

# Agawam High School

## ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

“Home of the Brownies”



**Superintendent of Schools**  
William Sapelli

**Principal**  
Steve Lemanski

**Director of Athletics**  
Dave Stratton

**Athletic Trainer**  
Tim Jacques

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the face of high school athletics in Massachusetts has changed dramatically. There have been many changes in the requirements for participation, necessitating an increased understanding of school, league and state rules.

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce to student/athletes and their parents/guardians the philosophy behind our program and the regulations and policies which govern it. Although this handbook cannot include every policy and rule which applies to athletics, the most critical and fundamental rules are contained within.

It is our expectation that parents and students will read this handbook in a thorough manner. In this way, misunderstandings about our rules may be avoided.

After having read the handbook, parents and students are required to sign the athletic permission form that is found on the last page of the handbook. Students who return this completed form have provided us with the indication that they understand and will abide by all policies and rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Association, our league and Agawam High School.

## PHILOSOPHY

Agawam High School believes that athletics are an important part of a sound educational program and that participation is a privilege available to all eligible students. While physical skill and demonstrated ability are primary considerations in determining actual participation, we believe that all aspects of secondary school athletics are subordinate to the essential purpose for which schools exist and must be controlled by educational considerations. This privilege carries with it serious personal responsibilities to the school, the student body, the faculty and the town which the athlete represents.

Interscholastic athletics provides the "other half" of education. The program strives to develop in students positive values and habits so that personal growth and development occur. Improved skill levels, a heightened sense of cooperation and competition, self-discipline and realization of the value of group goals are just some of the objectives of the athletic program.

Successful competitive performance in combination with educational considerations provides the cornerstone for our athletic program. All athletes are given fair opportunity to demonstrate their skill levels and made to feel they are part of a team. The young man or woman who learns to cope with victory and defeat; to accept frustrations and disappointments as well as success; to spend long hours in practice with no guarantee that they will get in the game; to accept discipline and to work with fellow athletes, has learned about things that cannot be taught in the classroom.

The program of athletics plays a unique role in joining the school and community. Civic pride and identification with Agawam High School are results of athletic participation that can last a lifetime.

**Boys****Girls****FALL**

Cross Country  
 Golf (Coed)  
 Football - Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen  
 Soccer – Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen

Cross Country  
 Field Hockey - Varsity and J.V.  
 Gymnastics  
 Soccer, Varsity, J.V.,  
 Soccer -and Freshmen  
 Volleyball—Varsity and J.V.

**WINTER**

Basketball - Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen  
 Ice Hockey  
 Indoor Track  
 Skiing  
 Swimming  
 Wrestling - Varsity and J.V.

Basketball - Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen  
 Indoor Track  
 Skiing  
 Swimming

**SPRING**

Baseball - Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen  
 Track & Field  
 Tennis  
 Lacrosse—Varsity and J.V.  
 Volleyball – Varsity and J.V.

Softball - Varsity, J.V.,  
 and Freshmen  
 Track & Field  
 Tennis  
 Lacrosse – Varsity and J.V.

Fall sports generally begin around either the 3rd or 4th Thursday of August (exception: Football).

Winter sports begin on the first Monday after Thanksgiving.

Spring sports begin on the third Monday in March.

**PARTICIPATION**

Subject to restrictions on team size, the athletic program will be open to all students who are physically able to participate and who are eligible under local and state regulations. An unlimited participation policy will be used whenever possible. There are factors, however, which may dictate that the total number of players on a team be limited in order to maintain a high level of safety, coaching, playing time and cost effectiveness.

It is the judgment of the coaches which dictates the selection of participants during actual game situations. All athletes are given fair and ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities prior to the commencement of league and non-league competition.

## GOVERNING BODIES OF INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

### I. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (M.I.A.A.)

- A. Provide leadership and service designed to improve inter-school relations in athletics.
- B. Foster cooperation among voluntary institutional members and the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association, Massachusetts Department of Education, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association, Massachusetts State Coaches Association and with professional organizations interested in attaining common goals.
- C. Secure uniform regulations and control of interscholastic participation in athletics throughout the state to provide equitable competition for students as an integral part of the education of secondary school students.
- D. Promote safety and health of participants in interscholastic athletics.
- E. Develop and channel the force of opinion to keep interscholastic athletics within reasonable bounds so that it will expressly encourage all that is honorable and sportsmanlike in all branches of sports for secondary youth.
- F. Provide a forum for concerns related to interscholastic athletics for institutions which become voluntary members of the Association.
- G. Develop uniform standards and procedures for determining championships at the end of the season.

### II. Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference

- A. Philosophy  
The interscholastic athletic curriculum is an integral part of the overall educational program of the member schools. The interscholastic athletic program shall exist for the benefits which it has for the students. The activities and contests shall be psychologically sound by being tailored to the physical, mental, social and emotional maturity level of the students participating in them.

Competition will be organized based on:

1. School population
2. Location
3. Emphasis placed on a particular activity
4. Economic consideration

B. Purpose

To promote sportsmanship and good play in interscholastic athletic competition

C. Membership

The following public high schools are members: Agawam High School, Amherst Regional High School, Athol High School, Belchertown High School, Cathedral High School, Central High School (Springfield), Chicopee Comprehensive High School, Chicopee High School, High School of Commerce - Springfield, William J. Dean Technical High School, Easthampton High School, East Longmeadow High School, Franklin County Technical High School, Frontier Regional High School, Gateway Regional High School, Granby High School, Greenfield High School, Hampshire Regional High School, Holyoke Catholic High School, Holyoke High School, Hopkins Academy, Longmeadow High School, Ludlow High School, Ralph C. Mahar High School, McCann Technical High School, Minnechaug High School, Mohawk Trail Regional High School, Monson High School, Northampton High School, Palmer High School, Pathfinder - Regional Vocational-Technical High School, Pioneer Valley Regional High School, Putnam Vocational High School, South Hadley High School, Southwick High School, Springfield School of Science and Technology, St. Mary's High School - Westfield, Sabis International Charter School, Turner Falls High School, Ware High School, Westfield High School, Westfield Vocational High School, and West Springfield High School.

### RECOGNIZED SPORTS

The following sports are recognized by the league as interscholastic sports for the purpose of League and M.I.A.A. rules:

Boys: Baseball - Basketball - Cross Country - Football - Golf (Coed) - Indoor Track - Lacrosse - Swimming - Ice Hockey - Skiing - Tennis - Track - Soccer - Volleyball, Wrestling

Girls: Basketball - Cross Country - Field Hockey - Indoor Track - Lacrosse - Softball - Tennis - Track - Gymnastics - Soccer - Skiing - Swimming - Volleyball

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The Superintendent of Schools is ultimately responsible for all phases of the Agawam High School athletic program.

The Principal is specifically responsible for all school activities that affect students in his/her building. All local M.I.A.A. authority and responsibility is vested with the principal.

The Director of Athletics is responsible for the actual administration and mechanics of operation of the program.

Local rules and regulations cannot supersede M.I.A.A. or league rules but may be stricter.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **M.I.A.A. Rules**

All Agawam High School athletic teams will follow the rules set down in the M.I.A.A. Rules and Regulations Handbook. Although it is not possible to reproduce the entire handbook here, the following is a condensed version of some of the more important rules:

#### I. Loyalty to the High School Team/Bona Fide Team Member

A bona fide member of the school team is a student who is regularly present for, and actively participates in, all team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of the school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to practice or compete with an out-of-school team.

### **PENALTIES**

Individual students in schools that have a team in a sport are not allowed to enter M.I.A.A. - sponsored tournament(s) except as a bona fide member of that school team.

#### II. Age Limits:

A student shall be under 19 years of age, but may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that his/her 19<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year. For grade 9 competition, a player shall be under 16 years of age but may compete during the remainder of the school year provided that the sixteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year. Principals must exercise great care in determining age of contestants, and in all doubtful cases, must secure birth certificates from the town clerk of the pupil's place of birth.

#### III. Academic Requirements

A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (e.g. second quarter marks and not semester grades determined third quarter eligibility) a passing grade in the equivalent of 5 credits.

#### IV. Chemical Health

During the season of practice or play, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana, steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as "NA or near beer". It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements.

### **The minimum penalties are:**

First Violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

Second and Subsequent Violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs.

All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

V. Taunting Policy

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting include but are not limited to: "trash talk", defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/her skills, efforts, sexual orientation or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or physical response; and physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, including "in the face" confrontation by one player to another and standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player.

In all sports, officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul and disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest/day of competition. In addition, the offender shall be subject to existing M.I.A.A. Expulsion Rules. A warning shall be given to both teams by game officials prior to the contest.

At all M.I.A.A. contest sites and tournament venues, appropriate management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt players, coaches, game officials or the spectators are subject to ejection.

**Agawam High School (Local) Rules**

- I. Signed permission card and verification of passing a physical exam are required before participation is allowed (practice or game). Forms are passed in directly to the athletic trainer. All students must turn in an M.I.A.A. medical form. A student-athlete must have a physical examination yearly.
- II. Athletes must travel to and from contest in transportation provided by the school. Special exceptions may be granted through written parental consent provided to the athletic director at least one day in advance. Failure to abide by this rule will result in a one-game suspension. Should an emergency situation arise, the coach shall use his/her professional discretion. Any decision will be reported to the Director of Athletics.
- III. Athletes must participate in their regularly scheduled physical education classes or they will not be allowed to practice or play on that day. Exceptions to the above will be made only through approval from the Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Student Activities.
- IV. A student may not change from one sport to another once the first game of the sport season has been played. Exceptions may be made but require unanimous consent of the Director of Athletics and the head coach of the two athletic teams involved. No student suspended or dismissed from a team may transfer to another team during that season.
- V. Students must be in attendance at school by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> period (8:09 a.m.) and no dismissal before 10:48 a.m. to participate in any team meeting, practice or game. Special exceptions may be granted by the Principal or Director of Athletics

# ATTITUDE

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you.....we are in charge of our attitudes.

By Charles Swindoll

The Saturday Evening Post

- VI. Any athlete suspended from school (either internal or external) will not be allowed to practice or play or attend any practices or meetings during the time of suspension. If the suspension includes a Friday, the athlete will not be allowed to take part in any activity on the weekend. The athlete must participate in a practice session before competing in a game situation.
- VII. Any student suspended under M.I.A.A. rules will not be allowed to dress in his/her team uniform, for any reason, during their suspension.
- VIII. Any athlete who is absent from school on a day prior to a non-school day is not eligible to participate in a practice or game on the first non-school day following the absence unless the absence has been cleared by the Principal or Director of Athletics. It is the philosophy of the athletic department that student-athletes be in school and at practice the day before a game. Occasionally, exceptions happen at which time communication should take place between the coach and the athlete, with follow up given to the athletic director. Non-communication will result in non-participation on game day.
- IX. Students are responsible for all equipment issued to him/her by the school. Uniforms and equipment are not to be worn or used for Physical Education classes, non-school activities or street wear. Exceptions may be granted by the head coach (example: game shirts may be worn to school on game days). All uniforms and equipment must be turned in at the conclusion of the season. Violations of this rule will render the student-athlete ineligible for further interscholastic competition and intramurals. Seniors may not graduate until all uniforms and equipment are returned. All lost equipment must be paid for by the student-athlete.
- X. Students are insured by the school system to participate in interscholastic athletics.
- XI. Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled competitions (league and non-league) and practices during the course of the entire season. As a general rule, Sundays are not utilized by the athletic department for games or practices. Rescheduling, however, (for any reason) may necessitate using Sundays. Athletes missing games or practices for religious reasons and/or family emergencies will not be penalized in any way.
- Athletes who miss practices or games due to family outings or holidays, vacations, jobs, or participation in extra-curricular activities other than athletics risk losing their position in the team lineup and may not receive any letter awards.
- XII. Athletes are not allowed in the locker room, weight room or gymnasium areas during the regular school day unless they are scheduled for Physical Education classes (including make-ups) or accompanied by their coach for a specific purpose.
- XIII. Athletic coaches may make rules governing the conduct of players and the requirements of training and practice. These rules, which are not to be in conflict with any regulations of the high school or M.I.A.A., must be approved by the athletic director and shared with players before they are in effect. Violations of these rules may result in temporary or permanent suspension from the team.

- XIV. Hazing - any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization or team which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of a student - is not allowed. Such conduct is a crime under Massachusetts's law and will not be tolerated.
- XV. "Captain's practices" are not recognized or supported by the athletic department.
- XVI. Students trying out for teams after the season has started may do so only with the consent of the coach and Director of Athletics.
- XVII. A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (e.g. second quarter marks and not semester grades determine the third quarter eligibility) a passing grade equivalent of 5 credits. To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have passed from the previous academic year the equivalent of five traditional year long major courses (5 credits).
- XVIII. Academically ineligible students must demonstrate through written documentation their efforts to bring up their grades. (A form provided by the athletic department and signed by all teachers to which the student reports for extra help will be checked weekly.) Only after the demonstration of effort and the attainment of passing grades at report card distribution time will the athlete become eligible. Written documentation must be turned in every Friday. If a Friday is missed, the student-athlete is removed from the team.
- XIX. Students must report all athletic injuries to their coach and athletic trainer. Subsequent to any serious injury, and prior to further participation in a sport, students must provide a medical release from a physician.
- XXI. Students will be hydrated at regular intervals during team practices and game play.
- XXII. No freshman will participate on the varsity level without consent of the head coach, the Director of Athletics and the parents.
- XXIII. Captains of a team are held to a higher standard than are their teammates. Recognized as leaders and role-models, a captain risk losing his/her title due to inappropriate behavior.
- XVIII. **THE AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND FOR OTHER BEHAVIORAL CIRCUMSTANCES NOT LISTED.**
- XIX. Athletes are reminded that as representatives of the school and community, they must strive to be good citizens. The following code of ethics forms the basis for our program:

As an Agawam High student/athlete, I pledge the following:

- to assume the responsibilities, privileges and obligations for being an athlete.
- to practice health, training routines and regulations
- to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- to agree that academics are the priority, not athletics.
- to understand that success in athletics results only with the dedication to work hard on a year-round basis.
- to promote team harmony and spirit by avoiding special interest groups and cliques.
- to sacrifice personal glory for the cause of the team endeavor and unity.
- to seek those relationships with my peers which bring credit to me and my school.
- to realize that all members of the team have a unique role and contribution to make.
- to remember that a good athlete will strive to top his/her own capacity to achieve, regardless to criticism and even in a losing cause.
- to remain with the team from the first day and until the season is completed.
- to never place a limit on what can be done.
- to give more to the team than you receive.
- to be a leader by the worthwhile things you do and say.
- to give best effort to develop competitive physical and mental fitness.
- to practice in word and deed that which is the best in the American character: competition, loyalty, morality, self-reliance, self-sacrifice and the responsibilities of self-discipline.
- to respect myself, my school, my team, and my community in a positive manner.

### **Relations with Booster Organizations**

The Agawam School Committee recognizes that the endeavors and objectives of booster organizations and similar groups can be a valuable means of stimulating interest in and endorsement of the aims and achievements of our public school system.

Generally, actions initiated by booster organizations provide the atmosphere and climate to weld together desirable community-school relationships. Fund-raising by booster organizations will be limited to a service provided or a product received. Students will not be allowed to stand in their uniforms with a can or similar device to collect money.

Booster Clubs dues will not be recognized as scholarships and will not be awarded during Senior Awards Night at Agawam High School nor during any school-sponsored recognition event. Student membership in a booster club will not be denied because of inability to pay annual dues.

### **Procedure for Violations**

The coach of each sport or the Director of Athletics shall determine if a violation of the athletic rules and regulations has taken place. In all cases, infractions of the athletic code must be reported to the Director of Athletics. If disciplinary action is taken, (including temporary or permanent suspension, censure or reprimand) an athlete may have his/her case reviewed upon request.

### **Review Procedure**

- I. The student and/or parents may ask to meet with the coach and/or Director of Athletics. This request must occur within two school days of the disciplinary decision by the coach.
- II. If not satisfied, the student and/or parents may ask to meet with the Principal, Director of Athletics and coach.
- III. Final decision on these matters rest with the Principal.

# **THE CASE FOR SPORTSMANSHIP**

“The ideals of good sportsmanship, Ethical behavior and integrity should permeate all interscholastic athletics in our community. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Our athletic fields should be the laboratory to produce good citizens reflecting “fair play” in every area of life.”

# AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL

School Song:  
*Joyous and Ever Loyal*

Joyous and ever loyal  
Let us root for Agawam High  
Let every heart sing  
Let every voice ring  
There's no time to grieve or sigh

RAH, RAH

It's ever onward  
Our course pursuing  
May defeat N'er our ardor cool

RAH, RAH

But united we will root for  
Our old AGAWAM HIGH

## Tomorrow Never Comes

Tomorrow comes — then it's today  
so if you have a debt to pay,  
or work to finish; don't delay.  
Tomorrow never comes.

It's fatal to procrastinate,  
until you find it's just too late,  
and then to put the blame on fate.  
Tomorrow never comes.

The putting right of some mistakes,  
the gesture that you meant to make,  
The habit that you vowed to break.  
Tomorrow never comes.  
So do it now — for fate can play  
some funny tricks; time slips away;  
we cannot see beyond today.  
Tomorrow never comes.

**WE GET OUT OF LIFE  
WHAT WE PUT INTO IT**

# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read the Agawam  
(Athlete's Name)

High School Athletic Handbook and agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Agawam High School, MIAA and all of the terms and conditions of the policies and procedures contained therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Athlete Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)