

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Mission Statement

The mission of New York State interscholastic athletic programs is to foster the quest for excellence by creating an educational and competitive experience within an atmosphere of sportsmanship. Successful programs develop individual and team potential by promoting high standards of competence, character, civility, and citizenship. (*NYSED Educational Frameworks for Athletics*)

Philosophy of Interscholastic Athletics:

At Walton Central School, we believe that athletics are important co-curricular activities that are an integral part of a student's life. It is our mission to provide as many interested students as possible with an opportunity to participate in athletic competition. It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for success. Although winning is important, it does not replace all other goals. The number of victories is only one criterion when determining the season's success. The main purposes are to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well being of student-athletes through aspects of athletic contests.

Modified Program Philosophy:

The modified program is open to all academically eligible students in grades seven (7) and eight (8). It is also open to students in grade nine (9) programs that do not have a JV team. In the event that the varsity team needs players to fill the squad, 9th graders may be asked to participate at the varsity level.

At this level, the focus is on learning athletic skills, game rules, fundamentals of team play, commitment to a team, appropriate sportsmanship descriptions, and to participate in healthy competition. It is our policy to play all participants at this level (not necessarily equally), however each participant will be expected to make a commitment to all practices and sign and follow the Athletic Code of Conduct. This program is designed to offer students the opportunity to engage in a more highly organized competitive experience than what is found in intramural programs, but not as involved as in Varsity and Junior Varsity competition.

Junior Varsity Program Philosophy:

The junior varsity program is open to those academically eligible student-athletes who display the potential of continued development into varsity level performers. With this in mind, it may be necessary, in some instances, to conduct tryouts and make cuts in selecting a team. Generally, the majority of the roster will be students in grade nine (9) and ten (10). Students in middle school may be considered if they have satisfied all SED requirements of the Athletic Placement Process required for their particular sport **and** have parental approval along with approval from the Junior Varsity Coach, Varsity Coach, and Athletic Director (the athletic placement process cannot commence without the approval of the athletic director).

Junior Varsity teams work toward achieving a balance between team and player development and striving for victory. The outcome of the contest becomes more of a consideration at this level. The coach will make every effort to play all players, but in some circumstances there will be some team members that may not see individual game action.

Varsity Program Philosophy:

The Varsity program is opened to all academically eligible high school students who display advanced skills. It is possible, but rare, for middle school students to be included. In cases where an advanced level of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate social-emotional development is demonstrated in a middle school student, they may be considered. Students in middle school must satisfy all SED requirements of the Athletic Placement Process required for their particular sport **and** have parental approval along with approval from the Varsity Coach and Athletic Director (the athletic placement process cannot commence without the approval of the athletic director).

The goals of the Varsity teams include: preparing to perform at the highest level, striving for victory in each contest, and working to reach the maximum potential of the group and individual. Playing time for individual team members will be determined by game strategy, work ethic, and skill. As such, all individuals on the varsity team have equal opportunity to play regardless of their age or grade. Since the coach is attempting to put the team in position to win each contest, it is possible that some individuals on the team will not see game action. Additionally, it is possible that underclassmen may see game action prior to upperclassmen. The Varsity Coach is the leader of that individual sport's program and will, in collaboration with the Athletic Director, establish the program's instructional strategy that is appropriate for each team at each level of competition.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Eligibility to participate in any form of extracurricular activity shall require certification of proper physical condition by a school physician, maintenance of satisfactory scholarship, written consent of a parent/guardian, and agreement by the student to observe the following regulations.

Participation in the Walton Central School athletic program is a privilege, and student-athletes are expected to behave in a manner that will reflect positively on their teams and on their school. Behaviors that violate these expectations and reflect poorly on the student-athlete, athletic program, and school will be met with proportional consequences.

Such behaviors will be identified at the discretion of the Board of Education as outlined in the District Code of Conduct. Student-athletes who fail to meet these expectations will jeopardize their participation in the Walton athletic program. Student-athletes may be suspended or removed from the athletic program for school-related and non-school related offenses, as determined by the athletic director and principal according to the guidelines set forth below. Suspensions may carry over from one season to the next, including from the spring athletic season of one school year to the fall athletic season of the next school year.

When a suspension is assigned based upon a percentage of the maximum regular season contests allowed in the specific sport and carries over to the next season, the athletic director and principal will determine the conversion of the length of suspension based upon the maximum allowed regular season contests in each sport. The following shall constitute prohibited behaviors and consequences for violations. Consequences are specified; however, the board of education and/or administration shall retain the right to exceed any consequences depending on the seriousness of the offense.

Consequences for Breaking the Code of Conduct

The consequences for breaking the code of conduct can range from a game suspension to a year suspension from participation, based on the nature of the misconduct, the level of its severity, and the number of times it occurs. Should the student-athlete at that time be found to have broken the code of conduct, the administrator will handle the consequences as outlined below.

Training Rules

Student-athletes on interscholastic teams at Walton will refrain from the use and/or possession of alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, illegal performance-enhancing substances, vapes, vaping paraphenialia, electronic cigarettes, and other illegal, non-prescription drugs not used as intended.

The following sanctions will be recommended for violations

Penalty for Violation (During A Sports Season)

1st Offense: Suspension from participation in 25% of the regularly scheduled contests of the team on which he/she is playing. Student is ineligible for practice, games and attendance at the team's events during this time.

2nd Offense: Suspension from participation in 75% of the regularly scheduled contests of the team on which he/she is playing. Student is ineligible for practice, games and attendance at the team's events during this time.

3rd Offense: This will end an athlete's eligibility at Walton.

NOTE: If not enough regular season games are left, then the penalty will carry over to the postseason and/or the athlete's next sports season. The athlete will miss games equivalent to the percentage of the season during which the violation occurred.

NOTE: Violations of the Code of Conduct are cumulative from season to season and year to year throughout the student athlete's high school career. In-season or out of season violations still move the athlete up the discipline ladder.

Behavior Unbecoming a Walton Student-Athlete

All of our student-athletes are expected to behave in a manner that will reflect positively on their teams and on their school. As representatives of the athletic program and the school district, it is the responsibility of the student-athletes to make positive decisions at school and in the community.

Behaviors that violate these expectations and reflect poorly on the student-athlete, athletic program, and school will be met with proportional consequences. Such behaviors will be identified at the discretion of the athletic director and principal but may include pictures of using and/or possession of alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, illegal performance-enhancing substances, vapes, or electronic cigarettes, as well as bullying, harassment, hazing, vandalism, theft, assault, and illegal acts resulting in police involvement. Offenses of this nature will be evaluated on an individual basis and may result in suspension or removal from the athletic program, as determined by the athletic director and principal.

Implementation of Suspension

Suspensions will commence immediately from the time an athlete is determined to be in violation of the regulations and all subsequent penalties will carry over from year to year throughout the student athlete's high school career.

Appeal Process

The parent must contact the superintendent to initiate an appeal within seven days of suspension. The superintendent will communicate a decision on the appeal within 5 days. The decisions of the superintendent regarding athletic suspension are final and may not be appealed.

NOTE: All suspensions will stay in effect during the appeals process.

Other Disciplinary Actions: Any student placed on In-School Suspension or Out-Of-School Suspension will be ineligible to play or practice on the day of suspension. The student may not attend games or practices on any day on which he/she is on In-School or Out-Of-School Suspension. Conduct that leads to ISS or OSS will be subject to review by the athletic director, principal or his designee.

CO-CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Students in co-curricular activities must balance the roles of being a full-time student and a part-time participant in the co-curricular activity. Our expectations are that students can

1. maintain passing averages in their courses,
2. seek extra help from staff when needed to help them maintain passing averages, and
3. always place a high level of importance on their academic achievement. However, should a student fall below a 65 in one or more classes, the following policy will be enforced.

Co-curricular Student Academic Policy

Students Failing Two or More Courses (grades are below 65)

Every five weeks, the guidance department runs grades for all students. If a student is failing two or more courses, the following policy will be implemented:

Level 1: If the student is failing two or more courses (grades below a 65), he/she cannot participate in games, performances, competitions or any events associated with co-curricular activities for five

weeks. He/she may continue to attend rehearsals, practices, regular school-day meetings, or other routine activities associated with the co-curricular activity. At the end of the five week period, the guidance office will generate a new grade report. If the student is not failing two or more courses, he/she remains fully eligible to participate in co-curricular activities.

Level 2: If the student is still failing two or more courses (grades below a 65), he/she cannot participate in rehearsals, practices, regular school-day meetings, or other routine activities associated with the co-curricular activity and cannot participate in games, performances, competitions, or any events associated with the co-curricular activities for five weeks. At the end of the five week period, the guidance office will generate a new grade report. If the student is not failing two or more courses, he/she remains fully eligible to participate in co-curricular activities.

However, if the student is still failing two or more courses, he/she remains ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activities. At the end of the each subsequent five week period, the guidance office will generate a new grade report.

Notes:

1. Failing status will be determined at the end of each five week period of school. Failing status is determined by using the 5 week average. If a student is failing the 5 week period, but has a cumulative average of 65 or above, then the student in that course would not be considered failing.
2. The process described in this co-curricular academic eligibility policy emphasizes the importance of meeting a passing standard (grades of 65 or higher) for academic performance in order for the student to be eligible to take advantage of co-curricular activities. Written notice of the policy will be given to the student and a copy will be sent home for parents/guardians. A copy of the policy is also available of the school website

Co-curricular activities include but are not limited to (for example only): Athletic Teams, Clubs and Societies, Musicals, FFA, Forensics (Speech and Debate), Student Council, Activity Nights, Dances, Yearbook, FBLA, Class events, Honor Society.

STUDENT/ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

In order to practice or participate in single or group extracurricular activities sponsored by Walton Central School, a student must:

1. Be in attendance by 8:30 a.m. every day during their designated season if they intend on participating in a practice or contest on that day. Excused absences are the only exception to this. If a student/athlete is found abusing this policy, consistently (3 or more times per season) showing up between 8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m., he/she will receive consequences on an individual basis.

Students with **late arrival** are expected to be in school by their designated time period. Any student consistently (3 or more times per season) showing up tardy will receive consequences on an individual basis.

2. Students may not go home sick and then return the same day for practice or an event.

Students are expected to be at ALL scheduled practices and games. Please notify the coach in advance if you are not able to attend

Scholarship

Must carry at least three courses per semester including Physical Education (High School).

1. Must maintain a satisfactory level of scholarship and abide by the Co-Curricular Eligibility Policy.

Transportation

Student-athletes **MUST** use school provided transportation to all athletics contests unless prior arrangements have been with administration. After an away contest, parents/guardians may sign out their child with the coach. No student may be signed out by anyone other than a parent/guardian unless **PRIOR** approval is granted by the administration. This however, should only occur in emergency circumstances.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Since athletics is educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our students.

MISCONDUCT POLICY

Coaches, players and spectators should refrain from unsportsmanlike conduct. Any specific act of misconduct of the kind described herein by any coach or player from the modified level through the varsity level in any sport shall result in action by the Section as set forth below. Because Section IV believes that the purpose of interscholastic athletics is to help promote sportsmanship and also believes that coaches, athletes and officials should be setting examples by their behavior. It is recommended that the following policy be implemented

If a player has been accepted for an individualized Education Program prior to the time of offense, and the hearing panel determines that the offense arose out of the particular condition which rendered the student eligible for an Individualized Education program, such player shall not be deemed to have committed an offense and neither the student nor the school shall be penalized under these rules.

HAZING/BULLYING POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that hazing/bullying is abusive behavior that harms victims and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation and tolerance. The Board further recognizes that preventing hazing/bullying in schools is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which all students can learn.

The Board is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality and that is free from all forms of hazing/bullying. To this end, the Board condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of hazing/bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events, including those that take place at locations outside the district, including any incidents involving electronic transmission.

- I. "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Any humiliating, degrading or dangerous activity demanded of a student to join a group, regardless of the student's willingness to participate (conduct has the potential to endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student).

2. Any hurtful, aggressive, destructive or disruptive behavior or other activity that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of that student.
3. Any coercion to force the use or abuse of any type of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
4. Any inappropriate activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to emotional, physical or psychological stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school or participating in any student organization.
5. Any inappropriate activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task or act that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.

II. Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate activity intended to harm where the perpetrator (s) get pleasure from the targeted child's pain and/or misery. It can be verbal, physical, and/or relational; have as its overlay race, ethnicity, religion, gender (including sexual orientation), physical or mental ability; includes all forms of hazing and cyberbullying (sending of offensive or threatening messages to others through any form of technology). It can be and often is continuous and repeated over time, but does not have to be. Once is enough to constitute bullying. Bullying may take place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that is designed to or has the effect of interfering with one's ability to attend school and/or to be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal or written taunts, name-calling and put-downs, ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs, extortion of money or possessions, exclusions from peer groups within school

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of hazing/bullying, and persons with knowledge of hazing/bullying report the harassment immediately. The District will promptly investigate all complaints of hazing/bullying, either formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. There shall be no retaliation taken against any individual making a good faith report of hazing/bullying to school authorities.

If, after appropriate investigation, the District finds that a student has violated this policy, prompt disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Districts Code of Conduct:

The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed towards any person who reports an act of hazing as well as against anyone who participated in the investigation of a complaint of bullying.

Adopted: January 3, 2008

WALTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Walton, New York

Parent- Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each person's role, we will be better able to accept the actions of the other and provide great benefits to children participating in Interscholastic Athletics. When your child(ren) become involved in our sports program, you should have an understanding of what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coaches of your child's program.

Communication you may expect from your child's coach

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations that the coach has for your child as well as for the participants on the team
3. Location and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements (i.e., fees, special equipment, attendance, etc.)
5. Procedure should your child be injured during a practice/contest
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

Communications coaches expect from parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notifications of any schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns in regard to coach's philosophy and/or expectations
4. Health related issues that may impact a child's ability to participate.

As your child becomes involved in programs at Walton Central Schools, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments in their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not necessarily go the way that you or your child may wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coach

1. The treatment of your child mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve (i.e., attendance at camps, summer leagues, etc.)
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you and your child may hope. Coaches are professionals. As such, they make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all athletes involved as well as the team as a whole. There are bound to be areas where you as a parent disagree with a coach's decision. While the issues above are appropriate to be discussed with the coaches, certain things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues NOT appropriate to discuss with coaches

1. Team strategy
2. Play calling
3. Amount of playing time
4. Other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and a parent. These are to be encouraged, since it is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When such a conference is necessary or desired, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

Procedure to follow to discuss an issue with a coach

1. Call or email the coach to discuss the issue with the coach or to arrange an appointment to meet with the coach.
2. If the coach cannot be reached at school, call the Athletic Director, Mr. Gates, to arrange an appointment to discuss or meet with the coach.
3. Do not attempt to confront a coach before, during 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 of issues.

What can a parent do if the meeting with a coach did not provide a resolution?

1. Call the Athletic Director, Mr. Preston, to discuss the issue and possibly arrange a meeting with the parent, coach and athletic director.
2. If this step does not provide a solution, then a meeting with the principal, athletic director, parent and coach may be arranged.

Theft of Valuables

Since the school district cannot be responsible for valuables such as money, jewelry, rings, watches and the like, each student is responsible for the safe keeping of such items. In relation to activities outside of the school, it is suggested that either the student not carry such items or make appropriate arrangements with non-school personnel for the safekeeping of such items. The district does not assume any responsibility for the loss, misplacing or theft of any such items.

EXCLUSIONS: NO BENEFITS SHALL BE PROVIDED FOR:

1. Cosmetic surgery (cosmetic surgery shall not include reconstructive surgery when such service is incidental to or follows surgery resulting from trauma) sickness, disease, orthodontic treatment.
2. No benefits will be paid for care in connection with the detection and correction by manual or mechanical means of structural imbalance, distortion or subluxation in the human body for purposes of removing nerve interference and the effects hereof where such interference is the result of or related to distortion, misalignment or subluxation of or in the vertebral column.
3. Self inflicted injuries.

LIMITATIONS:

1. No benefits will be paid unless the first treatment has been provided within 45 days from the date of injury.
2. No benefits will be paid for treatment rendered after 2 years have elapsed from the date of Injury. (Except open dental).

We sincerely hope that this information will assist in making you and your child's experiences with the Walton Central School Athletic Department more enjoyable and rewarding!



A Fact Sheet for Parents



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if your child just "doesn't feel right." Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

If your child or teen reports **one or more** of the symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the signs yourself, seek medical attention right away. Children and teens are among those at greatest risk for concussion.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

Signs observed by parents or guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events *prior* to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events *after* the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule or assignments

Symptoms reported by your child or teen



THINKING/REMEMBERING:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down than usual
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy



SLEEP*:

- Feels drowsy
- Sleeps *less* than usual
- Sleeps *more* than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

**Ask about sleep symptoms only if the injury occurred on a prior day.*



PHYSICAL:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"



EMOTIONAL:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous



DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if she or he has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

Children and teens with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day the injury occurred.

They should delay returning to their activities until a healthcare professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. This means, until permitted, not returning to:

- Physical education class,
- Sports practices or games, or
- Physical activity at recess.

What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

1. Seek medical attention right away.

A healthcare professional experienced in evaluating for concussion can determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child or teen to return to normal activities, including physical activity and school (concentration and learning activities).

2. Help your child take time to get better.

Your child should take it easy the first few days after the injury, when symptoms are more severe. As your child starts to feel better (and within a few days after the injury), he or she can gradually return to regular (non-strenuous) activities. If your child's symptoms do not worsen during an activity, then this activity is OK for him or her. If symptoms worsen, your child should cut back on how much he or she can do that activity without experiencing symptoms. Ask your child's doctor for written instruction to help with recovery, and let the doctor know if concussion symptoms do not go away or if they get worse after your child returns to regular activities.

3. Offer support.

Be sure to offer support during your child's recovery, and allow him or her to stay connected with friends and others.

How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?

Most children can return to school within a few days. Help your child or teen get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, speech-language pathologist, or counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. Your child may feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because she or he cannot return to recreation and sports right away, or cannot keep up with schoolwork. Your child may also feel isolated from peers and social networks. Talk often with your child about these issues and offer your support and encouragement. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually. Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed;
- Spend fewer hours at school;
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments;
- Receive help with schoolwork; and/or
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer.

To learn more,
go to [cdc.gov/HEADSUP](https://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP)



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