

2026-2027

STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK

ONE TEAM. ONE SCHOOL. ONE TRADITION.

AGE

To participate on a high school team (grade 9-12) you must not have reached your 19th birthday by the June 30th immediately preceding the school year. To participate on a junior high team (grades 7-9 or 9th only) you must not have reached your 16th birthday by the June 30th immediately preceding the school year.

INJURIES

Any athlete who is treated by a physician for an injury or illness during or prior to a sport season is required to obtain a physician's release before they are permitted to participate in practices or contests. The release must be from a licensed medical physician who is the attending physician of record. A medical release from a chiropractor will not be accepted. All student-athletes must have completed a PIAA pre-participation physical (CIPPE) form prior to the start of their sport season. Physicals are good for one school calendar year from June 1 – May 31.

If a student is receiving school attendance/academic accommodations for a concussion, they cannot attend practices or contests until those accommodations have been removed. Prior to participation, all accommodations must be removed and the student returned to a normal class schedule including participation in physical education class. They also must have a full medical release to return. Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion must complete the return to play protocol with the TJHS Certified Athletic Trainers prior to being released in any capacity.

TRANSPORTATION

Athletes must travel to and from away contests in transportation provided by the school district. Athletes are not permitted to drive on their own or ride to/from away contests with a friend or their parents. Situations may occur where, through no attempt to circumvent this rule, an athlete must be driven by a parent. This is acceptable, provided the parent notifies the athletic office or the coach in writing prior to the event.

EQUIPMENT

Students are responsible for all equipment issued including uniforms and practice clothing. They are expected to return all equipment/uniforms at the end of the season and will be required to pay replacement costs for any items that are not returned or are returned in unsatisfactory condition. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the school district practice and competitions. Students are not to use athletic equipment or clothing for gym classes or for participation on teams outside of school. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to your coach, not the athletic office.

Within one week after the close of a season the coach and/or equipment manager will conduct a uniform return. Failure to return equipment or uniforms will result in the following:



1. Notifcation to parent/guardian of what is owed.
2. Withholding a report card or awards until uniform & equipment return obligation is met.
3. Students will not be permitted to participate in subsequent sports seasons until all equipment or uniform debts from previous seasons are collected or reimbursement is made.

LETTER AWARDS

Requirements for earning a varsity letter are established by each coach with the approval of the Athletic Department. Each Coach will determine more specific criteria for earning a letter. Letter awards are achievement awards, not participation awards and will be distributed as such.



SCHOOL/PRACTICE ATTENDANCE

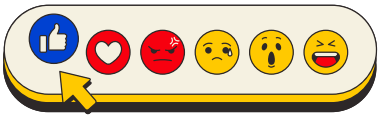
A student must be in school by 8:59 A.M. in order to participate in a contest or practice session. A student may not practice or play if he/she is absent from school the day of practice or contest unless approved by the Athletic Director or Principal. A student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of their absence. Students with 10 ore more unexcused tardies will face school discipline that could result in loss of participation privileges. Students with early dismissals must return to school following their appointment to be eligible to participate in a contest or practice that day. If a student is absent from school on a Friday or day prior to a break, they are not permitted to attend practice or contests over the weekend/break. Students that have chosen virtual/online learning but login each day by 7:30 A.M and be in attendance for all classes.

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has be in attendance for a total of 45 days following his/her 20th day of absence. If the 20th absence occurs in the final semester, the required 45 days of attendance may continue into the following school year before they are eligible.The exception is where there is a consecutive absence of 5 or more school days due to confining illness, injury or quarantine with a physician's excuse. Attendance at summer schools does not count toward the 45 days. (PIAA Rule).

Attendance at practices during the season is mandatory and under the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. Failure to comply with the attendance policies of the coach can result in dismissal from the team.

In the event a student-athlete is suspended from school, they are unable to attend, practice or play in contests throughout the duration of the suspension including the final day. School suspension is considered complete when the student returns to their normal class schedule. All class work must be kept current during suspensions. If the suspension occurs prior to a school break, the student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of the break.

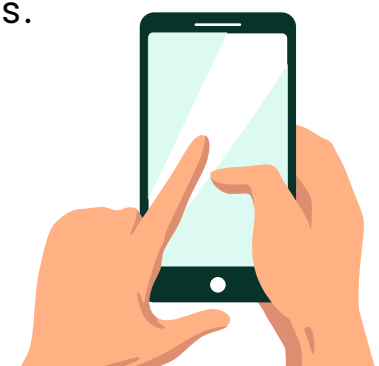
INITIATION/HAZING/BULLYING/BEHAVIOR/ SOCIAL MEDIA



Under no circumstances will initiations, hazing or bullying of any kind be tolerated. Any student involved in hazing, initiation or bullying of another student will be dismissed from the team and appropriately dealt with under the West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy.

This will include all types of bullying including cyber bullying and social media bullying. Students will be held accountable for all social media posts and could face team discipline if warranted. Threats of malicious statements toward another student or coach will be considered bullying and will result in consequences.

It is a privilege to participate in interscholastic athletics and with that privilege comes certain responsibilities. As an advocate for technology, the district also recognizes the role social media plays in communication and outreach. It is the expectation that our student-athletes will use social media in a positive and respectful manner to engage with family, friends and the community. Disrespectful, insulting, abusive and or threatening content, be it original, re-posted, re-tweeted, or liked, has no place in Thomas Jefferson Athletics and will not be tolerated. Student-athletes who post offensive commentary or content directed at opponents, officials, team members or coaches will be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension from all team activities. It is a privilege to represent Thomas Jefferson High School in interscholastic competition and we hold out student-athletes to the highest standards for integrity and ethical decisions.



WHAT YOU POST REPRESENTS YOU, YOUR TEAM & YOUR SCHOOL.

THINK • RESPECT • PROTECT



SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDERS

BE MINDFUL
What you post stays forever.

BE RESPECTFUL
Lift others up. Don't put anyone down.

BE SMART
Keep your personal information private.

BE A JAGUAR
Your actions reflect our school, our team and yourself.

BUILD UP. DON'T TEAR DOWN.
Be positive.
Be a leader.
Be the difference.

ONE TEAM. ONE SCHOOL. ONE TRADITION.
EVERY POST MATTERS.

SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDERS

- Nothing is private! Even though you may utilize privacy tools, everything you post online is public information.
- Your content is your thumb print. Once you post something, it is lined to you forever!
- Your audience is global. Consider the appropriateness of your content as your audience is young children, peers and adults. Young children often imitate the actions of those older.
- Who is watching? Always remember that college coaches, admissions and prospective employers often review social media sites to gauge the character of the student.

In the event that a student athlete becomes aware of any situation involving these types of activities, they must report it to their coach immediately.



Students are expected to show appropriate behavior at all times including on social media. Good sportsmanship is an expectation for all student athletes. It is never persmissible for student athletes to audio or video record coaches or other athletes in any district facility or during any team activity without prior permission. All games/practices whether home or away are considered school events. As such, all district rules and regulations apply. The same shall apply on buses or other modes of transportation.

DRESS CODE

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, you are representing the community and Thomas Jefferson High School. The way you look and dress is a direct reflection on the district and your family. As such, you are expected to wear clothes that are clean and appropriate. Coaches have the right to set more specific standards than outlined above.



PERIOD OF PARTICIPATION

A pupil shall not represent his/her school in interscholastic athletics if they have surpassed any of the following prior to this year.

- Been in attendance more than 6 semesters beyond the 8th grade.
- Played 6 seasons beyond the 6th grade in any sport.
- Completed the work of grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 inclusive.



DRUGS - ALCOHOL - TOBACCO

The possession, use, furnishing or transmission of narcotics, stimulant drugs, alcoholic beverages, steroids or other unauthorized substances and the use of any tobacco products by student-athletes is strictly prohibited. The West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy will be applied where there is an infraction dealing with drugs, alcohol or tobacco use.

If a student athlete is cited by the police or other authorities for the use of drugs or alcohol, the coach has the authority to administer additional team discipline.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

The athletic office will conduct a weekly grade check. In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics and cheerleading, a student must have passed or be passing a minimum of four classes. Back work may be made up providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the district. Student-athletes who attend Steel Center Vo-Tech must have passed or be passing two classes at Thomas Jefferson High School and be passing their classes at Steel Center. In the event the student is not passing four classes, they are ineligible to practice or play in contests until the next grade check.



In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards above, the student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics or cheerleading for the first fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period.

At the end of the school year, the student's final credits in his/her subjects rather than his credits for the last grading period shall be used to determine his eligibility for the following year. Student who are ineligible to end the year are not permitted to begin sports in the subsequent season until they have attended school for 15 days and have become eligible.

The approved grading scale of the West Jefferson Hills School District will be used in determining academic eligibility. An "I" grade and/or an "F" grade will be considered not passing. The Athletic Director will inform the player and the coach if they are ineligible to participate.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION



PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to student athletes.

As your child becomes involved in the athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson High School, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. This is all part of growing as a young person and building character. It teaches them how to deal with adversity and persevere through it.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Your child's role on the team.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACH

1. Playing time
2. Team Strategy
3. Play Calling
4. Other student-athletes

IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH - THE PROCEDURE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW:

1. Email the coach to discuss or schedule a meeting. It is expected that your child will attend the meeting with you.
2. You must always follow the proper chain of command. Assistant Coach, Head Coach, AD, Principal. Please do not contact the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent or School Board members in regard to athletic concerns.
3. **It is unacceptable to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Coaches have been directed by Administration that they are to remove themselves immediately from any confrontational situation.**

Since research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, these programs have been established. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided within this booklet makes both your child's and your experience with the Thomas Jefferson High School athletic program enjoyable and rewarding.



SUMMARY

This handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of rules and regulations governing our interscholastic prgrams. This handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included. Each coach, however, has the right to make reasonable rules more stringent than those listed in this book. Any rules not addressed in this handbook will revert to the student handbook for clarification.

The West Jefferson Hills school District hopes you enjoy your particiaption in the athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson High School. We are proud of our Jaguar teams and all of those student-athletes representing our district. Please remember that what you do and how you act is a direct reflection on your family, school and community.



THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

2026–2027 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read the **Thomas Jefferson High School Athletic Handbook** and agree to uphold the rules, regulations, and expectations outlined within. I understand the responsibilities and standards expected of student-athletes and recognize the penalties that may result from abusing the privilege of representing the Thomas Jefferson High School Athletic Department.

Student Name (Print) _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Please sign and return this form to your coach.

WEST JEFFERSON HILLS
WJHSD
WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL
830 OLD CLAIRTON ROAD
JEFFERSON HILLS, PA 15025
PHONE: 412-655-8610
FAX: 412-655-8618
www.wjhsd.net

ABSENCE DUE TO APPROVED SCHOOL BUSINESS
THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

The student is required to secure assignments from subject teachers and keep abreast of academic work during this absence. All assignments are due the day of return to school.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL TRIP OR TOUR:

MY CHILD _____ HAS MY PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE

IN THE PROPOSED TRIP TO_____
(place to be visited)

ON_____
(dates)

PERMISSION IS ALSO GRANTED TO AUTHORIZE MEDICAL CARE IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY WHEN PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) CANNOT BE CONTACTED.

TRANSPORTATION VIA (CHECK ONE):

SCHOOL BUS_____ COMMERCIAL CARRIER_____ PRIVATE VEHICLE_____

_____ _____
(signature of parent/guardian) (date)

_____ _____ _____
(home phone) (cell phone) (business phone)

NOTE: PUPILS ON FIELD TRIPS ARE REPRESENTING THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY. WITH THIS IN MIND, THEY ARE REQUIRED TO DRESS AND BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY. PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND TRAVEL TO ACTIVITIES IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT. I FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT POSSESSIONS AND/OR VEHICLES ARE SUBJECT TO SURVEILLANCE AND POSSIBLE INSPECTION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, age, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 5094 and Title VI. For information regarding services, activities, programs, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Director of Human Resources at 412-655-8450 x2228.