River Mill Academy



RIVER MILL ACADEMY
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Athletic Handbook

2026-2027

Mission

To create mutual respect, trust and care for one another throughout the entire athletic department, including the directors, coaches, athletes, and their families. Emphasizing the importance of academics, teamwork, and sportsmanship for all student athletes.

Introduction

The policies, procedures, and regulations in this handbook are in compliance with the policies and administrative procedures outlined in the River Mill Academy Handbook.

The purpose of the athletic handbook:

- To provide successful experiences for students and the efficient operation of the athletic program.
- To establish regulations and procedures to deal with violations that occur on or off school grounds throughout the entire calendar year.
- To encourage athletes to make choices that ensure their health and safety as well as provide appropriate consequences for students who violate the rules.

This handbook shall be used by all principals, coaches, student athletes, and parents.

Student Athletes:

Being a part of the RMA athletic program is a privilege which demands a commitment to strive for excellence in all areas of school life: academics, social activities, community, and discipline. Student athletes must be made aware of their constant responsibility to represent River Mill positively and display our values. RMA administration and coaching staff have the authority to suspend or revoke the privilege when the rules and standards of the athletic program are not being followed.

The true Jaguar athlete is a role model representing the school. They earn respect by practicing, preparing, and playing hard while demonstrating the highest degree of sportsmanship at all times. Sportsmanship is demonstrated by showing respect to members of opposing teams and schools, the coaching staff, teammates, officials, and the use of acceptable language and an overall attitude.

A. During competition, an athlete:

- **a.** Acknowledges winning and losing are part of the game and learns to accept both.
- **b.** Has complete control of himself/herself at all times. Horseplay, display of temper, use of profanity, and disrespect for coaches or officials will result in disciplinary action from the coach and/or administration.

B. On campus, an athlete:

- **a.** Will refrain from fighting, scuffling, horseplay, and juvenile behavior in and around the school building.
- b. An athlete suspended will not be permitted to work out with, travel with, or participate with the team during that period. Eligibility after the suspension period will be left at the discretion of the coach and/or administration.

C. **During the athletic period and practices before and after school, an athlete will:**
   a. Notify the coach if he/she needs to miss a game or practice that is scheduled. Absences from in-season practices should be handled according to the team's rules.
   b. Be on the field, court, weight room or other designated area and ready to practice when designated by the coach. Tardiness will not be tolerated.
   c. Maintain a neat and clean locker room and playing area, no matter if at a home contest or away contest.

D. **During team travel, an athlete will:**
   a. Travel to and from all contests on a bus provided for the team (including managers). Athletes can be signed out by a parent/guardian ONLY to avoid riding the bus back after contests.
   b. Conduct himself/herself properly on the school bus or in any school vehicle. He/she will follow all bus rules provided by RMA. This includes keeping activity buses free of trash and/or food.
   c. Be informed of departure and return times. It is your responsibility to be on time for all departures and to inform your parents of the time to pick you up after the contest.
   d. Only coaches, players, managers, and/or school personnel are allowed to ride the team bus.

NCHSAA Eligibility/Requirements for Participation:

A. **Academics-** RMA students will follow the NCHSAA Semester Grade Policy.
   1. A student must have passed a minimum of 70% of their classes from the previous semester. This policy applies to our middle school as well.
   2. The student must take a minimum academic course load each semester and must fulfill this for the entire semester. (must be credited courses).
   3. The student must meet local promotional standards and any local GPA requirement. Local promotional standards can be found in the student handbook.

B. **Age Requirements**- A student must not turn 15 (middle school) or 19 (high school) years of age on or before August 31 of the current year. A student cannot exceed 3 (middle school) or 4 (high school) consecutive seasons in the same sport.

C. **Attendance-** It is NCHSAA policy that students must have been in attendance for at least 85% of the previous semester at an approved high school or middle school.

D. **Physical Examination**: completed on a NCHSAA form, good for one year from the date the physical was completed (including Health History Form, Physical Examination Form, and Medical Eligibility). This must be uploaded into DragonFly Max.

E. **Consent to Participate and Release Form:** Both student and parent/legal guardian must sign off before participation is allowed.

F. **Sportsmanship Pledge:** Both the student and parent/legal guardian must sign off before participation is allowed

G. **Gfeller-Waller Concussion Form:** Both student and parent/legal guardian must sign off before participation is allowed.

H. **Crash Course Concussion Education Video and Parent Seat Video:** It is mandatory for all coaches, parents, and athletes to watch the Crash Course Concussion Video. Parents must also watch the Parent Seat Video. Signing off on this form states you have watched the videos.

I. **Return to Play From Illness or Injury (non-concussion)-** if a student athlete misses 5 consecutive practices or games due to an illness or injury that is not a concussion, the return to play form must be completed by a medical professional and parent and returned to the Athletic Director before being allowed to return.

J. **Return to Play from Concussion-** if a student athlete is diagnosed with a concussion, a medical professional must fill out the return to play from the concussion form, and the return to play 7-day protocol must be completed with an approved staff member. After completion, the concussion form must be signed by a medical professional and parent and returned to the Athletic Director before being allowed to return.

RMA Athletic Policies:

A. **Pre-Season Meeting Attendance-** Attendance at a pre-season meeting led by the athletic department is mandatory for any student-athlete and parent/guardian prior to participating in a sport.

B. **Attendance-** it is the policy of River Mill that every student-athlete attends school. Per the NCHSAA, student athletes must have been in attendance for at least 85% of the previous semester at an approved high school. Student athletes also must be in school for at least half a day to be able to participate or attend practice or games. A school sponsored field trip does not affect participation status.

C. Early Dismissal and Departure- Due to the nature of athletics and the travel involved, it is often necessary for student athletes to be released early from class. This in no way releases the student athlete from academic responsibility, including class assignments, quizzes, tests, and homework. Athletes are expected to notify their teachers prior to leaving campus and arrange to make up all assignments, quizzes, or tests, and obtain homework.

D. **Sportsmanship Policy**- It is expected that our athletes be gracious in victory, dignified in defeat, and always treat game officials, coaches, and opponent athletes with the utmost courtesy and respect. It is a privilege and should be treated as an honor to represent River Mill Academy in any athletic activity.

   a. <u>Unsportsmanlike Behaviors:</u>
      i. Profanity: Use of profanity, foul language, or obscene gestures demonstrates a lack of self-control that will not be tolerated.
      ii. Fighting: Fighting is prohibited at all times regardless of who threw the first punch.
      iii. Trash talking: Use of any derogatory language that threatens or verbally abuses any opponent (or game officials) is not allowed.
      iv. Inappropriate Physical Contact: Such as slapping /pushing /shoving /tripping /throwing punches/etc. is forbidden
      v. Arguing with Game Officials: Respectfully accepting their call, even if you do not agree with it. Do not argue with him/her. Immature outbursts such as throwing balls/kicking chairs/etc. Will not be tolerated.

   b. <u>Violations:</u> Violations of these policies will be handled in the following manner, and punishments shall be issued whether or not a game official issues a penalty of unsportsmanlike or ejectable nature. Offenses may result in a suspension from school at the principal's

discretion. Any RMA athlete who receives an unsporting double yellow/red card, technical foul, or ejection will follow the rules outlined below.

i. **First Offense**: The athlete will be suspended from the current game. Then, the athlete, accompanied by a parent or guardian, will attend a meeting with a school administrator prior to returning to the team activity.

ii. **Second Offense**: The athlete will be suspended from the current contest as well as the next scheduled contest. (If an offense occurs during practice, the athlete will be suspended from the next game.) Then, the athlete, accompanied by a parent or guardian, will attend a meeting with a school administrator again prior to returning to the team's activity. They will also receive written notice of prior and future actions.

iii. **Third Offense**: The athlete and a parent/guardian will attend a meeting with a school administrator and receive written notice resulting in suspension from the team for the rest of the season.

c. Other Punishments:

i. If an RMA athlete starts a fight, he/she will be immediately ejected from the game and may be suspended from the team for the remainder of the season.

ii. If administration determines a pattern is occurring over the sporting season or years, administration may impose additional sanctions.

d. Implementation: All coaches must enforce this policy. Oversight of the coach's execution of this policy rests solely in the hands of the principal. If the principal finds that this policy is not being implemented, the principal shall have the authority to enforce this policy against any student athlete who violates it.

E. **Athletic Fee:** Fees are $50.00 per sport, per athlete, and are due once the student is placed on the official team roster. This fee must be paid prior to the first contest. Athletes will not be eligible to play until the fee is paid. Fees are nonrefundable if an athlete withdraws from a sport.

F. **Athlete Emergency Form-** This form includes contact information, medical information, parental permission, and insurance coverage.

G. **Transportation Form-** form includes parents/guardians signing off on who an athlete can ride with, who can sign your athlete out from away games, and hold harmless, release, and waiver. This will be released on a case-by-case basis.

H. **Transportation Guidelines-** When school-provided transportation is used for athletic events, only student-athletes and personnel listed on the official team roster/eligibility sheet are permitted to ride the bus to and from the event. The official roster/eligibility sheet must be approved and signed by both the head coach and school principal prior to travel. No additional students, family members, friends, or unauthorized individuals may ride the bus unless prior administrative approval has been granted.

I. **Team Rules and Regulations-** each coach has their own set of rules for their specific sport. Both the athlete and parent must sign in DragonFly Max before being able to participate.

J. **Social Media Policy-** Any content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning, or threatening towards any individual or entity as well as any acts of violence (derogatory comments towards another school, taunting comments aimed at a student, coach, or team, and derogatory comments against race, sexual orientation, and/or gender, etc) will not be tolerated from a student

athlete or parent/guardian. Administration, Athletic Directors, and the head coach have the ability to impose probation, suspension, or removal from a team on the first offense.

K. **Commitment-** Being part of a team is a commitment to yourself, your teammates, your coach, and your school. Please make sure that BEFORE you try out for a team, you are willing (and able) to complete the entire season. This means making arrangements before the season starts with your work, transportation, and any other prior commitments you may have. It is very important that you attend all practices and games that are set by your coach. If you have specific questions or concerns, these should be addressed with the coach prior to tryouts.

L. **Scheduling-** Our schedules are posted on the athletics website under each sport as well as in the Jaguar Journal that goes out every Sunday. There you will find a master calendar for all sports, individual spreadsheets for each team, and a summer calendar for events taking place during summer break. Make sure to frequently check the NCHSAA website for your desired sport to know state playoff dates.

M. **Tryouts/Cuts/Playing Time-** RMA Sport teams will hold tryouts for every sport, and cuts will be made based off a Head Coach's optimal team size. There are no guaranteed spots based off of previous playing season participation. Playing time is entirely at the discretion of the Head Coach. Athletes and parents must recognize in order for our athletic programs to excel at their full potential, playing time will be awarded however the Head Coach sees fit.

N. **Overlapping Athletic Participation-** An athlete who is already participating in a sport may not begin practicing in another sport until the first sport has completed its season. Should an athlete drop a sport or be dropped from a sport, they will not begin in the next sport until the first sport has completed its season.

O. **Same-Season Athletes-** Student athletes are permitted to participate in more than one sport during the same season, only if all coaches are in mutual agreement. All NCHSAA rules must be complied with. The primary sport must be designated, and attendance required primary for this sport. The student athlete will be required to pay both athletic fees during this season.

P. **Uniforms-**

   a. Uniforms are the property of RMA Athletics. They are not permitted to be worn during school days. Uniforms and equipment will be distributed to coaches at the start of each season. Each coach will be responsible for the distribution of uniforms and equipment. It is the responsibility of each coach to return all items received to the designated athletic director at the end of the sports season. The athlete is financially responsible for all uniforms and equipment assigned to him or her. All parts of the uniform must be returned at the end of the season in the condition which it was assigned. Failure to return the uniform or return in the same condition will result in a fine for each piece not returned or damaged. Before any awards are received, or a student begins a new sport, the athlete must return all their items or pay the determined fee.
   b. In the event that a team would like to purchase supplemental uniforms or equipment, parents of the team are encouraged to coordinate with their team's head coach to set up individual

team fundraising. All individual team fundraising requests must be submitted by the Head Coach in writing to the athletic directors for approval at least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated start date.

c. All equipment and uniforms purchased by teams shall become the property of River Mill Academy and entrusted to the care of the athletic department. No outside uniforms are allowed to be donated or purchased. All team gear/equipment needs prior to design and purchase approval by the athletic department.

Q. Supervision/Facilities- Athletes are to be always supervised by a coach and/or school personnel in all facilities during all activities. Athletes are not to use athletic facilities unattended at any time for any exception.

R. Communication- RMA Athletics will keep the following order for lines of communication: 1st Contact- Athlete's Coach, 2nd Contact- Athletic Director, 3rd Contact- Administration. Please keep all team sport specific questions directed to the Head Coach of each team. The 24-hour policy is in effect for any parent wishing to communicate with coaches. After practices and/or games will not be when concerns/issues will be brought to a coach. Parents/Guardians must set an appointment with the coach to address any questions, concerns, or issues. If the question, concern, or issue has not been resolved, then the Athletic Director and/or Administration will discuss the matter with the parent/guardian.

S. **Incident and Accident Procedures-** In the event of an incident or accident at an athletic event on or off campus, the supervising coach or RMA staff member must report said incident or accident to an RMA administrator as soon as possible.

Student Athlete and Parent Acknowledgement:

I affirm that I have read the above policies and that I understand what is required of me to represent River Mill Academy as a student athlete and parent. I also fully understand the consequences for any unsportsmanlike behavior on my part.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____