle, these students will be pulled from participation in activities until the Dean of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment confirms that progress has been made.
3. **Probation Level** - Multiple Failing Classes (69 or below): Students earning grades 69 or below in two or more classes are on probation. They:
    a. Are *immediately* pulled from activities for at least one (1) cycle and until the Dean of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment confirms that progress has been made
    b. Will be assigned 2 cycles of Community Periods with guided study halls
    c. If no progress is evident by the end of the cycle, the students will continue to be withheld from activities for another cycle and until progress is demonstrated

Implementation and Oversight

The Dean of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment will compile a list of students who fall into the abovementioned categories at mid-semester and semester points. The Dean will also inform and maintain communication with School Counselors, activity moderators, and activity directors regarding these students' academic standing once they are identified.

Definition of Progress

For a student to demonstrate "progress" as required by this policy:

- The student must show improvement in classwork, homework completion, and assessment scores
- The Dean of Academics, Instruction, and Assessment will be responsible for confirming whether sufficient progress has been made to allow return to activities
- Teachers may be consulted to provide evidence of improvement in their subject areas
- This policy aims to balance the importance of academic achievement with the valuable experience of participating in school activities and athletics.

ATTENDANCE

- Students absent from school, attending less than two full class periods, or having an extended stay in the nurse's office may NOT participate in any athletic or extra-curricular activities that day unless the Dean of Students, in collaboration with the Principal and/or Director of Athletics, makes an exception.
- Students found skipping class will be *immediately ineligible* for any extra-curricular activity on the day the transgression occurred; further consequences will be determined by the Dean of Students, the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and/or the Director of Athletics.

CONDUCT

Student-athletes at GMAHS are expected to exhibit appropriate conduct at all times. Members of all athletic teams are bound by the rules and regulations as stated in the Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School handbook. Particular attention should be paid to the following and the specific sanctions that will result when violations occur:

- Student-athletes may not intentionally come in physical contact with any official, team member, opposing coach and/or spectators
- Student-athletes may not verbally abuse any official, team member, opposing team member or coach, and/or spectator
- Student-athletes must refrain from misconduct while traveling or in their representation of GMAHS, especially in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, theft or vandalism of property and/or equipment

- Student-athletes will refrain from any form of hazing or bullying.
    - "Hazing." Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of [a student] **a person** or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization [operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by an institution of higher education]. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.
    - “Bullying.” The act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, psychological, cyber, or written interactions. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. Examples of bullying include but are not limited to: any act that is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; intimidation, either physical or psychological; threats of any kind, stated or implied; assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional; attacks on property; written intimidating, threatening, and/or demeaning letters, notes, messages, texts, or emails; social isolation or manipulation of a student; engaging in implicit or explicit coercive behavior to control, influence or affect the health and well-being of a student; any other behavior or acts which have the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education, creating an intimidating or threatening educational environment, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.
- General misconduct

Severity of sanctions will be determined by the Director of Athletics after consultation with the coach, involved parties, and the Dean of Students where deemed appropriate. The above-mentioned situations are not inclusive, and the Director of Athletics will administer penalties where deemed appropriate. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Written reprimand to the involved party(ies)
- Suspension from practice(s)
- Suspension from competition(s)
- Suspension from all team activities for a specified time
- Restitution ordered for damages and/or theft
- Expulsion from the team for the remainder of the season and/or academic year
- Reporting the infraction to law enforcement, if deemed necessary

Note: In any contest in which a GMAHS athlete or coach is ejected, PIAA mandates a next contest suspension. If the ejection is considered “supplemental”, additional consequences exist per PIAA rules. *In addition* to the PIAA mandate, GMAHS may impose its own sanction of an additional term of suspension. Therefore, any GMAHS player or coach ejected from a game/contest may be suspended for **TWO** consecutive contests/games and may be subject to further disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the team indefinitely

ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUG USE

Refer to the GMAHS Student Handbook*

Any student who violates Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School's Controlled Substances/Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco policies, will be subject to the most severe sanctions, including expulsion from all Athletic Department programs and referral to appropriate administration for institution-wide review. Disciplinary consequences include suspension and expulsion from GMAHS. Violations may also result in penalties and/or fines as are imposed by any and all law enforcement agencies.

TEAM TRAVEL

While on the road, student-athletes of GMAHS are representatives of the school. Student-athletes are to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect a positive image on themselves and the school. Appropriate conduct must be exhibited at all times.

- Athletes must use appropriate language at all times
- If music is played while traveling, it must be played at a decibel level that is approved by the driver; additionally, the content of the music played on the bus, at GMAHS home field/location, and at away fields/locations—language and situation—must be appropriate and reflect the values of GMAHS.
- Teams must remove all belongings and any trash from the buses/vehicles that take them off campus. Leave it better than you received it!
- GMAHS Athletics Department generally provides buses/vehicles for athletes to travel to and from athletic contests.
  - If an athlete chooses not to return to campus on the team bus/van, a travel release form must be on file with the Athletics Department via Arbiter.
    - **Note**: Each team may have rules regarding team travel. Please check with your coach and his/her team policies.
  - When a situation arises in which an athlete cannot travel on a bus provided by the school, permission must be requested to and granted by the Director of Athletics in advance.
  - Student-athletes should make sure that they know the time and place of their departure and be prompt and ready to leave at the scheduled time.
  - Student-athletes should always take study material with them because there will be time on the road for studying.
  - A neat and clean appearance in GMAHS apparel is required.
  - For team travel for the crew program, please refer to the crew handbook.

EARLY DISMISSAL FOR AWAY GAMES

Student-athletes should change into their sports uniforms *and acceptable travel gear* during their lunch periods on game days. Student-athletes should remain in class until the set dismissal time. Once dismissed, student-athletes should conduct themselves in a manner that is cognizant of the fact that classes are still in session. All athletes MUST sign out in the Counseling Suite prior to leaving the school building for their away game.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

When student-athletes are issued equipment and uniforms, it is done on a loan basis unless otherwise noted. Student-athletes are responsible for the proper care of all equipment and/or uniforms—this may include specific care instructions from the manufacturer.

- Student-athletes are responsible for returning all equipment and uniforms to the Coach, Athletic Trainer, or Director of Athletics **personally** within one week of the last competition date. Uniforms should be returned in a sealed bag with the athlete's name on it.
- Any lost or damaged uniforms and/or equipment must be reimbursed for the replacement costs**.** Failure to do so may result in termination of future eligibility, forfeiture of athletic awards, and/or refusal for academic registration, and release of grades or college transcripts.
- Student-athletes may wear only GMAHS issued and/or approved uniforms.
- Some uniforms may need to be purchased
  - Cross Country/Track & Field
  - Swim & Dive
  - Flag Football
  - Crew
  - Tennis

TEAM SELECTION

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his/her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach(s). It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or Varsity team the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the team. Parents should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and be available to answer athletes' questions regarding team selection as it pertains to them.

We understand that not being selected for a team is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents. Anyone not selected for a team is welcome to try out again next season, to try another sport, or volunteer in some other way for the team (such as a manager).

PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES

While parents are welcome to watch practices, interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus during practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would not be tolerated in an academic setting.

- Practice sessions may last up to three hours.
- An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions.
    - Each team will have an attendance policy reflective of their respective sport
- Practices may start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or the availability of facilities.
    - A member of the coaching staff will communicate the practice and game schedule either via the team app or via email
- No practice may be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather or held when school is not in session due to inclement weather unless express permission is given by the Director of Athletics.
- There may be practices held on Saturdays, Sundays, and over holiday periods.

VARSITY LETTER PREREQUISITES

The policy for earning a varsity letter will vary by sport and will be communicated in team policies distributed at the start of each season. Both players and managers may earn a varsity letter. Criteria may include:

- attendance
- completion of a full season
    - Injury, illness, and otherwise excused absences will be taken into account
- a minimum number of rostered varsity contests
- a minimum number of varsity appearances
- minimum number of points earned in regular season and post-season contests
- coach and Athletic Department discretion

First year varsity/JV award winners will receive a letter and service pin; subsequent years at the same level will receive a service pin.

POST-SEASON

- PIAA varsity teams/individuals may qualify for post-season games/contests at the District and State levels*; members of the Crew team may qualify for SRAA Nationals
    - Transportation, lodging, and food stipends will be provided by GMAHS should overnight stays be required
        - Food allowances: $15 for breakfast (if not included in the hotel rate), $20 for lunch, and $25 for dinner
        - The Athletics Department, or their designee, will select transportation and lodging accommodations and will handle arrangements for the event

IN-SEASON SHOWCASES

- In-season showcases requiring travel and lodging shall financially be the burden of team members
- Fundraising, by way of snack-stand revenue, Dine and Donates, raffle baskets, and other school-approved methods, may be utilized to offset the costs

OUT-OF-SEASON ACTIVITIES

- Out-of-season activities are heavily regulated by PIAA; as a result of these parameters,
    - Athletes shall not wear school-issued uniforms (exception: NFHS-sponsored events)
    - GMAHS shall not pay for entrance or participation fees
    - Participation MUST be voluntary
    - Coaches shall NOT use these activities as a means of evaluation
- In PIAA-sponsored sports, regional and national level invitationals are considered out-of-season*

END OF SEASON EVALUATION

All student-athletes will be given an opportunity to meet with their coaches at the end of the season. This meeting is a chance for both players and coaches to offer feedback on the season, and to discuss the team's as well as the individual athlete's performance. In addition, student-athletes will be given an opportunity to evaluate the season in an end-of-season survey provided by and reviewed by the Director of Athletics.

FUNDRAISING

The athletic department recognizes the importance of fundraising activities as another source of revenue for supplemental, team-driven activities and events. Any fundraising activity must have prior approval from the Athletic Director.

ATHLETIC TRAINING NEEDS

The GMAHS certified athletic trainer (ATC) is available to all student-athletes for evaluation, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of athletic-related injuries as well as referral of student-athletes for medical or emergency care. The following procedures are in effect:

- Student-athletes should contact the athletic trainer immediately in case of sports-related illness or injury, no matter how minor
- Student-athletes should report for treatment prior to practice or competition, if instructed to do so by the school's ATC
- Student-athletes should follow all recommendations and guidelines regarding treatment and rehabilitation as set by ATC
- The ATC has the right to limit or prohibit student-athletes from practice and/or competition when deemed appropriate or necessary.
- After injury, the following Return to Play (RTP) protocol must be followed:
    - Following a complete physical assessment, the GMAHS athletic trainer may, at his or her discretion, and in accordance with approved protocols, return an athlete to practice or competition unless the athlete is under the current proximate care of a licensed physician.
        - When the athlete is under the care of a licensed physician, the licensed athletic trainer must have written documentation from the treating physician in order to return the athlete to practice or competition.
        - If an athlete is not being seen by a licensed physician following an injury, the GMAHS athletic trainer will determine when the athlete may return to practice or competition.
            - Final return to play decisions will be made in cooperation and agreement with the treating physician, and the athletic trainer in accordance with approved protocols*, policies, and procedures.
                - *Specific **concussion RTP protocol is** based on **The Zurich Protocol:**
                    - Step 1 begins at the time of the injury.
                    - Step 2 begins on the first completely symptom-free day. To progress to the next step, the athlete must remain symptom free.
                        - Step 1) No activity, complete rest
                        - ***A note from an MD or DO is required to begin step 2***
                        - Step 2) Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. No resistance training.
                        - Step 3) Sport-specific exercise (e.g., stick handling for field hockey players, ball handling for basketball and soccer players, etc.); add one set of low resistance training if able.
                        - Step 4) Resume non-contact training drills; add additional sets and higher intensity resistance training if able.
                        - Step 5) Full contact <u>practice</u> after receiving medical clearance from an MD or DO. ***A medical clearance note is required***.
                        - Step 6) Full participation in practice and/or contests
                    - If at any point concussion symptoms recur, the athlete should cease activity and rest. Following a symptom- free period, the athlete should return to the previous step in the progression and resume as above. No medications may be taken at any step of the progression, so as to potentially mask any symptoms. The athlete must check in with his or her athletic trainer daily prior to practice.
    - Final return to play in any circumstance, however, is ultimately determined by the GMAHS Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC)
        - Once return to play has been established by the GMAHS ATC, the Head Coach then will determine, based on the team needs, when the player is contest ready.

- After non-emergency injury, permission to return to play must be obtained from GMAHS's ATC and communicated to the head coach.
- Any borrowed equipment (braces, crutches, ace bandages, etc.) is to be returned when no longer needed.

Failure to follow recommended treatment, rehabilitation, or medical follow-up may result in suspension and/or loss of eligibility to participate in practice and/or competition for a specified time which will be determined by the Director of Athletics in consultation with the trainer and the appropriate coach.

INSURANCE

Student-athletes must understand the inherent risk involved in interscholastic athletics. This risk can involve serious physical or even fatal injuries. As a result, Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School requires all student-athletes to have their own basic health and accident insurance policy, which does not exclude participation in athletics.

GMAHS student-athletes are also covered under Gwynedd Mercy Academy's insurance plan. This is a secondary insurance coverage that covers bills in excess of what the student-athlete's primary insurance covers and does not include co-pays.

The following procedures are to be followed and it is important that the student-athlete and her parents/guardians are fully aware of these procedures and their implications:

- A completed and approved PIAA Section 6 CIPPE form is required for all student-athletes prior to participation in any athletic tryout, practice, or competition.
    - Students are responsible for procuring this physical exam on their own and will assume any financial obligation for such an exam.
- A certified athletic trainer is available for athletic injury and for referral of athletes for emergency and further medical care at on-campus home athletic contests.

STUDENT-ATHLETE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

When a problem arises for a student-athlete, the following steps are to be followed to address the situation:

Step 1
Athlete goes to Head or Assistant Coach and presents concerns.
If not resolved:
Step 2
Athlete and Head Coach meet with Director of Athletics.
If not resolved:
Step 3
Athlete, Head Coach, and Director of Athletics meet with the Principal
If not resolved:
Step 4
Athlete, Head Coach, Director of Athletics, and Parents meet with the Principal.

**This process may be modified if the Administration of GMAHS deems it necessary.*

One of the most valuable life lessons gained through sports can be the opportunity to sharpen one's skills of self-advocacy and, with that, the power of problem-solving. Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School's mission is one that promotes the empowerment of its students. The Athletics Department, therefore, welcomes the opportunity for its student-athletes to solve problems in the realm of playing time, positioning, strategy, and the like. **At no time** will any member of the Athletics Department, including its coaches, entertain a conversation about the aforementioned issues with anyone other than members of respective GMAHS teams.

ROLE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to be positive, proactive, and respected partners with the School and the Athletics Department. However, player positioning, playing time, starting line-up, and general team strategy are decisions made solely and impartially by the GMAHS coaching staff.

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS AND CONTRACT

I, while a parent/guardian of a student-athlete of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School, *promise* to:

- Always set an example of good sportsmanship
- Accompany my child to team/athletic orientation and informational meetings offered by the athletic department, as my schedule will permit.
- Promote mature behavior from all spectators during athletic contests—assist in making GMAHS fan behavior the "red and GOLD" standard for others to follow
- Applaud my child's accomplishments and effort as well as the accomplishments and efforts of the other members of the team.
- Accept the coaches' decisions regarding all team management decisions—playing time, positioning, strategy, etc.
- Adhere to the "next day" policy of communication with coaches
    - Coaches should never be approached, emailed, texted, or called during or in the immediate aftermath of a contest
- Follow the procedures set forth by the GMAHS Athletics Department regarding paperwork, injuries, conflict resolution, and expectations.

I, while a parent/guardian of a student-athlete of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School, *understand* that:

- Demeaning language toward officials, the opposing team and/or spectators will not be tolerated.
- Demeaning language toward GMAHS players, spectators, and/or coaching staff will not be tolerated.
- I will not be granted an audience with the coach, Director of Athletics, or any other member of the GMAHS Administration regarding the playing time or position of my daughter, nor the general strategy chosen by the coaching staff.
- My participation as a supporter of GMAHS Athletics is a privilege, not a right.
- If I fail to follow the aforementioned expectations, GMAHS reserves the right to issue the following sanctions:
    - Written or verbal reprimand to the involved party(ies)
    - Ban the violating party(ies) from campus during sporting activities.
    - For repeated offenses, the student-athlete may be suspended from team activities for a specified period
    - Report the infraction to law enforcement, if deemed necessary

STUDENT-ATHLETE CONTRACT

I, while a participant of GMAHS Athletics, *promise* to:

- Attend all practices and meetings faithfully.
- Communicate with a coach personally before missing a team activity (meeting, practice, contest, etc.)
- Maintain my eligibility and academic standing as laid out in the GMAHS student handbook
- If involved with an outside sport or activity, understand that my commitment to the Gwynedd Mercy Academy team comes first.
- Be presentably dressed in school apparel at each contest, home and away.
- Refrain from using drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, and inhalants.
- Replace any equipment or uniform issued to me, either by payment or the equivalent of the lost article.
- Turn in all necessary forms issued to me by the coach or Director of Athletics by the set deadlines.
- Report any personal injury or teammate's injury to coach and/or GMAHS athletic trainer immediately.
- All athletes promise to maintain an open dialogue with their teachers regarding their participation in athletics.
    - It is the student-athlete's responsibility to alert her teacher in a timely manner when she will be missing class due to a contest. All make-up work must be completed at a date set by the teacher.
- Adhere to the "next day" policy of communication with coaches
    - Coaches should never be approached, emailed, or communicated with during or in the immediately aftermath of a contest
- Follow all reasonable requests made by the Director of Athletics, Certified Athletic Trainer, and coaches, especially those involving practice, health, rest, competitions, and academics.
- Only communicate with my coach through school email or team selected app

I, while a participant of GMAHS Athletics, *understand* that:

- I am a "valued representative of the GMAHS community and as such am expected to be an excellent role model for my peers and a respected ambassador for Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School."
- I am expected to always set an example of good sportsmanship.
- My athletic participation at GMAHS is a privilege.
- I am not guaranteed playing time.

- I am not guaranteed any specific position on the team, field, court, standings, line-up, etc.
- Only the coaching staff makes final decisions regarding playing time, positioning, strategy, training—any decision regarding the management of the GMAHS team.
- After injury, written permission must be obtained from the physician authorizing participation after emergency care or rehabilitation
- After non-emergency injury, permission must be obtained from GMAHS's Certified Athletic Trainer and communicated to the head coach.

- If I fail to follow the aforementioned expectations, GMAHS reserves the right to:
    - Reprimand, verbally and/or in writing
    - Suspend from practice(s)
    - Suspend from competition(s)
    - Suspend from all team activities for a specified time
    - Demand restitution for damages and/or theft.
    - Expel from the team for the remainder of the season and/or academic year
    - Report the infraction to law enforcement, if deemed necessary

SPORTS CAPTAINS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Position Overview:

The Team Captain is a student-athlete leader who serves as a bridge between coaches and players, upholds the highest standards of sportsmanship, and promotes team unity, accountability, and performance. Captains are expected to lead by example, inspire teammates, and represent their school with integrity on and off the field.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership and Role Modeling

- Demonstrate consistent effort, discipline, and sportsmanship during practices, games, and team functions.
    - This demonstration should occur both on and off the boundaries of play
- Set a positive tone for the team through respectful behavior, punctuality, and commitment
- Encourage and support all teammates, regardless of skill level or playing time.

Communication

- Serve as a liaison between coaches/Athletic Department staff and players, voicing team concerns respectfully and constructively.
    - Meet with the Director of Athletics periodically to discuss the State of the Team
- Facilitate open dialogue among teammates to resolve conflicts and build trust.
- Provide constructive feedback and motivation to peers.

Team Building

- Foster a sense of team unity, inclusivity, and school pride.
- Organize and lead team meetings, bonding activities, and warm-ups.
- Welcome new players and help integrate them into the team culture.

Accountability and Standards

- Hold self and teammates accountable to team rules, goals, and conduct expectations.
- Organize post-practice and post-game clean up by the entire team.
- Address negative behavior calmly and appropriately, either personally or by involving coaching staff when necessary.
- Support teammates academically and encourage balanced time management.
- Perform any tasks deemed appropriate by a member of the coaching staff and/or the Athletics Department.

Contest and Practice Responsibilities

- Assist coaches in organizing drills, managing equipment, and maintaining team focus.
- Lead by example during conditioning and practice intensity.
- Represent the team by working collaboratively with officials before, during, and after contests

The process for selecting team captains can include, but is not limited to, team voting, coach input, interviews and/or applications. The specific process varies by sport, but generally involves identifying players with strong leadership qualities, commitment to the team, and the ability to inspire and motivate their peers.

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY OF THE GMAHS ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Student-athletes should be concerned with any behavior that might embarrass themselves, their families, their teams, and/or Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School. This includes any activities conducted online.

As a student-athlete participating in interscholastic sports at GMAHS, you are a representative of the school. Your connection to your school and your team is, in many respects, under a microscope. Colleges and scholarship committees search online sites to screen potential candidates and applicants. In addition, the online universe has been at the heart of negative newspaper headlines, lawsuits, and general negative consequences for those that don't follow these general principles:

- Before participating in any online community understand that anything posted online is available to anyone in the world.
    - Any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online –even if you limit access to your site.
    - Companies, colleges, and universities *pay* to be able to view their applicant, potential scholarship recipient, potential employer, etc. whose settings have been set to "private"—what you post, even "privately", can have serious repercussions on your future
- You should not post information, photos, or other items online that could embarrass you, your family, your team, the Athletics Department, or Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School.

The *malicious use* of on-line social networks about any member of GMAHS, the AACA, the PIAA community, or non-PIAA opponent, including, but not limited to the behaviors listed below, will be subject to disciplinary action by the Dean of Students, the Principal, and/or the Director of Athletics:

- Demeaning or taunting statements about opposing teams, opposing players, coaches, and/or teammates
- Impersonation of persons other than self
- Threats to opposing teams, opposing players, coaches, and/or teammates
- Incriminating photos or statements depicting hazing, sexual harassment, vandalism, stalking, underage drinking, illegal drug use, and/or other inappropriate behavior

Sanctions may include:

- Verbal/Written notification requiring that the unacceptable content be removed
- Verbal/Written reprimand to the involved party(ies)
- Suspension from practice(s)
- Suspension from competition(s)
- Suspension from all team activities for a specified time
- Expulsion from the team for the remainder of the season and/or academic year
- Reporting the infraction to law enforcement, if deemed necessary

Failure to agree and adhere to this Code of Conduct can result in actions ranging from reprimand or suspension to dismissal from the program. It is the Athletic Department's intention to achieve a level of behavior that reflects positively on all of us. This Code of Conduct is in addition to any specific team policies established by your coach, as well as all guidelines established by Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School that apply to all students.

ATHLETIC TRAINING CONSENT

By signing this authorization, I authorize Mr. Kris Foulke**,** Certified Athletic Trainer, contracted by Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School to act in the capacity of an approved medical provider.

I, the Parent /Guardian of the above name student, understand that my student-athlete may be injured while participating in school sponsored athletics. I hereby grant permission to GMAHS's Certified Athletic Trainer to administer any preventative, first aid, or emergency treatments to evaluate and examine, which they deem reasonably necessary to the health and well-being of my student-athlete.

I/we expressly permit the contracted athletic training staff to evaluate and treat any injury/illness that occurs as a result of the athlete's participation in athletics. This includes any and all reasonable and necessary care including therapeutic modalities, rehabilitation, preventative instruction, and use of EMS services as needed. In the event your athlete gets injured on school grounds, I authorize GMAHS's Certified Athletic Trainer to facilitate evaluation, treatment/care and/or EMS transportation or other forms of transportation for the appropriate care of the injured athlete. I understand that the GMAHS Certified Athletic Trainer will contact the athlete's parent or guardian as soon as possible in the event of an emergency situation.

Athletic Training Consent Form

**This form is signed electronically via Arbiter*

I have had the opportunity to review and understand the contents of this form. By signing this form*, I am confirming that it accurately reflects my wishes.

Athletic Handbook Agreement Form

**This form is signed electronically via Arbiter*

I *understand* and *agree* that I am required to know, understand, and follow the aforementioned expectations, policies, and standards outlined in the Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School Athletics Handbook.

Addendum
PIAA ARTICLE VI
TRANSFER, RESIDENCE and RECRUITING
FAQ's

A. In-Season Transfers.

1. Because of the timing difficulties in expeditiously obtaining necessary paperwork, of confirming representations of eligibility, of determining whether such Transfers are opposed by any appropriate party, of promptly scheduling hearings to consider such matters, and to reduce the likelihood of participation by an ineligible student that would impact on competition and the opportunity to participate by other students, a student who Transfers after the student Practices with a school's Team shall be ineligible to participate in that sport in Contests for a period of 21 calendar days following enrollment at the student's new school. The student's eligibility shall thereafter be determined by Sections 3 or 4 of this ARTICLE, as applicable.

2. If a student in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade transfers before the student was eligible to participate in at least 50% of the PIAA maximum number of Regular Season Contests in that sport, the student is ineligible for participation in the postseason (District championships tournament and thereafter) in that same sport, for the current school year.

3. If a student transfers after the student was eligible to participate in at least 50% of the PIAA maximum number of Regular Season Contests in that sport, the student will be deemed to have participated in an entire season and, following the transfer, will not be eligible for further participation in that sport for the current school year. If said student is in the 10th or 11th grade then said student is ineligible for participation in the postseason in the (District championships tournament and thereafter) in that same sport of the subsequent school year.

B. Out-of-Season Transfers

1.If a student transfers after participating in a sport in their 10th grade year, or thereafter, and following completion of such season, transfers to another school, said student is ineligible for participation in the postseason (District championships tournament and thereafter) in that same sport for the subsequent school year. The student, if otherwise eligible, may participate in that sport only during the regular season.

- Who does the **In-Season "21 Day Rule"** apply to?
  - A student who transfers after **practicing and/or playing** with their former school's team.

- What if the student wants to play a different sport?
  - The **"21 Day Rule"** would not apply … the rule applies to students who play the same sport at their previous school.

- When does the **"21 day Rule"** sit out begin?
  - 21 Calendar Days following enrollment at the student's new school

- Can the student practice during the **21 Day** sit out period?
  - Yes – the student can practice once all physical and school eligibility requirements are met.

- When is the **In-Season "50% Rule"** applied?
  - When a student transfers to a new school after they have been **eligible to participate** in 50% of the PIAA's maximum number of contests in that sport.
    - Example: a Soccer player transfers to a new school after the 10th game of the season. The student's season would be considered completed.

- Does the **"50% Rule"** count the # of games played?

- No – the rule considers the number of contests the student was eligible to play.

- Who does the **"Post Season Transfer Rule"** apply to and what does it mean?
  - Students who transfer after playing a sport in their 10th grade year or thereafter, are eligible to participate in all regular season contests, but will be ineligible for post season contests.

- What if an 11th or 12th grade transfer student did not play a sport at their old school?
  - The **"Post-Season Rule"** would not apply to the student.

- Can a student ineligible for the Post-Season participate in District playoffs?
  - No - the **"Post-Season Rule"** includes all District and PIAA playoff and championship events.

- Can a school / student appeal the Transfer Rule(s)?
  - **"21 Day Rule"** – No appeal or waiver
  - **"50% Rule"** / **"Post-Season Rule"** – Yes, the District Committee may consider an appeal.

- For what reasons can a District Committee consider a waiver? Documentation is required.

SECTION 3. SPECIFICATION OF ARTICLE

A. Per Article VI, Section 2(C) of the PIAA By-Laws, this transfer was necessitated by exceptional and unusual circumstance(s) beyond the reasonable control of the student's family as follows:

- ☐ A transfer following a local child welfare agency approved change in residence;
  Documentation required: proof of child welfare organization approval of change of residence.
- ☐ A school-initiated administrative transfer within a school district;
  Documentation required: the official school district transfer document.
- ☐ A transfer following a court order directing such transfer or change in residence;
  Documentation required: copy of the court order.
- ☐ A transfer caused by a military reassignment of a parent;
  Documentation required: copy of the military transfer document.
- ☐ A transfer caused by release from a juvenile facility;
  Documentation required: copy of the official release document.
- ☐ A transfer following a school's decision to terminate its interscholastic athletic program;
  Documentation required: copy of the minutes or directives confirming the school's official action.
- ☐ A transfer following a bona fide change of residence resulting from a change in employer of a parent;
  Documentation required: proof of (1) new residential arrangements (lease or purchase documents); and (2) the change of employer (a job reclassification or shift hours change with a current employer will not support a request under this provision).

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- ☐ A transfer following an involuntary substantial change in financial condition and resources that compels withdrawal from a school.
  Documentation required: documents showing (1) a substantial reduction in family income and, (2) that tuition assistance was sought and denied or was insufficient to overcome the substantial reduction in family income.
- ☐ A transfer occurring after a school closes;
  Documentation required: proof of school closure.
- ☐ A transfer resulting from bullying, harassment, or other misconduct.
  Documentation required: (1) written corroboration from persons unrelated to the student and/or the student's family that the alleged misconduct occurred, and (2) a letter from school administration that confirms the student timely sought assistance of appropriate school personnel to address such misconduct and that the school agrees that a transfer was appropriate.
- ☐ A transfer because of violence, or a threat violence, directed against the student.
  Documentation required: copy of the police and/or school report(s) of the incident(s).
- ☐ Other

NOTE: For purposes of this provision, whether a student's transfer was materially motivated by an athletic purpose is not a factor to be considered. Also, the following reasons will NOT support the grant of a waiver:
- A transfer for academic, developmental, spiritual and/or social reasons; and
- A change of residence resulting from a family separation, unless following court approval.

All other tendered reasons will be considered by the District Committee on a case-by-case basis.

- A post-season eligibility waiver **MUST** be received by the District Committee no less than 30 days prior to the start of the post-season in order to be considered.

- What reasons will transfers **NOT** be considered by a District Committee?
    - Transfers to address academic, developmental, spiritual and/or social reasons

- Who is responsible for knowing if a student is eligible or ineligible?
    - School Administration is responsible for certifying the eligibility of all contestants