

## **BRATTLEBORO AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

A code of conduct can be defined as the rules and regulations that govern the personal behavior of the student. In athletics it also involves the expectations of conduct that promote good character and demand quality ethical and moral behavior.

The conduct of an athlete is closely observed in many areas of life. A student-athlete's general conduct in and out of school shall be such as to bring no discredit to the student or the school. This code of conduct extends beyond school time, school grounds and school functions. Students may be suspended from athletic participation for up to one year for inappropriate behavior, violations of school rules and/or policies or criminal offenses. Due Process will be followed in keeping with district policy regarding individual's rights.

### **ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES AT BAMS**

The following sports and teams are offered at BAMS:

#### **Fall**

- Cross Country Running
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Soccer

#### **Winter**

- Nordic Skiing
- Nordic Skiing (V)
- Basketball

#### **Spring**

- Softball
- Baseball
- Track and Field (V)

In addition, BAMS strives to offer a complement of intramural athletics which includes volleyball, basketball and floor hockey.

## **ATTENDANCE STANDARDS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

A student-athlete is expected to maintain good attendance patterns regarding practice, scheduled competition and classes. In the classroom, a student-athlete is expected to give respectful attention to classroom activities and show respect for other students and faculty at all times.

A student-athlete absent from school may not participate in practice or play in any game or activity scheduled for that day unless given approval by the Athletic Director or Principal. A student-athlete shall be considered absent and unexcused if not in attendance for at least four class periods. Advisory does not count as a class period. It is the responsibility of the Coach to check the attendance list every day.

When a student-athlete anticipates an absence from school on the day of a scheduled event, the Coach should be notified by the student. The student-athlete must also seek approval to participate from the Athletic Director or Principal. Attendance at a funeral is an example of a reason an athlete may be absent.

Student-athletes are expected to be in school the day following a competition in which they participated.

Student-athletes who miss class as a result of extra-curricular events or excused absences are expected to make up work as soon as possible, and to make proper arrangements with the instructor before the absence. This may include attending after school support sessions. Participants and coaches should understand that practice is not an acceptable excuse for failing to attend after school help sessions, or completing make-up work. Academics come first.

## **BANQUETS**

End of the season awards and team functions are presented by the individual coach in an appropriate manner, at the discretion of the coach.

## **COACH'S STATEMENT**

Each sport or team is unique unto itself. It is appropriate for the individual coaches to determine and set team guidelines for participation in athletic contests. These guidelines will be made known to the student-athlete prior to the start of practice for the season, and may not be contrary to the established policy. They are reviewable by the Director of Athletics.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The coach, the parent and the community working together can have a significant impact on young people. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations will be placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

Communication you should expect from the Coach include:

1. Coach's Philosophy;
2. Coach's expectations for your child and the team;
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests;
4. Team requirements, i.e., practices, specific equipment, out of season conditioning;
5. Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation;
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

While involvement in athletics should be a positive experience for all participants, there may be times when things don't go smoothly for the participant or there are disagreements between the participant and the Coach. These situations are as much a part of the learning experience as are the good times. Our coaches work hard to do the best that they can for all of their student-athletes, and we ask you to respect the fact that their decisions are often extremely difficult, and are made based on factors of which students and parents may not be aware. We strongly encourage the student-athlete not the parents, to talk to the coach about any issues or problems that arise during the season. This is the most direct and productive means of communication, and also a valuable method of teaching responsibility.

## **CONFLICTS IN EXTRA-CURRICULA ACTIVITIES**

Student-athletes who attempt to participate in many extra-curricular activities may find themselves with conflicting obligations. The Athletic Department recognizes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extra-curricular activities; and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts. However, this is not always

possible. Student-athletes have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts are bound to happen. It also means notifying the coaches or faculty advisors involved immediately when a conflict does arise. When conflicts do arise, the advisors or coaches will get together and work out a solution so that the student does not feel in the middle. Solutions should be based on

1. the relative importance of each event;
2. the importance of each event to the student;
3. the relative contribution the student can make;
4. how long each event has been scheduled;
5. a conversation with the parents.

Once the decision has been made and the student has followed that decision, the participant will not be penalized in any way by the coach or faculty advisor. If it becomes obvious that a student-athlete cannot fulfill the obligation of the school activity, he or she should withdraw from the activity.

If a conflict arises between a school activity and a non-school activity, it is expected that the student will honor the school activity. Conflicts with non-school activities could affect playing time, and/or participation on the team.

## **HAZING**

Hazing will not be tolerated and will not be associated with the Brattleboro Area Middle School Athletic Program.

Act 120 (Anti-Harassment and Hazing Law of 2000) deems that "it is the policy of the state of Vermont that all Vermont educational institutions provide safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environments. Harassment, hazing and bullying have no place and will not be tolerated in Vermont schools. No Vermont student should feel threatened or be discriminated against while enrolled in a Vermont school".

Hazing is declared by the state to mean "any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with an

educational institution; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing may occur on or off the campus of an educational institution."

Anyone committing the act of hazing may be suspended indefinitely from the athletic program, and referred to the local police. Depending upon the magnitude of the incident, cancellation of the athletic schedule may also occur.

## **HOMESCHOOLERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN BAMS ATHLETICS**

District #6 School Board Policy F26, in accordance with Act 119 of the Vermont Legislature, encourages home study students to participate in courses, programs and activities offered at BAMS. All homeschooled students must abide by the rules of conduct set forth in this handbook, as well as school policies and procedures.

Participation in programs or activities will be subject to the following conditions:

- ❑ Home study students must supply to the school principal a copy of their formal home study enrollments notification from the Commissioner of Education.
- ❑ All students are subject to the same age, performance and pre-requisite standards for admission to courses and co-curricular activities.
- ❑ Participation in athletic and other extra-curricular activities will be in compliance with the school's eligibility requirements as well as with the current guidelines adopted by the Vermont Principals' Association.
- ❑ The parents of home study students may be asked to provide supervision for some activities on the same basis as the parents of fully enrolled students.

## **INJURIES**

Brattleboro Area Middle and Union High Schools are fortunate to have an Athletic Trainer who is available to students to assist and/or advise in the care, prevention, treatment, referral and rehabilitation of athletic injuries. All injuries that occur while participating in athletics must be reported to the Coach and

Athletic Trainer. Student-athletes should follow the recommendations of the athletic training staff. If a student-athlete is treated by a physician, whether or not they are being treated by the Athletic Trainer, the participant must obtain written permission from the physician in order to return to the activity. This written permission must be on file with the Athletic Trainer.

The Athletic Trainer will keep office hours (as posted) during school hours.

## **MISSING PRACTICE**

A student-athlete should always consult with his/her coach before missing practice. Missing practice or a game without a good reason will be dealt with severely. Missing practice due to academic make-up work or extra help is an acceptable reason. However, student-athletes should also budget their time in order not to fall behind academically. If the student-athlete must go on a family vacation during the season, the individual must give the coach notice as soon as the plans are known. It is also stressed that the student-athletes and their families anticipate participation on a team, and attempt to schedule appointments such as routine medical care at a time which won't interfere with a sport season in progress. The interruption of practice could affect playing time and/or participation on the team.

## **PLAYING TIME**

Decisions regarding playing time are made by the coach in the best interests of the team.

It is the philosophy of the BAMS Administration that every effort will be made to ensure each student-athlete participates in every competition. It is expected that members of the BAMS athletic teams will see action in each game as long as they fulfill all of their team responsibilities and expectations, and that their participation does not constitute a potential danger to their physical well-being as determined by the coaching staff.

Team members who have questions about their playing time should address them directly to the coach. Coaches are not required to discuss playing time with parents.

## **PRACTICE AND GAME SCHEDULES**

Coaches are expected to give practice and game schedules to participants well in advance. There are also individual schedules printed and available for public use in the Main Office. Furthermore, our schedules can be found on the internet on the school website, or by going to [viewmyschedule.com](http://viewmyschedule.com) and linking to our school's schedules. Parents can also sign up at this site to receive e-mail notification of any changes to the schedule.

In the case of cancellations, WKVT and WTSA radio stations will generally be notified, and most postponement/cancellation decisions will be made by 1 PM at the latest for school-day games.

## **PRE-PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

Before participating in athletics at BAMS, each participant must adhere to the following responsibilities:

\* ***Physicals*** - A physical examination is required every two years for students participating in athletics. Each student must have a physical examination before participating in the athletic program for the first time. The Athletic Department has a Pre-Participation Physical Examination (PPE) form for this purpose, and the physical examinations are at the expense of each individual. The PPE must be on file with the Director of Athletics prior to the athletes' participation in team tryouts, practice or competition. A record of this exam will be kept on file by the Athletic Trainer and in the school health office.

\* ***Insurance*** - All participants in the athletic program are required to furnish proof of accident/health insurance before participating in tryouts, practices or competitions. BUHS does not purchase insurance for its student-athletes, but if the student is not covered under a family policy, student insurance can be purchased through the school for a nominal fee.

\* ***Athletic Code of Conduct and Participation Contract***- The Code of Conduct and Consent Form must be completed and signed by the student and his/her parents or guardians before participating in tryouts, practice or competition. The signatures on this contract will signify that both participants and parents/guardians understand, accept responsibility and pledge to abide by the BAMS rules and regulations. Participants are committing to themselves and their families, their teams, and their school that they will abide by all training regulations, and the Code of Conduct. Parents and Guardians are likewise committing to the Code of Conduct and are asked to assist in the enforcement of these regulations.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Brattleboro Area Middle School is not responsible for a student-athlete's personal or school-issued property that is lost, stolen or damaged in association with participation in athletics. When not in use, students are expected to keep their property locked in their lockers at all times. Student-athletes are encouraged to supply their own locks, but if unable to do so, the Athletic Department will issue the student-athlete a lock. Students should make a strong attempt to leave extremely valuable items or large sums of money at home. However, if absolutely necessary, these items can be secured with their individual coaches.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

If a student-athlete is involved in malicious damages to the school or public property, he or she will be required to make restitution to the owner and may be suspended or dismissed from the team. Additionally, there will be other school-based consequences imposed by the Principal. Students should have pride in our school. It is ours, and any environment is only as good as the people in it. Student-athletes should also play their part in keeping the locker room areas clean, and without damage.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT-ATHLETES**

Being a member of a Brattleboro Area Middle School athletic team continues the earlier ambitions for many students, and for others, it is their first exposure to organized sports. As a member of an interscholastic team in Brattleboro, each student has inherited a wonderful tradition and earned the opportunity to continue to develop his/her athletic skills.

Our tradition has been to succeed with pride. We have a desire to win, but above all, we want each and every student-athlete to compete with pride and his/her greatest effort. We expect each student-athlete to honor the vision of BAMS: 'Learning for Life; Caring for Others; Doing the Right Thing'. We do not always win a game, but we can be winners when we know we have put forth our best effort. It is important that our student-athletes develop a desire to excel, and to do their best at all times.

The most important responsibility of any student-athlete at BUHS is to develop and broaden his/her strength of character. Each student owes it to him/herself to realize one's fullest potential—academically, athletically, physically and socially.

Our goals for each student athlete are the following:

- ❑ Be a good team member and demonstrate good sportsmanship;
- ❑ Work hard to develop self-discipline, your skills, and a respect for your teammates and others;
- ❑ Embrace the spirit of hard work, honesty and dependability;
- ❑ Place the team and its objectives higher than personal desires.

You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic team. Your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field, will be a reflection of our school. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute greatly to school spirit and community pride.

### **SCHOOL-ISSUED EQUIPMENT**

All student-athletes are responsible for the return of all equipment or uniforms issued them. Students will be charged for equipment or uniforms not returned or returned in less than satisfactory condition. No award will be granted until equipment is returned or paid for. No equipment for participation in other sports will be subsequently issued. Seniors will be denied diplomas if uniforms, equipment or its face value are not returned or reimbursed. It is not the responsibility of the student to replace items that are damaged through normal wear and tear.

### **SPORTSMANSHIP AND ON-FIELD BEHAVIOR**

Brattleboro Area Middle School promotes good sportsmanship amongst student-athletes and fans. We encourage students, parents and friends to attend games and support our teams, but we ask you to do so in a positive manner. Middle School students should set a good example in the matter of sportsmanship and should quickly condemn unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of other students or adults. To this end, student-athletes should strive at all times to exemplify the qualities of good citizenship and realize that they are role models.

Inappropriate language or gestures that are vulgar, demeaning, hurtful, derisive or not in the school or athletic program's best interests will not be tolerated. On the field, BAMS' student-athletes are expected not use profanity or illegal tactics, and also learn that both winning and losing are part of the game. BAMS student-athletes should be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.

As a player:

- ❑ Treat opponents with respect;
- ❑ Play hard, but play within the rules;
- ❑ Exercise self-control at all times; set an example;
- ❑ Respect officials and accept their decisions;
- ❑ Win without boasting, lose without excuses, and never quit;
- ❑ Remember that it is a privilege to represent BAMS and the Brattleboro area community.

As a spectator:

- ❑ Attempt to understand and be informed of the playing rules;
- ❑ Applaud positive performance and appreciate a good play no matter who makes it;
- ❑ Show compassion for an injured player;
- ❑ Do not heckle, jeer or distract players;
- ❑ Avoid profane and obnoxious language and behavior;
- ❑ Respect officials and accept their decision;
- ❑ Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach;
- ❑ Do not criticize players or coaches after a loss of a game;
- ❑ Respect the property of others;
- ❑ Censure those whose behavior is unbecoming.

## **TRAINING RULES—SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Training rules are established to help student-athletes obtain healthy lifestyles, responsible behavior, and optimal team and individual performances.

Participation in athletics and the use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs are not compatible. Students have to decide if they want to be athletes. Student who do elect to participate in athletics are voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. There are no shortcuts to success, and student-athletes must realize that there is a price to be paid in order to be a competitor.

The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol and/or non-prescription drugs is not permitted by student-athletes. A violation of these rules by a student-athlete will result in a hearing before the school administrator who will render a decision on the infraction. Due Process will be followed in keeping with district policy regarding individual's rights.

A student-athlete who possesses or uses tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or paraphernalia specifically or reasonably associated with alcohol or illegal drug use faces the following consequences:

- ❑ First Offense - Suspension from 25% of the competitions scheduled as part of the regular season. The student-athlete will be expected to participate in all scheduled practice sessions during the period, but will not be allowed to dress in uniform for competition.
- ❑ Second Offense - Suspension for the duration of the present season, or semester (whichever is longer).
- ❑ Third Offense - Immediate dismissal from interscholastic athletics for a full calendar year ending at the start of the season in which the violation occurred.

In addition to the missed competition, for each violation, the student-athlete will be required to participate in a drug and alcohol assessment (or Smoking Cessation class), and follow the recommendations in accordance with the district wide policy. This is at the family's expense.

Furthermore,

- A. This code represents a four-year, twelve month commitment. It is in effect regardless of whether school is in session or not, and whether the athlete is "in season" or not. If the student is not "in-season" at the time of the violation, the assessment should take place immediately, and the suspension will be during the next season of participation. Any type or combination of three infractions (i.e. one drinking, one smoking, and one drug) constitutes three violations.
- B. Failure to meet or to work toward meeting these requirements will result in immediate dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season or a student will be prohibited from participating on any other athletic team until the obligation has been met.
- C. Any student-athlete who voluntarily self-reports an instance of substance use as their first violation, will have half of the participation penalty removed. The self-reporting would have to occur before school officials learned of the incident from other sources. Furthermore, there will be no penalty for student-athletes who voluntarily seek assistance from any school personnel for a substance-related problem in the absence of a specific incident that has been reported by others.
- D. Disciplinary actions may be appealed to the next level of authority as follows: 1) coach 2) athletic director 3) assistant principal 4) principal.

## **TRAVEL**

Athletic participants are required to travel to and from all out-of-town events in school designated transportation. All regular bus rules will apply during transportation. A participant may be released directly to the parent or their designee (authorized adult) for certain necessary reasons as cleared with the coach. However, our coaches do have the discretion to require all participants to travel with the team at all times. In no case shall student-athletes be allowed to ride with other student-drivers.

During away competitions, participants will remain with their teams and under the supervision of the coach. Participants should arrange for transportation home at the appropriate time after the activity has ended or the team has returned from an away competition.

Students are expected to stay seated while a sports' bus is in motion, keep the bus clean, and refrain from any activity which may cause disruption to the driver or damage to the bus. The coach has the authority to assign seats on the bus, if he/she chooses, and grant or restrict permission to eat on the bus.

## **TRYOUTS AND CUTS**

The Athletic Department understands the importance of having our students involved in athletics and extracurricular activities and strives to maximize the options available for students to participate in athletics. Therefore there will be no cuts based on athletic ability. Teams however may be structured in such a way that those with previous experience and skills be placed on one team while those with little or no experience and needing to develop their skills are placed on another team. Students who display a pattern of inappropriate behaviors, missed practices, poor academic performance or lack of effort may be asked to leave the team.

Therefore before deciding to try out for a team at BAMS, students need to know that they may not be placed on a team of their choice and that participating on a BAMS team is a responsibility and commitment to the team which needs to be adhered to.

Before the season begins, the coach will provide pertinent information to all candidates at a preseason meeting. Such information shall include, but not be limited to, the length of the preseason practice period, the objectives used to select the teams, and the approximate number of team members that will be selected for each team. The coach should also distribute practice and game

schedules and make clear the commitment necessary to become a member on the team.

When the preseason practices have concluded, and the coach has selected the team members, the coach will meet with all the athletes and assign the team which each will participate on. In addition, each coach will be available to meet with each athlete individually to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and/or reason for being placed on a specific team.

When a situation does arise where parents might find it necessary to raise a concern, we ask that the concerns are expressed directly to the Coach.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches include:

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically;
2. Ways to help your child improve;
3. Concerns about your child's behavior and attitude;
4. Academic support.

Sometimes it is difficult for a parent to accept the degree of playing time his/her student receives. Coaches must make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those listed below, however, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time;
2. Team strategy;
3. Play-calling;
4. Other student-athletes.

If the parent or guardian believes it necessary to register a concern, please follow the appropriate protocol:

1. Contact the coach first to set up an appointment. Please do not attempt to confront the coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for the parents and coach, and meetings of this nature usually do not promote satisfactory resolution. If you cannot reach the coach, contact the Athletic Director, and a meeting will be set up.
2. If the meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, call to set up an appointment with the Athletic Director. Hopefully the situation will be resolved. If not, the matter would continue to the next level of authority beginning with the Principal.
2. The Athletic Director can be reached at 451-3540 or via email through the BAMS website: <http://www.bams.k12.vt.us>.