

Altoona Athletic Program Philosophy

The Altoona School District recognizes extracurricular sports as a vital part of educating the whole child. Athletics can provide valuable experiences that may not be duplicated in the classroom or during other school activities.

Student athletes represent our school district, our community, and their individual families; therefore they are held to a higher standard than non-participating students.

Participation in extracurricular and co-curricular athletics is a privilege. Once signed, the athletic code is in effect 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This athletic code applies to student athletes from grades 6 to 12. It is not the intent of this athletic code to punish, but rather to guide and inform the athlete of his/her responsibilities and privileges. It is up to the individual to make intelligent choices to become and to remain an athletic participant.

Goals of Athletic Program

1. To provide athletic opportunities for both males and females.
2. To help develop the minds and bodies of young students.
3. To present the opportunity to develop, practice and observe good sportsmanship.
4. To teach cooperation and collaboration.
5. To provide opportunities for problem solving.
6. To show students the value of hard work, self-discipline, and dedication.
7. To provide students with competitive situations.
8. To provide experience of following rules, regulations and decisions of officials
9. To teach responsibility.
10. To provide additional opportunities for interaction and communication between the community and School District.

Required Forms

Prior to participation in any athletic activities the student must have on file the following forms:

- Updated Physical Form
- Altoona High School Emergency Authorization Form
- Extra-Curricular Registration, Permission, Waiver and Code Agreement Form
- Concussion Form

Care And Maintenance Of Equipment

Student athletes shall be held responsible for the care, maintenance and return of all equipment they are issued. Any equipment lost or willfully abused must be paid for by the student to whom it was issued.

Travel

All athletes must travel with the team on the team bus, both to and from athletic events, unless a parent asks permission of the coach and it is permitted, and if the parents have completed the off-site transportation permission form, and submitted it to the appropriate authority. All forms are available on the School District of Altoona website under the Athletics/Activities tab.

Wisconsin Concussion Law

Wisconsin Statute 118.293, Concussion and Head Injury, requires athletic departments to develop guidelines and other information for the purpose of educating coaches, pupil athletes and their parents/guardians about the nature and risk of concussion and head injury in youth athletic activities and to distribute concussion and head injury information.

Transfer Student Eligibility

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, a student who transfers from any school into a WIAA member school after the fourth consecutive semester (end of sophomore year) following entry into the 9th grade shall be ineligible for practice and competition for one calendar year, unless the transfer was made necessary by a total change in residency by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or for other extenuating circumstances determined through the WIAA's existing waiver process. The calendar year will be determined from a student's last day of attendance at school and/or last day of attendance at athletic practice. Also, any student transferring into the Altoona School District that has been declared academically or athletically ineligible by their previous school, due to sanctions stemming from athletic code or handbook violations will retain that status for the period of time decreed by their former school.

Academic Eligibility

Academic achievement should be the prime concern of the student; therefore, students participating in interscholastic athletics grades 6 to 12 must maintain a passing grade in all of their subjects.

- High school students are required to take a minimum of 30 hours (six classes) of course work each semester.
- A student shall become academically ineligible by earning a NC in one or more classes during his/her latest grading period.
- A student who is failing a class in the middle of the grading period will NOT be permitted to miss that class to travel or participate in an athletic event.
- A student who earns one (1) failing grade during the previous grading period will be ineligible for one (1) contest if the number of scheduled contests or performances is ten (10) or fewer during a season, or two (2) contests/performances if the number of contests/performances is more than ten (10) during a season. A student will be eligible for participation contingent upon the student filing a weekly academic progress report with the coach/advisor of the activity indicating passing grades in all classes. If the academic progress report

- does not indicate passing grades, the student will be ineligible for the entire following week, Monday through Saturday.
- To remain eligible, on the 20th day of the current grading quarter, the student will be required to have a form signed by all of his/her teachers indicating that he/she is passing all courses at that point of the grading period. If the student is not passing all classes, he/she will become ineligible for the remainder of the quarter and may not practice or compete.
 - Students who receive an "incomplete" grade or a "WNC" (Withdrawal No Credit) will have their probationary or eligibility status determined by the principal.

Attendance

- Students wishing to participate in an athletic practice or event are expected to attend school the entire day of such practice or event, and to be on time the day following any event.
- Students with medical appointments or family emergencies may participate in the day's activity if their absence is excused by the principal or the activities director. Written verification from a physician or dentist may be required.
- Any unexcused absence will result in the student being ineligible to participate in athletic practices or events that day or the day it is discovered.
- A pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness (more than three in a season), will result in the student being ineligible to participate in the next event.
- Any student who accumulates sufficient absences (excused or unexcused) that leads to truancy being filed with law enforcement will be ineligible for the next event following the truancy notification. Note: students who have reached the age of 18 and are considered truant according to Wisconsin State Law, even if truancy is not filed, will also be ineligible for the next event.
- Attendance of student athletes at practices and games or events is mandatory, with the exception of injury or illness, or with the specific consent of the coach. Consequences will be determined by specific coaches.
- Students serving an out-of-school suspension may not participate or attend practices, games or events during the suspension and until they have resumed attending classes after completion of the suspension.
- Students serving an in-school resource (formerly known as in-school suspension) may not participate in practice, games or events the day of the suspension.

WIAA Requirements

- A student athlete must meet all Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association ("WIAA") requirements and refrains from any acts in violation of WIAA rules and School Board Athletic Policies. The Official WIAA Constitution, by-laws, regulations, and guidelines found in the WIAA Handbook and received as a condition of membership by all schools, shall govern in all instances except as herein modified by local board policy.
- The WIAA prohibits athletes from participating in non-school competition during the season, in the same respective sport. However, students may participate in non-school

competition, outside of the school season, as long as they do not violate conditions set down by the WIAA regarding amateur status. The Altoona coaching staff recognizes that athletes have many opportunities to play athletics of all kinds both during and outside of the school athletic seasons. It is the belief of the athletic department that the athlete remains loyal to the school sport that they are participating in at that time. While dual participation in different sports is not prohibited by the school or WIAA, it is a concern that the athlete will become both physically and emotionally fatigued by the amount of combined practice and competition and that their performance will be compromised, therefore affecting their team and teammates. The coaching staff also realizes each individual is different and some athletes may be better equipped to handle the demands of dual participation. Dual participation in school and non-school athletics should be carefully considered by the parent and athlete. Open communication with the coach regarding dual participation is strongly encouraged from the outset and should be ongoing throughout the season.

Guidelines for Conduct (Alcohol, other Illegal Substances, Disruptive Behavior)

Alcohol and other illegal substances

- A student athlete will not knowingly participate in a social gathering where alcohol or illegal drugs are being used or sold. If the student athlete finds himself or herself in such a gathering, the following applies:
 - The student needs to remove himself or herself from the premises as soon as possible.
 - If the student is unable to leave the premises as soon as possible, he or she will be obligated to present the circumstances to the Activities Director and principal. The consequences of such will be managed on a case-by-case basis.
- A student athlete will not knowingly enter a car which is transporting alcoholic beverages unless he/she is under the direct supervision of his/her parents or legal guardian.
- Attendance at family gatherings, attended by the student athlete's parents, where use of alcohol is occurring will not be considered a violation. (This does not allow the student athlete to use these products. These exceptions would include such logical events as family weddings, graduation parties and other similar occasions).

Disruptive behavior

- A student athlete may be ineligible if he/she is willfully and persistently disrespectful or displays behavior which is disruptive to or interferes with the learning environment.
- A student athlete who is in violation of contest or game regulations as established by the WIAA which causes ejection from an athletic contest will result in missing one additional interscholastic contest.
- A student athlete who participates in a hazing activity will be suspended. Hazing is defined as any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of an individual.

- A student athlete who violates the Altoona School District policy regarding “Bullying” shall be suspended. Offenses include bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, and menacing behavior. This includes physical, verbal, psychological, and technologically-transmitted behavior.
- A student athlete should refrain from any conduct, at or away from school that would reflect in an unfavorable manner of himself or herself or the School District. Such conduct may include profanity, insubordination to teachers or coaches, or inappropriate displays of affection in the school, on school grounds, on buses, or at athletic events.
- Consequences for a student athlete who is found to have committed a criminal act, or who commits acts of willful, persistent, disruptive behavior, or other activities that interfere with the rules of the School District of Altoona, will have disciplinary consequences determined on a case by case basis.
- A student athlete who commits acts of willful, persistent, disruptive behavior, or other activities that interfere with the rules of the School District of Altoona will be suspended. A student athlete who is suspended or expelled from school shall be ineligible for participation including practices and contests during the period of suspension or expulsion.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are the greatest role models for a young person. The Altoona school district seeks parental assistance to help develop outstanding young men and women who possess the self-discipline and motivation to make a difference in the world. The administration, faculty, staff, and coaches ask that parents be supportive of the programs and personnel of the Altoona School District. Parents should demonstrate that support by respecting the decisions and efforts of the coaches who work with the student athletes. Parental assistance is also requested in enforcing this athletic code so that a fair and healthy environment will exist for all students. While spectators, at any extra/co-curricular events either at Altoona or any other site, parents are expected to display sportsmanlike behavior. An individual or group who displays unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from an event and may be prohibited from further attendance for a period of up to six weeks.

Parent/Coach Communication

Communication a parent/guardian should expect from a coach:

- The expectations the coach has for your child and all the players on the team
- Locations and times of all practices and games
- Team requirements
- Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- Situations involving your child
- Ways to help your child improve
- Your child's attitude, work ethic, and eligibility
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues that are not appropriate to discuss with the coaches or Activities Director:

- Playing time of any student athlete

- Team strategy, practice organization, or play calling
- Other student athletes

Procedures to follow if there is a concern to discuss with a coach:

- The student athlete should speak to the coach about an issue before the parent intervenes. This will help the student athlete learn to communicate his/her needs in an effective manner.
- If the issue is not resolved, the parent may contact the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent will call to schedule an appointment with the Activities Director to discuss the situation. The Activities Director will only intervene if the issue has already been discussed with the coach.

****Please do not confront a coach before or after a game or practice. Meeting of this nature normally do not assist in creating a resolution to the situation.***

Penalties for Code Violations

First Offense:

Student athlete must continue to practice and travel with the team and:

- Will be suspended from the team for a minimum of 20% of the regularly scheduled games, meets, or tournaments. If that percentage of events does not remain to be played, the penalty shall extend into the next sport season in which the student athlete participates. The administrator may, using his/her discretion and the circumstances warrant, suspend the student athlete for a longer period, yet not greater than one calendar year.
- Must write a letter and read it out loud to his/her teammates about the negative effects of his/her actions.
- Must perform 10 hours of approved community/school service within a month of his/her violation or after all appeals.

First Offense Only - Self-Referral: When an athlete confesses to violating the athletic code, a suspension of 10% of the scheduled events will take place. Self-referral must be made to the coach, and/or administrator within 24 hours of the code violation.

Second Offense:

Student athlete must continue to practice and travel with the team, and:

- May not participate in games for 50% of the scheduled season. The suspension carries over into the athlete's next season if necessary.
- Must perform 15 hours of approved community/school service within a month of his /her violation or after all appeals.
- Must write a letter and read it out loud to his/her teammates about the negative effects of his/her actions.
- If an AODA violation, the violator must undergo, at his/her expense, an AODA Assessment performed by a community/ based health organization/AODA treatment agency, along with any recommendations for treatment or education program prescribed by the assessors to confront the behaviors of use/abuse. The violator will provide the Activities Director written certificate of compliance with recommendations in order to restore eligibility.

Third Offense:

Student athlete is prohibited from participating in interscholastic athletics in any way for the equivalent of one school year (36 school weeks). The athlete and their parent(s) will seek appropriate substance abuse counseling at their expense. Athletes under a one-year suspension may, after 18 school weeks, petition the Athletic Counsel to request a reduced suspension if positive steps and results have been documented and 20 hours of school-approved community service has been performed.

Alternate Penalties:

The administrator has the discretion to impose alternate sanctions, where, after careful deliberation, he/she determines the mitigating factors concerning the violation and circumstances warrant either an increased or reduced penalty. Any lesser suspension or alternate penalty is the discretion of the administrator and is not a right or privilege granted the student. (Mitigating circumstances do not include such factors as: the skill or notoriety of the student/athlete; the effect on the student's future ability to play high school, college, or professional sports; the effect on the student's school or other record or the ability to obtain future educational or other financial assistance. Alternate penalties may include participation in community service, attendance at AA, or mental health counseling.)

Enforcement

- The Activities Director oversees the school's sports programs and serves as a supervisor for coaches. He or she will work with high school or middle school administration to validate and determine consequences for athletic code violations.
- Supporting evidence of violations may include, but are not limited to:
 - A list of students produced by the local authorities who were caught at parties where drugs or alcohol are present, or of students ticketed for a violation.
 - Verifiable electronic evidence (photos, social media postings, etc.). Any verifiable and identifiable image, photo, or video which implicates a student to have been in possession or presence of illegal use of drugs or alcohol, or out of character behavior or crime, may result in confirmation of a violation of the code.
 - A person who has witnessed or heard about a violation of the athletic code. This person must submit a written statement to the Activities Director of the alleged violation. The infraction should be submitted in a timely fashion. The statement shall include the time, place and type of violation and be properly signed. The person submitting the statement shall be made aware that the accused athletic code violator/parents will have access to the complaint.
 - A confession personally made by the student athlete.
- A fact-finding meeting will be conducted by the Activities Director and another Administrator.
- If sufficient collaborative evidence is found and the joint decision of the Activities Director and administration is to take action, the decision shall stand unless the athlete or parents wish to appeal the decision.
- If hearsay evidence cannot be substantiated on the basis of subsequent investigation, it will be treated as rumor and no consequences will be given.

- Upon the decision that a violation has occurred, the Activities Director or administration will notify the student athlete and the parents. This notification will be verbal and in writing. The administration will give a copy to the student involved and mail a copy to the parents. This document will outline the specific details of the asserted Code violation.

Appeal Procedure

In the event an athlete chooses to appeal the decision, the appeals process outlined hereafter constitutes the procedure an athlete and his/her parents must follow in appealing a decision relating to eligibility. It should be understood that athletes and parents must follow all of the appeal steps. *Note: The student athlete will continue to practice with the team, but remain ineligible for game play throughout the entire appeals process.*

Step One – Activities Director/Principal

If a hearing before the Athletic Counsel is requested, an appeal must be made in writing to the Activities Director or principal within (ten) 10 school days of the date of the written violation

Step Two – Appeal to Athletic Counsel

- A date for a hearing shall be established by the principal or designee, such date to be no later than (ten) 10 school days after receiving the written appeal.
- Present at the hearing shall be the accused student athlete, his/her parents, and the members of the Athletic Counsel.
- The Athletic Counsel shall consist of a panel of the following: a girls varsity head coach, a boys varsity head coach, a non-coaching faculty member, the building principal or designee, and two (2) student officers, (student council or National Honor Society who are not involved in the same athletic program as the student in violation). The hearing shall be conducted by the Activities Director or the building principal.
- Use of a tape recorder or other recording device shall be permitted.
- The athlete and his/her parents will have the opportunity to present their reasons for the appeal to the Athletic Counsel. The Athletic Counsel shall meet in closed session to determine whether the violation is upheld.
- A majority of the Athletic Counsel must approve any action taken. The Activities Director will serve as facilitator of the meeting and will not be a voting member. If there is an Athletic Counsel tie, the discipline shall remain viable and intact.
- The person conducting the hearing shall announce the decision to all parties and provide all parties a follow-up written confirmation of findings. A copy will be mailed to the athlete and his/her parents.

Step Three – Appeal to the Board of Education

If an athlete and his/her parents are not satisfied with the findings of the Athletic Counsel hearing, they may appeal in writing to the Board of Education. The Superintendent must receive in writing, a request for a hearing before the Board of Education within 14 days of the first hearing.

Additional Rules by Coaches and Advisors

- A coach or advisor may establish additional rules concerning student conduct during the season. Any rules established by the coach or advisor must be in writing and handed out to the student, their parents, and the Activities Director prior to the established starting date of the activity. Student cooperation with and conformance to any rules designed by the coach or advisor are required to maintain eligibility in that specific sport. These rules must be in accordance with the athletic code and all other district policies.
- The coach has the right to suspend any student from a team whom they consider a demoralizing influence or a detriment to the objectives of the sport. The coach initiating the suspension must provide documentation and have the approval of the Activities Director and principal.

Unlawful Discrimination

Consistent with legal requirements, the School District of Altoona shall not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, homelessness status, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability/ handicap in its curricular, career and technical education, co-curricular, student services, recreational or other programs or activities, or in admission or access to programs or activities offered by the District as required by section 118.13 and other state statutes. This policy also prohibits student discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (handicap) and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability).

CROSS REF: Policy 411, Student Nondiscrimination/Equal Education Opportunities
411-Rule, Student Discrimination Complaint Procedures
411-Exhibit 2, Discrimination Complaint Form

The School District of Altoona Athletic Code, Rule 370 will be reviewed annually.

Approved: 11/3/14