AVONWORTH
SCHOOL DISTRICT

ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Table of Contents

WELCOME TO AVONWORTH ATHLETICS *3*

CONTACT INFORMATION *4*

ATHLETIC RESOURCES *5*

ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY *6*

ELIGIBILITY *6*

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE **6**

MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS **6**

Wrestling Weight Certification 7

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY **7**

Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes (PIAA Guidelines) 7

Weekly Eligibility Checks 7

Grading Period & Year-End Eligibility 7

ATTENDANCE ELIGIBILITY **7**

AGE-BASED ELIGIBILITY **7**

AMATEUR STATUS **8**

DURATION OF ELIGIBILITY **8**

TRANSFERS **8**

OUTSIDE PARTICIPATION **8**

ALL STAR CONTESTS **8**

TEAM SELECTION **8**

PARTICIPATION RULES *9*

MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION AND OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS **9**

TRAINING **10**

Off-Campus Training 10

Clinics 10

Private Instruction 10

Off-Season Workouts 10

INJURIES **10**

Sports Medicine Staff 11

Athletic Training Room 11

CODE OF CONDUCT *11*

SPORTSMANSHIP **11**

TRANSPORTATION **12**

TURF GUIDELINES **12**

LOCKER ROOM GUIDELINES **12**

POLICIES **12**

Drug and Alcohol (Policy 227) 12

Bullying and Cyberbullying (Policy 249) 13

Hazing And Harassment Policy (Policy 247) 13

Discriminatory Harassment (Policies 103 And 248) 14
Sexual Harassment (Policy 248) 14
Drone/Unmanned Aircraft (UAS) (Policy 719) 14

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS 15
Suspension From Team 15
Dismissal From Team 15
Due Process 15

OFFICIALS 16

GAME SCHEDULING AND COMMUNICATIONS 16

CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS 16

EARLY DISMISSALS 17

POST-SECONDARY ATHLETICS 17

COLLEGE RECRUITING 17

NCAA AND NAIA ELIGIBILITY 17

AWARDS & RECOGNITION 18

VARSITY LETTERS 18
Letter Jackets 18

NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS (NIL) 18

AWARDS 18

PHOTOS & VIDEOS 19

CONCERNS/ FORMAL COMPLAINTS 19

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT 19

POST-COMPLAINT PROCESS 19

WELCOME TO AVONWORTH ATHLETICS

Dear Student-Athletes and Families,

Welcome to Avonworth Athletics. Participation in interscholastic athletics is one of the most rewarding experiences a student can have. Our athletic programs are designed to challenge students academically, physically, and socially while helping them develop the leadership, discipline, teamwork, and character that extend far beyond competition.

At Avonworth, we believe athletics are an extension of the classroom. Every practice, contest, and team activity provides an opportunity to grow as individuals while representing our school and community with pride.

This handbook is intended to serve as a resource for student-athletes and their families by outlining expectations, policies, procedures, and available resources. We encourage every family to review this handbook together before each athletic season.

Thank you for your commitment to Avonworth Athletics. We look forward to another outstanding year of competition and are proud to have you represent the Antelopes.

Go Lopes!

Additional athletic information, schedules, livestreams, forms, and announcements are available on the Avonworth Athletics website:
https://avonworthathletics.digitalsports.com/

Nate Milsom
Athletic Director
Avonworth School District

CONTACT INFORMATION

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Nate Milsom

Office: 412-366-6360 ext.1508

Email: nmilsom@avonworth.k12.pa.us

ATTENDANCE AND ATHLETIC DIRECTOR SECRETARY

Melissa Kline

Office: 412-366-6360 ext. 1601

Email: mkline@avonworth.k12.pa.us

ATHLETIC TRAINER

Brandon Rea

Office: 412-366-6360 ext. 5322

Email: brea@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Athletics Website

https://avonworthathletics.digitalsports.com/

ATHLETIC RESOURCES

Parents and student-athletes can access the following resources throughout the school year:

Avonworth Athletics Website

Schedules, scores, rosters, news, forms, and announcements.

https://avonworthathletics.digitalsports.com/

Healthy Roster

- Sports physicals
- Medical forms
- Injury communication

Hudl Fan

- Watch live events
- View replays
- Receive livestream notifications

LeagueMinder

- Official game schedules
- Schedule updates or changes
- Game times, opponents, and locations

ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

The Avonworth School District believes in offering a competitive athletic program that prioritizes student participation and personal growth. While striving for fair competition with other schools is encouraged, it should never come at the expense of sportsmanship, academic priorities, or student well-being.

Athletics are viewed as an integral part of the secondary school experience, supporting the district's commitment to a well-rounded education. Programs should challenge both physically and intellectually talented students and be accessible to all who are physically able to participate.

The athletic program is educational in nature, offering valuable learning experiences that align with the broader goals of the school. It shall be governed by local and state school authorities to ensure proper oversight.

Participation in athletics should promote physical health, skill development, emotional maturity, social competence, moral values, cooperation, competitive spirit, self-discipline, an appreciation for democracy, and a commitment to team goals. All athletic contests should emphasize physical growth, skill building, positive social experiences, and good sportsmanship.

ELIGIBILITY

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

No student may be denied the opportunity to try out for an athletic team if they meet all criteria established by the PIAA and the Avonworth School District. Tryouts and cuts are permitted with prior approval from the Principal or Athletic Director. Student managers are not permitted to participate in practices, scrimmages, or games.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS

To participate in Avonworth interscholastic sports, student-athletes must meet the following medical and insurance requirements in accordance with PIAA, WPIAL, and Avonworth School District policies:

- The PIAA CIPPE Physical Form is the only accepted physical form and must be completed and signed by both a parent/guardian and a physician.
- All forms must be completed and signed through the Healthy Roster app.
- Students must have insurance to participate in interscholastic sports as per PIAA, WPIAL, and Avonworth School District policy.
- Students are not permitted to participate in any practices or contests until their completed physical form is submitted to the head coach or athletic trainer.
- Visit the Avonworth Athletics website for athletic forms, schedules, registration information, and other important resources.

Medical certification is valid for one year from the date of the physical unless:

- The student suffers an illness or injury that prevents participation in 25% or more of the regular season contests during the immediately preceding sports season; and/or
- The student experiences an illness or injury that results in an absence from school of ten (10) or more days and/or requires surgery.

In these cases, re-certification will be required before the student-athlete can return to participation. The Athletic Office maintains a current list of all student-athletes cleared to participate.

Wrestling Weight Certification

PIAA requires all middle school and high school wrestlers to complete a wrestling weight certification program. The Athletic Training Staff oversees this process in accordance with PIAA regulations. For more information, please contact the Head Athletic Trainer or the NWCA.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes (PIAA Guidelines)

- Students must follow all PIAA eligibility rules to participate in interscholastic athletics.
- To remain eligible, students must be passing at least four full-credit courses (or the equivalent) with a minimum grade of 60% in each class.

Weekly Eligibility Checks

- Eligibility is cumulative from the start of the grading period and reviewed weekly.
- The Athletic Office checks grades every Wednesday morning.
- Students have until Friday at 2:00 PM to bring any failing grade up to passing.
- If a student is failing more than one full-credit course by the Friday deadline, they are ineligible for one week (Sunday through the following Sunday).

Grading Period & Year-End Eligibility

- If a student does not meet requirements at the end of a grading period, they are ineligible for 15 school days, starting on the day report cards are issued.
- At the end of the school year, a student's final grade—not their fourth quarter grade—determines eligibility for the following school year.

ATTENDANCE ELIGIBILITY

Students must be regularly enrolled and attending school full-time to participate in athletics.
Any student who is absent for 20 or more days in a semester will lose athletic eligibility until they have completed 45 school days of attendance following the 20th absence.

AGE-BASED ELIGIBILITY

A student becomes ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition upon turning 19 years old, unless their 19th birthday falls on or after July 1, in which case they may compete for the remainder of that school year.

To participate in junior high or middle school athletics, a student must not turn 16 before July 1 immediately preceding the school year.

AMATEUR STATUS
To be eligible to participate in a sport, an athlete must be an amateur in the sport. They may lose their amateur status in a sport for at least a year if they accept compensation for teaching, training, and coaching in a sport. They may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities, or for service as a lifeguard.

DURATION OF ELIGIBILITY
A student is ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics if they:

- Have reached the end of their fourth consecutive year (eighth consecutive semester) beyond 8th grade, regardless of actual attendance. If a student repeats a grade after 8th grade, they will be ineligible as a senior.
- Have played more than six seasons beyond 6th grade or more than four seasons beyond 8th grade in any sport. Additionally, students may not participate in more than three seasons total during grades 7–9.
- Have completed coursework for grades 9 through 12, inclusive.
- Participate in more than one season of the same sport in a single school year.

TRANSFERS
Students may not transfer from one school to another, in whole or in part, for athletic purposes. Any student who transfers for athletic reasons or is recruited will lose eligibility for one year.

- All students transferring into the Avonworth School District must consult with the Principal or Athletic Director before participating in any team activities to verify their eligibility for interscholastic athletics.
- Transfer students are prohibited from starting any in-season or out-of-season activities without prior approval from the Athletic Director.

OUTSIDE PARTICIPATION
A student will lose eligibility for the remainder of the season if they participate in an athletic contest as an individual or as part of another team in the same sport while a member of an Avonworth team. This rule may be waived if the school principal submits a written request to the PIAA.

ALL STAR CONTESTS
A student who chooses to participate in an all-star contest in a sport will lose eligibility in that sport for one year.

TEAM SELECTION
The Avonworth School District recognizes that limitations in resources, facilities, and safety may restrict the number of participants in certain sports. However, it is the District's philosophy to ensure that all student-athletes are treated fairly and equally during the selection process.

PARTICIPATION RULES

- The school administration may revoke athletic participation privileges at any time for disciplinary reasons, flagrant misconduct, poor sportsmanship, excessive absenteeism, or failure to meet minimum eligibility requirements.
- Students must meet all eligibility requirements set by the P.I.A.A. to participate.
- A student must be present in school for at least three and a half hours on the day of a practice or contest to participate. Exceptions require prior approval from the Building Principal.
- Student-athletes are responsible for knowing all rules, regulations, and schedules (practice and game times and locations) for their team.
- Student-athletes must notify their head coach well in advance of any conflicts or issues causing them to miss practice or games.
- Students serving internal or external suspension may not practice or participate in contests during the suspension. Students with detention on a practice or contest day may participate only with permission from the head coach and administration.
- Athletes may choose their sport, but once the season begins, switching sports requires consent from all coaches involved.
- No athlete removed from a team for disciplinary reasons may compete in another sport during the same season.
- Students must complete one sport season before participating in another. Those wishing to play two sports or activities in the same season must notify both coaches and the Athletic Director to coordinate schedules and resolve conflicts.
- Athletes currently participating in a recognized high school sport may not join out-of-season conditioning programs, camps, clinics, or open gyms without prior consent from both their current head coach and the out-of-season coach.
- Students who are ineligible due to academics or attendance may practice with parental approval but cannot participate in any interscholastic scrimmages or contests.

MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION AND OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS

The Avonworth School District is committed to the development of well-rounded individuals both mentally and physically. Students at Avonworth are encouraged to participate in a variety of sports and activities. Sport specialization is NOT a supported philosophy by the athletic administration or school district.

If participating in multiple sports or activities, student-athletes can expect support from coaches, who will work with them, their parents, and the Athletic Director to make reasonable accommodations. No athlete should feel pressured by a coach to focus on just one sport. Please refer to School Board Policy 122.3 for additional information.

Some student-athletes may have jobs outside of school. While it's important to make every effort to attend scheduled team activities, it's also understood that work commitments can arise. If this happens, communicating openly with coaches about work schedules is encouraged, and athletes should expect reasonable accommodations without fear of punishment for missing practices or games due to their job.

TRAINING

Off-Campus Training

Some teams may occasionally train off campus, such as going on runs for warm-ups or conditioning. These sessions are supervised, and athletes are expected to stay within the group and follow directions. Coaches must always know where student-athletes are during off-campus training for safety reasons.

Clinics

Student-athletes may voluntarily participate in sports camps and clinics run by coaches, but attending these events does not guarantee any special treatment or advantage on the coach's team.

Private Instruction

Private coaching sessions with an Avonworth coach, whether paid or voluntary, are allowed but strongly discouraged. Participating in private instruction with a coach does not guarantee a spot on a team or affect playing time in any way. These arrangements can create the appearance of favoritism and may lead to misunderstandings. All athletes will be evaluated equally based on their performance and commitment to the team, not on any outside coaching relationship.

Off-Season Workouts

Off-season workouts may be offered by coaches, but participation is completely voluntary. These workouts are open to all Avonworth students who are interested in participating in that sport. Information about dates, times, and locations will be shared through school announcements and sport interest forms, typically sent out via Google Forms.

If a morning workout needs to be canceled due to a school closure or delay, updates will be shared in advance through public announcements, the district website, or platforms like the Athletics Website or the student information system. Student-athletes should check these sources regularly for updates.

INJURIES

The Avonworth Athletic Training Staff is committed to providing high-quality care to all student-athletes and follows the ethical standards of the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) and Pennsylvania's Athletic Trainers' Practice Act.

All injuries must be reported to a coach, who will then notify the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer will follow up with the athlete and, if necessary, contact their parents. If a student-athlete is treated by a medical doctor for an injury, a written release signed by the physician is required before returning to participation. Athletes will not be permitted to resume practices or competitions until this release is submitted to the athletic trainer. The Avonworth School District does not accept releases signed by parents or guardians.

Sports Medicine Staff

Team Physician: Dr. Marco Alcala – The Team Physician oversees and approves the standard of care for student-athletes as outlined in the Medical Standing Orders. This includes guidance on the care and rehabilitation of athletic injuries.

Head Athletic Trainer: Brandon Rea, LAT – The Head Athletic Trainer is responsible for managing the daily operations of the Athletic Training Room, including coverage of varsity, junior varsity, and freshman practices and games. Responsibilities include the prevention, evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of injuries to student-athletes.

Student Athletic Trainers: Avonworth High School partners with Duquesne University and other local colleges and universities to support the clinical education of student athletic trainers. These students assist with the care of Avonworth athletes under supervision, in accordance with Pennsylvania state law and the contractual agreement with Allegheny Health Network.

Athletic Training Room

All rehabilitation and treatments should be completed before the start of practice to ensure student-athletes are properly prepared to compete. The Athletic Training Room (ATR) is also available during school hours for student-athletes who have campus privileges or open periods in their schedules. These treatments must be scheduled in advance with the athletic training staff.

CODE OF CONDUCT

To keep Avonworth athletics strong and fair, it is important that everyone follows the rules and maintains high standards of behavior and sportsmanship. The community, school leaders, and coaches believe that good conduct and citizenship are key to a successful athletic program.

Student-athletes must follow the rules in the Student Handbook. Doing so earns the honor and respect that come with participating in sports. Remember, being part of the athletic program is a privilege and not a right. Parents/caregivers must sign off on the Athlete/Parent Sportsmanship Code of Conduct Agreement in Healthy Rosters before the student athlete may participate in any Avonworth athletics program. A copy of the Sportsmanship Code of Conduct can be found at the end of the handbook (Appendix A).

SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is one of the most important values taught through interscholastic athletics. It is the shared responsibility of school administration, coaches, parents, and fans to model and promote integrity, fairness, and respect to student-athletes.

These core values help create an environment where healthy competition thrives—driven by honest rivalry, mutual respect, and grace in both victory and defeat. The goal of the Avonworth Athletic Program is to consistently demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship in every contest.

Student-athletes, coaches, parents, and fans represent Avonworth during all athletic events. Their actions reflect on the school and are noticed by the opposing team, the local community, and the media. Displaying good sportsmanship helps show the best of what Avonworth stands for.

To reinforce its importance, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) has issued the following rule:

- Any coach or athlete ejected from an interscholastic contest by a PIAA official for unsportsmanlike or flagrant misconduct will be disqualified from the next contest at the same level.

In addition to this PIAA rule, the Avonworth School District may impose further consequences in accordance with the Sportsmanship Code of Conduct Agreement.

TRANSPORTATION

Student-athletes are required to ride the team bus to and from all away athletic contests unless a written request from a parent or guardian is submitted to and approved by the Athletic Office by noon on the day of the event. Private driving to or from contests is not permitted without prior approval. Only authorized team members, including athletes, trainers, managers, statisticians, and cheerleaders, may ride the bus. While on the bus, student-athletes are expected to behave respectfully, keeping noise levels reasonable and avoiding disruptive or distracting behavior. It is important to keep the bus clean by properly disposing of trash and not leaving a mess behind. In case of any transportation emergencies, student-athletes must immediately follow all instructions from staff and the bus driver. Athletes should remember that they represent Avonworth School District at all times and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly while traveling.

TURF GUIDELINES

- No food of any kind is allowed on the turf, including chewing gum and sunflower seeds.
- Only water and sports drinks (e.g., Powerade) are permitted.
- All types of cleats are allowed except metal spikes (such as track or baseball spikes).
- All paper, cups, athletic tape, and other debris must be picked up and disposed of in garbage cans.
- Only the athletic trainer's cart and ambulances are allowed on the turf surface.
- Benches should be kept on the track, not on the turf.
- Report any issues or damage to the turf surface immediately to the coach.

LOCKER ROOM GUIDELINES

Athletes must keep their lockers locked to protect belongings. Any valuables should be secured in a locker or handed to a coach to be kept safe in the equipment room.

POLICIES

Drug and Alcohol (Policy 227)

In accordance with the Avonworth School District's Drug/Alcohol Policy, any student who possesses, uses, or is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, mood-altering substances, or other

prohibited substances during school hours, at school functions, or on school property will face disciplinary action and may be required to undergo rehabilitation. Per PIAA rules and District policy, student-athletes will be excluded from all extracurricular activities, including practices and contests, during their disciplinary period. The head coach may impose additional disciplinary measures according to their own rules and policies.

Steroids
The use of anabolic steroids by any student involved in school athletics is prohibited except when prescribed for a valid medical purpose. Use for bodybuilding, muscle enhancement, increasing muscle bulk or strength, or enhancing athletic ability is not valid.

Minimum penalties for steroid violations are:

1. First violation: suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the season.
2. Second violation: suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the current and following season.
3. Third violation: permanent exclusion from school athletics.

Students may only return to athletics after the principal receives a medical report confirming no residual evidence of steroid use. Additionally, students must participate in a drug counseling or treatment program approved by the principal as a condition of reinstatement.

Bullying and Cyberbullying (Policy 249)
Athletes are expected to treat others with respect both in person and online. Bullying of any kind, including cyberbullying, is not tolerated.

Cyberbullying is any cyber-communication or publication posted or sent by a person online, by instant messenger, email, web site, blog, online profile, interactive game, handheld device, cell phone, or other interactive device that is intended to frighten, embarrass, harass, or otherwise target another minor, and: the communication is repeated; a threat of bodily harm issued; or there is a public posting designed to hurt, embarrass or otherwise target a child.

Athletes that witness or experience bullying, you should report it immediately to a trusted adult, such as a coach, teacher, or administrator. Bullying incidents will be investigated confidentially by school officials. Consequences will be enforced for those involved in bullying, which may affect their eligibility to participate in athletics or other activities.

Hazing And Harassment Policy (Policy 247)
The Avonworth School District does not tolerate any form of hazing or harassment in school-sponsored activities. No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer, or staff member may plan, direct, encourage, assist, or engage in hazing. Administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and employees are responsible for preventing, not permitting, condoning, or tolerating hazing.

All reports of hazing will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against anyone found responsible.

Hazing includes any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the physical or mental health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation, membership, or affiliation with any school-recognized organization.

- Physical endangerment includes but is not limited to:
    - Physical brutality such as whipping, beating, or branding
    - Forced calisthenics or exposure to extreme weather
    - Forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, or medication
    - Any forced physical activity that could harm an individual's safety
- Mental endangerment includes any activity that causes extreme mental stress, such as:
    - Sleep deprivation
    - Forced social isolation
    - Forced conduct that leads to embarrassment or harms dignity

Any hazing activity is considered forced, even if a student appears to participate willingly.

Discriminatory Harassment (Policies 103 And 248)
Discriminatory harassment includes unwelcome conduct, whether graphic, written, electronic, verbal, or nonverbal, that targets an individual or group based on race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or disability. Examples include offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, name-calling, ridicule, insults, offensive objects or images, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, or any other harmful or humiliating behavior.

Discriminatory harassment conduct is:

- Sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive; and
- Viewed by a reasonable person in the complainant's position as creating an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment that substantially interferes with or limits the individual's or group's ability to participate in or benefit from school programs, activities, or opportunities.

Sexual Harassment (Policy 248)
Title IX sexual harassment is any unwanted behavior based on sex that seriously affects a student's ability to participate in school programs or activities. This includes behavior that is so severe, widespread, and offensive that it prevents equal access to education or athletics.

Examples of Title IX sexual harassment include sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

If any student-athlete experiences or witnesses such behavior, it should be reported to school officials immediately to ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

Drone/Unmanned Aircraft (UAS) (Policy 719)

To protect the safety, privacy, and security of all participants and spectators, the operation of drones (Unmanned Aircraft Systems – UAS) on or above Avonworth School District property during athletic events, practices, or activities is prohibited unless prior written approval has been granted by the Superintendent or designee.

The use of drones must comply with:

- Avonworth School District Board Policy 719 – Use of Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations
- Any applicable PIAA, WPIAL, and local regulations

Any individual or organization requesting to operate a drone on school property for athletic purposes must complete the District's **Drone Usage Request Form** and receive written approval before the event.

Unauthorized drone operations may result in:

- Removal from school property
- Cancellation of drone operations
- Notification of local law enforcement or the FAA when appropriate

For additional information or to request approval, visit the District's Drone Usage Request Form.

Drone Usage Request Form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8hOcZ6yE5ZpFQpXcxxvTdkKas28VD99oVR0vauFRDS9awSQ/viewform

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Suspension From Team

A student-athlete may be suspended from a team for serious violations of team, athletic department, school, or district rules as outlined in the Student Handbook. Any suspension will be made by the coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Building Administrator. These individuals will discuss the situation together before a decision is made.

If a student-athlete is under investigation for possible dismissal from a team, a temporary suspension may be put in place until the investigation is complete.

Dismissal From Team

A student-athlete may be removed from a team for severe or repeated violations of team, athletic department, school, or district rules and policies. This decision will be made by the coach in consultation with the Athletic Director and Building Administrator, after conferring as a group.

Any student-athlete dismissed from a team will not be allowed to join another team during that sport's season. Additional restrictions may apply based on School Board policy or the Student Handbook.

Due Process

The following procedure has been established by the Athletic Department to ensure due process when a student-athlete is being considered for suspension or dismissal from a team:

The coach, Athletic Director, or Principal will notify the student-athlete and their parent/guardian of the potential suspension or dismissal, including the reason for the action and the proposed date it would take effect. This notification may occur in person or by phone.

The student-athlete and their parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to respond to the charge and present any relevant information or evidence. If requested, a conference will be scheduled immediately or as soon as possible at a mutually agreed-upon time.

This process is designed to ensure fairness.

- Nothing in this section limits the right of the student-athlete or parent/guardian to appeal the decision to the Avonworth Superintendent, School Board, or the courts.
- Legal representation is permitted at any stage of the process.

OFFICIALS

Officials play an important role in every game and are assigned by the Athletic Director or district officials. Student-athletes are expected to treat officials with respect at all times, regardless of the calls made during competition. Respect means listening carefully, avoiding arguing or disrespectful language, and accepting decisions with good sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike behavior toward officials can result in consequences that may affect an athlete's eligibility to participate. If there are concerns about an official's performance, these should be communicated respectfully through the proper channels by coaches or parents, not through disrespectful actions or words during the game. Maintaining respect for officials helps create a fair and positive environment for all participants in athletics.

GAME SCHEDULING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Official athletic schedules are maintained through LeagueMinder and published on the Avonworth Athletics website. Student-athletes and families are responsible for checking schedules regularly, as contests may change due to weather, facility availability, or other circumstances.

CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS

Athletic contests may be canceled or postponed by the Athletic Director. If this happens, the Athletic Director will notify coaches and, when necessary, local media. Coaches are responsible for informing their teams. Athletes should ensure they are part of any group communication system the coach uses to share updates.

If school is canceled, athletic events and practices are usually canceled as well. However, there may be exceptions, especially for playoff games or competitions that cannot be rescheduled. In those cases, the Superintendent, Principal, and Athletic Director will decide whether it's safe and appropriate to participate.

If a practice is canceled after the school day begins, your coach will inform the Athletic Director so that an announcement can be made during the day. Athletes should stay alert for updates and follow the coach's instructions regarding schedule changes.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Athletic contests and practices are generally scheduled to avoid conflicts with the regular school day. In some cases, early dismissal from class may be required for a game or competition. These dismissals are approved in advance by school administration and will be communicated through the appropriate channels. Student-athletes are responsible for keeping up with any missed classwork or assignments due to early dismissal.

POST-SECONDARY ATHLETICS

COLLEGE RECRUITING

If planning to participate in athletics at a college or university, student-athletes can receive support from their coaches, the Athletic Department, and the Counseling Office. This team is available to help guide students and their families through the recruiting process and provide important information about college athletics.

Collegiate recruiters may contact coaches or the Athletic Office to request basic directory information about student-athletes, such as name, address, phone number, and honors. This is allowed under federal law (FERPA). However, if a student-athlete or their parents do not want this information shared, they must submit a written request to the Avonworth Athletic Office before the first official practice of their sport.

NCAA AND NAIA ELIGIBILITY

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) oversees college sports and sets rules about eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid. There are three NCAA divisions—Division I, II, and III—based on the size of a school's athletic program and whether athletic scholarships are offered.
If a student-athlete plans to enroll in college right after high school and wants to compete in Division I or II sports, they must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Center to ensure they meet academic and other requirements.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) also offers opportunities for men and women to compete in college sports at a high level.
Both the NCAA and NAIA Eligibility Centers review a student-athlete's academic records to determine if they meet the initial eligibility rules. The certification process begins August 1 of the athlete's senior year. Forms and more information are available in the high school guidance office, as well as online at www.ncaa.org, www.naia.org, and the school district website.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

VARSITY LETTERS

Below are minimum requirements to earn a varsity letter. Head coaches may set stricter standards at the start of each regular season, including playing time, points scored, dedication, co-operation, loyalty, leadership, a sense of fair play, and years of service. Students dismissed from the team for disciplinary reasons or that elect to leave the team on their own prior to the completion of the season forfeit their eligibility for varsity letters. Please note that letters are only awarded to athletes, managers, and statisticians in varsity sports.

- Athletes must demonstrate sportsmanship and conduct that reflect positively on the school in their interactions with opponents, teammates, and officials.
- Athletes must follow all participation and training rules set by the School District and the head coach for their sport.
- Athletes must adhere to the practice and game regulations established by their coach.
- Athletes are expected to complete the entire season, including individual and post-season competitions.
- All issued equipment must be returned to the satisfaction of the head coach and Athletic Director.
- Seniors who have completed at least two full seasons on the team will receive a varsity letter.
- Coaches may award letters at their discretion based on factors such as:
    - Positive contributions to the team
    - Demonstrated good sportsmanship and a supportive attitude
    - Injury preventing an athlete from lettering despite having met other criteria

Letter Jackets

Letter jackets must be purchased by the athlete through Greater Pittsburgh Specialty Advertising. All information and order forms are available in the Athletic Office.

NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS (NIL)

Pennsylvania law permits eligible high school student-athletes to receive compensation for the use of their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), provided all applicable PIAA regulations, state law, and Avonworth School District policies are followed. Student-athletes may not use Avonworth School District logos, uniforms, trademarks, or other intellectual property without prior written approval. Any NIL agreement must be reported to the Athletic Director and Building Principal in accordance with District procedures.

AWARDS

The athletes may receive awards from their school, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media, or a non-profit service organization approved by your school principal. Permissible awards are a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, jersey, watch, ring, scroll, photograph medal, plaque, or similar trophy, which must bear appropriate organizational insignia or comparable identification. Per Policy 240 this may not exceed $500 per student

PHOTOS & VIDEOS

One of our goals at Avonworth School District is to share positive news with our community. This includes athletic updates. If you do **NOT** give permission for your child to be photographed or video recorded, you must give written notice. Visit our website for more information.

We will do our best to ensure your child is not photographed or video recorded. However, it's important to note that athletic contests are public events. As such, the District cannot prevent media outlets from attending the event and taking photos. However, your child will never be required to participate in a media interview, if they do not wish to do so.

Avonworth School District utilizes automated Hudl Focus cameras to livestream selected athletic contests. By attending athletic events, participants and spectators acknowledge that they may appear in livestream broadcasts or archived recordings.

CONCERNS/ FORMAL COMPLAINTS

The Avonworth School District is committed to providing athletic and activity programs that support student growth and well-being. Any concern or complaint should be directed to the coach or director of the activity first. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved after discussing it with the coach or director of the activity, a formal complaint may be submitted by following the process outlined below.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

1. **Start with the Athletic Director**: Any formal complaint must first be directed to the Athletic Director.
2. **Put It in Writing**: Complaints must be submitted in writing to be considered. Verbal or anonymous complaints will not be reviewed.
3. **Include Documentation**: Complaints should include any supporting documentation and must also be submitted to the building principal along with the Athletic Director.
4. **Playing Time Concerns**: Playing time issues generally do not qualify as a formal complaint unless there is clear, documented evidence of malicious intent targeting a specific athlete.
5. **Initial Review**: The Athletic Director and principal will determine whether the complaint meets the criteria for a formal investigation and will confirm receipt of the complaint in writing. If the concern does not qualify as a formal complaint, the parent/guardian may be encouraged to discuss the issue directly with the coach.

POST-COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. **Fair Treatment During the Process**: Once a formal complaint is received, the student-athlete will be allowed to continue participating in their sport or activity without prejudice until the investigation is complete.

2. **Written Acknowledgment**: The Athletic Director will notify the complainant in writing that the complaint has been received and that the investigation is underway.
3. **Investigation**: The Athletic Director will meet with the coach or activity director involved, review all documentation, and determine whether the complaint is valid.
4. **Notification of Outcome**: Once a decision has been made, the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.
5. **Next Steps if Disagreeing with the Outcome**: If the complainant disagrees with the decision, they may submit additional supporting documentation for further review. If no new information is provided, or if the original decision stands, the case will be closed.
6. **If the Complaint is Valid**: If the complaint is found to be valid, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in line with district policy. In most cases (except those requiring immediate dismissal), a meeting will be held between the coach, Athletic Director, and complainant to promote open communication and resolution.