

**North Providence
Middle School
Athletic Handbook
Athlete/Parent-Guardian**



Approved by the North Providence School Committee – August 23, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide student athletes and their families with an overview of the North Providence Middle School interscholastic athletic programs and the policies, procedures and rules that govern it. Questions regarding any material in this handbook, as well as questions about any aspect of the program not addressed in this booklet, should be directed to the Athletic Director.

North Providence Middle Schools are members of the Rhode Island Principals Committee On Athletics (RIPCOA), whose purpose is to organize, regulate and promote interscholastic athletics for middle schools of Rhode Island. As an RIPCOA member school, North Providence Middle Schools abides by the regulations and subscribes to the guidelines set forth by this organization. In addition, school committee policies and school rules also govern the school's athletic program.

Being a member of a North Providence Middle School athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic team of a North Providence Middle School, you have inherited a tradition which you are challenged to uphold. When you wear the colors of our school, you indicate a willingness to assume the responsibilities that go with those traditions.

PHILOSOPHY

North Providence Middle School athletic programs are an integral part of the total curriculum; therefore, a comprehensive program of athletic activities is vital to the educational development of students. The athletic program provides a variety of experiences to aid in the development of favorable habits and attitudes in students that will prepare them for the secondary level. These experiences are designed to serve the school, assist in the development of respect for self and others, promote fellowship and goodwill, promote self-realization and all-around growth, and encourage learning the qualities of good citizenship, school pride and self pride.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a positive atmosphere of school athletics at a North Providence Middle School.
- To provide opportunities that will allow athletics to serve as experiences where students may cope with problems and handle situations similar to those encountered in the contemporary world.
- To provide adequate and natural opportunities for:
 - physical, mental, social and emotional growth and development;
 - acquisition and development of special skills in activities of each student's choice;
 - team play with the development of such commitments as loyalty, cooperation, fair play and ethical conduct;
 - directed leadership and supervision that stresses self-discipline, self-motivation, excellence and the ideals of good sportsmanship that make for winning and losing graciously;
 - achievement of school goals and the student's individual goals;
 - provisions for worthy use of leisure time in later life, either as a participant or spectator; and

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- development of leadership qualities.
- Remember that an athletic contest is only a game - not a matter of life or death for player, coach, school, official, parent, fan, community, state, or nation.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

A. Eligibility

In order to participate in interscholastic athletics, students must take a minimum of six courses in addition to physical education per semester and not have failed more than two courses, including physical education, at the end of the previous marking period. Eligibility shall be determined by grades at the end of the 1st quarter, the midterm grades, the 3rd quarter cumulative grades and final grades. At all times, the students must have a passing grade of 65 in at least three of the four core areas, (ELA, Math, Science, & Social Studies) and Physical Education.

- The final grades of the previous academic year shall be considered the criteria for academic eligibility at the beginning of a new academic year.
- A student who is retained in a grade because of academic failure but remains eligible relative to age will be considered academically ineligible for the first marking period.
- In the case of a student who devotes a considerable part of the summer to making up subjects failed during the school year and receives credit toward promotion/graduation for this make-up work, that student shall be entitled to count such credit toward eligibility provided this credit is made an official part of his/her school record during the first week of the fall term. In case a student fails to complete the minimum scholastic requirements for athletic eligibility at the end of a quarter due to unavoidable absence, the student shall be ineligible for the next quarter until these requirements of the preceding quarter are made up.

Students are NOT eligible if:

- they are excused from physical education for medical reasons (including a nurse's note);
- an athlete will be ineligible for athletic competition in a junior high/middle school if the athlete's 15th birthday occurs prior to September 1st of the school year in which the athlete seeks participation.
- they transfer enrollment without a corresponding change of residence may be declared immediately eligible provided that the Transfer /Waiver Affidavit has been completed by the losing and receiving school and it is determined that the student had not been a varsity roster member of said sport of interest. If a member of said roster plays, then a waiting period is necessary before the student can become eligible.
- they played or practiced with an outside team in any sport that conflicts with the high school practice or contest;
- they do not comply with rules outlined in the Rhode Island Principals Committee On Athletics Rules and Regulations. This publication may be found at <http://1ab.fa6.myftpupload.com/>

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- they are not in school on the day of practice and the day of a game or if the practice/game is to be played on a weekend or vacation, the student must be in attendance on the day prior to that weekend/vacation. Any exception to the rule must have prior approval of the Principal and the Athletic Director. Students must be in attendance at school by the start of the school day and no later than 8:50am with a note to be considered present. An athlete must remain in school for the duration of the day. Dismissals are not acceptable on game days or on the day prior to a weekend contest or the day before vacation. Only medical appointments, court dates and death in the family will be considered by the Principal and the Athletic Director as reasons for early dismissal. If a student-athlete cuts a class or leaves the building unannounced, he/she will be ineligible to participate in the next league contest.
- Student athletes that are suspended or serving in-house suspension are ineligible to practice or play until reinstated by a parent.

The Principal and the Athletic Director reserve the right to deem students ineligible due to violation of school rules and the athletic contract signed by each student prior to the start of the season. (attached)

B. Insurance

The school has arrangements with an insurance company through which parents/guardians can secure accident/medical insurance for their children at a nominal cost. Students participating in interscholastic sports are required to carry *accident/medical insurance*. The school does not assume responsibility for medical expenses resulting from injuries to participants in sports. The family's personal medical insurance is the first step in covering medical expenses. Accident/medical insurance can only be used to help pay for expenses not covered by your personal insurance.

In claims involving school accident/medical insurance, parents need to pick up an insurance form at the school office. Once the school and attending physician have made out their parts, the parents send the form and bills to the company.

C. Parental/Guardian Permission and Acknowledgement of Athletic Policies

At the time students try out for an athletic team, they will receive this handbook. Each parent or guardian will read all of the enclosed material and certify that they understand the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the school district. Each athlete's parent/guardian will complete a *North Providence School Department Athletic/Activity/Co-Curricular Participation Contract* for each sport to have knowledge and understanding of all school policies and giving permission to participate in that interscholastic sport. This form will be kept on file in the Athletic Director's office.

D. Physical Examination

In order to try out for a team, a student must have a health physical on file prior to participation. The physical covers all sports provided the examination occurred within **13 months** of the ending date of the respective physical. If a physical expires during the season the student must submit an updated physical in order to remain eligible. Students and Parents will be responsible for communicating with the medical staff any preexisting conditions that may affect athletic participation.

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E. Risk of Participation

Athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury, which may be a result of athletic participation. In order to participate in interscholastic sports, students and parents/legal guardians are required to sign the *Rhode Island Principals Committee On Athletics Assumption of Risk Form*. This form must be notarized and submitted to the coach prior to participation. One copy will be kept on file in the Athletic Director's office and a second copy will be filed at the Rhode Island Principals Committee On Athletics office. This process is required only once during the three years of middle school for each new athlete, including transfer students.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department. The community, school administrators, and coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound athletic program. Athletes are expected to abide by this code of conduct, which will earn them the honor and respect that participation and competition in the interscholastic athletic program affords. Conduct which results in dishonor to the athlete, the team or the school will not be tolerated. All rules apply to all athletes including players, managers, trainers, cheerleaders and all other students representing a team from the North Providence Public Schools.

A. Sportsmanship

"Good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, integrity, and the respect for others" are the guiding principles that permeate all interscholastic activities in our school. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. All individuals, regardless of their role, are expected to model sportsmanship because of their influence on the behavior of others.

STUDENT ATHLETES MUST:

- appreciate and understand that their behavior is observed and emulated by many who are younger;
- live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by the RIPCOA;
- accept and understand the seriousness of their responsibility and the privilege of representing their school and community;
- live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff;
- learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with parents, fans, and peers;
- treat opponents the way they would like to be treated, as a guest or friend;
- refrain from taunting, trash-talking, or making any kind of derogatory remarks, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature, to their opponents during the game;
- wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner that they would like to receive following a victory or defeat;
- respect the integrity and judgment of game officials;
- win with humility and lose with grace.

B. Alcohol and Drugs Including Tobacco

Medical research substantiates that the use of alcohol and mood modifying substances produces harmful effects on the human body and will affect athletic performance. You cannot compromise your participation with substance abuse. Students who experiment with such substances jeopardize program morale, reputation and

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success, and they do physical harm to themselves and risk personal injury and harm to others during their activity. Students must decide if they want to hold a leadership position or want to be part of an athletic team. If they do wish to be a participant, they must make the commitment in order to do so. A big part of this decision means refraining from the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and steroids. Student athletes are considered in violation of this policy if they use any tobacco products or are in the presence of, possess, consume (including being under the influence of), and/or distribute, other than as prescribed by a physician for personal use, any tobacco product, controlled drug and/or intoxicant or steroid at any time (see Year Round Expectations) whether during school, at any school activity, on school property, or at locations off school property.

Alcohol and Drugs Including Tobacco and Vaping

For a first offense, a student athlete will be:

- dismissed from school activity participation for a period of time to be determined by the Principal and activity moderator/coach.
- immediate dismissal from school activities and a report filed with the appropriate authorities.
- required to participate in and complete a mandatory counseling program as a condition of reinstatement appeal
- required to meet with Athletic Director and Coach to request reinstatement
- required to have a parent(s)/guardian(s) meeting with Athletic Director and/or Assistant Principal before reinstatement to the team
- required to forfeit their captaincy if they hold that position (see Captains section).

For any additional violation in the same year or subsequent year, a student athlete will be suspended from all interscholastic athletic competitions and extracurricular activities for 365 calendar days.

Year Round Expectations

The substance use policy is in effect year round, in and out of season, on and off the field, in and out of uniform for all student athletes. There is a reason for this ... *We care about the welfare of our student athletes.* We expect a year round commitment from you if you want to be involved in the athletic program in the North Providence School System. Violation of this policy will be enforced at the beginning of the next full season the student athlete participates in.

Presence at Parties with Alcohol and Drugs

If a student athlete attends a party where alcohol or drugs are being illegally dispensed, the student athlete must leave the party immediately.

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C. Cyber Images

Any identifiable image, text, photo, or video which implicates a student athlete to have been in possession or in the presence of alcohol and/or drugs, or portrays actual use, or out of character behavior or crime, shall be confirmation of a violation of the code of conduct. Since there is no way to establish a timeframe for when or the location of where the image was taken, it shall be a responsibility that the student athlete must assume. It must also be noted that there may be persons, who would attempt to implicate an athlete, by taking such images, to place them in a situation where they might be in violation of this code standard. Athletes must take every precaution to not place themselves in such an environment.

D. Captains

Captains will be appointed by coaches with team input at the discretion of the coach. Prior to the selection of captains, athletes will be informed by the coach of the criteria for selection and obligations of the position. The position of team captain is one of honor, leadership, and responsibility. As a result, students serving in that capacity are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner both in and outside of school.

Any student involved in a violation of the code of conduct that results in a suspension from school, or any student who is associated with, in possession of, or found to be involved with drugs, steroids, alcohol, tobacco use, weapons, or crimes outside of school, will lose the ability to serve as captain of any school-sponsored athletic team or leader of a student club or activity for a period of one calendar year. Any sitting captain of a North Providence Middle School athletic team will have that position rescinded and will be ineligible to serve for a period of one calendar year.

E. Attendance

Student-athletes must be in school on the day of practice and the day of a game or if the practice/game is to be played on a Saturday or Sunday, the student must be in attendance on the day prior to that weekend/vacation. Any exception to the rule must have prior approval of the Principal and the Athletic Director. Students must be in attendance at the start of the school day and no later than 8:50am with a note to be considered present.. An athlete must remain in school for the duration of the day. Dismissals are not acceptable on game days or on the Friday prior to a weekend contest or the day before vacation. Only medical appointments, court dates and death in the family will be considered by the Principal and the Athletic Director as reasons for early dismissal. If a student-athlete cuts a class or leaves the building unannounced, he/she will be ineligible to participate in the next league contest.

F. Hazing

Under no circumstances will any type of hazing and/or initiation be tolerated. The term “hazing”, as defined by Rhode Island State Law, means any conduct or method of initiation that any student organization, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person (abbreviated from State of Rhode Island Hazing Law, section 11-21-1(b)). Violation of this policy will result in strong disciplinary action, including suspension from the athletic team and loss of captaincy.

The following activities include but are not limited to some examples of violation of this standard:

- Requiring the consumption of any food, alcohol, drug, or other substance;
- Requiring participation in physical activities, such as calisthenics, exercise, or other games or activities requiring physical exertion;
- Exposing another to weather elements or other physically or emotionally uncomfortable situation;
- Forcing excessive fatigue from sleep deprivation, physical activities or exercise;

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- Requiring anything that would be illegal under any applicable law, including laws of the State of Rhode Island;
- Requiring anything that can be reasonably expected to be morally offensive to another;
- Committing or requiring any act that demeans another based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, or age;
- Committing any act of physical brutality against another, including, but not limited to, paddling, striking with fists, open hands, or objects, and branding;
- Kidnapping or transporting another with the intent of stranding him or her;
- Committing verbal abuse;
- Forcing or requiring conduct that can be reasonably expected to embarrass or adversely affect the dignity of another, including the performance of public stunts and activities such as scavenger hunts;
- Intentionally creating labor or work for another;
- Denying sufficient time for study or other academic activities; or
- Committing or requiring another to commit any sexual act or engage in lewd behavior.

G. Selection of a team

Selection of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. Their actions, however, must be consistent with the philosophy and policies of the athletic program.

When a player selection is necessary, the process will include three important elements. Each candidate should have:

- competed in a minimum of five practice sessions;
- performed in at least one intra-squad scrimmage; and
- been personally informed of the player selection and the reasons for the action by the coach.

The Athletic Director will approve all specific guidelines on team selection prior to their announcement.

A student not selected for a squad will be permitted to try out for another team if the coach of the second team agrees. A student not selected for disciplinary reasons, however, will not be eligible to participate on another squad for that sport season.

H. Individual Coach's Rules

Coaches may establish (with advanced approval of the athletic director and principal) additional rules and regulations for their respective teams. These rules must be given in writing by the coach to all team members and explained fully at the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules will also be in writing and will be administered by the coach. Additional team rules must be consistent with all other school rules and regulations. Copies will be kept on file in the athletic director's office. Coaches, with the consultation of the Athletic Director, may take reasonable disciplinary action pertaining to any problem that may arise that has not already been reviewed in this handbook.

I. Conflicts in Extracurricular Activities

Athletes who attempt to participate in several extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict of obligations. Athletes must notify the advisors/coaches involved immediately when a conflict does arise.

When a conflict arises, the advisors/coaches will work out a solution so those students do not feel caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the principal or his designee will make the decision based on the following:

- the relative importance of each event;
- the importance of each event to the student;
- the relative contribution the student can make;
- how long each event has been scheduled; and
- a conversation with the athlete and/or parents.

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

J. Leaving a Squad

Athletes who leave a squad will have 48 hours to ask the coach for reinstatement. The coach will act independently on each case. These students are expected to discuss their decision with the Athletic Director and coach. This is an important step so that they realize their responsibility to the team and themselves.

Within the first week of the preseason, a student may drop from the squad without penalty. After this time, the student may not participate in any other athletic activity for that season unless the Athletic Director and both coaches involved grant permission.

K. Locker Room Regulations

1. Rough-housing and throwing towels or other objects are not allowed in the locker rooms.
2. All showers must be turned off. The last staff person to leave the shower room is expected to check all showers.
3. Athletes should ensure that all clothing and valuables are locked in their lockers.
4. No glass containers are permitted in locker rooms.
5. All shoes that have spikes or cleats must be put on and taken off outside of the school building.

L. Practices and Contests

Athletes are expected to attend all contests and practices during the season, vacations included, unless excused by the coach and/or Athletic Director prior to the absence. Athletes with unexcused absences from contests or practices must practice one day (5 days maximum) for each contest or practice missed prior to resuming competition. The athlete must miss at least the next scheduled interscholastic league contest of the season.

Any adult not authorized by the Athletic Department shall not attend any practice or be on any sidelines, bench or playing area.

M. Vacations

Vacations (including trips during school vacations) by athletic team members during a sports season are discouraged. Athletes and parents wishing to do so should assess their commitment to the team. In the event of an absence due to a vacation that is unavoidable, the athlete must:

- contact the coach at least one (1) week prior to the vacation, preferably before the beginning of the season;
- present a signed excuse by the parent or guardian at least one (1) week prior to leaving;
- accept their playing status on that squad following the return to competition
- Students who have an option to participate in a school or community service related trip will not incur a penalty, however, must accept their playing status on that squad following the return to competition.

N. School Policies/Rules

Athletes will abide by all rules and regulations outlined in the “Code of Behavior” published in the Handbook for Students and Parents/Guardians which is distributed to all students on the opening day of school.

Out of character behavior or criminal offenses could result in suspension or elimination of the privilege to participate in the athletic program. Administration reserves the right to enforce a *Student/Athlete Behavioral Contract* for student athletes who do not abide by North Providence Middle School academic and behavioral requirements.

O. Suspension/Detention

Athletes cannot participate in athletics while serving a suspension or detention. An athlete who is issued a detention must attend the session(s) assigned regardless of home game or practice conflicts. Athletes with away contests must meet with an assistant principal to be reassigned to the next open day to serve the detention.

P. Appearance

Student athletes assume the responsibility of representing their school; consequently, they are expected to dress appropriately and professionally for practices, contests, and travel.

Q. Travel

Athletes must travel to and from athletic contests in transportation provided by the North Providence Public Schools unless previous arrangements are made by the athlete’s parents for exceptional situations. The Athletic Director and coach must approve permission for exceptions. In addition:

- Athletes will remain with their team under the supervision of the coach when attending away contests.
- Athletes may return from an away contest only with their parents. In that event, the parent must request permission in writing from the Athletic Director and approved by administration 2 days prior to the contest. The athlete will be released only to their parents upon the personal recognizance of the parent by the coach.
- Athletes are not permitted to drive their own vehicles to away contests.
- All regular school bus rules will be followed.

R. Equipment and Uniforms

Athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of all equipment issued/loaned to them. School-furnished equipment is to be worn only for contests and practice or when authorized by the coach. All equipment must be returned immediately after the season.

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Athletes who do not return their equipment in good condition or who lose their equipment will be assessed the replacement cost of the equipment. Additionally, athletes may not participate in another sport until this obligation has been fulfilled and will be on social suspension until obligation is met. Due to the Rhode Island Principal Committee on Athletics, equipment cannot be issued to any student out of season. It is the student's responsibility to make sure any issued and personal belongings are secured properly in the locker room.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND COACH COMMUNICATION

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication parents/guardians should expect from coaches:

- philosophy of the coach;
- expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad;
- locations and times of all practices and contests;
- team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning;
- procedure followed should your child be injured during participation; and
- discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication coaches should expect from parents/guardians:

- concerns expressed directly to the coach about their child; and
- notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance

As your children become involved in the programs at a North Providence Middle School, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- the treatment of your child, mentally and physically;
- ways to help your child improve; and
- concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches are professionals.

They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain topics can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other topics must be left to the discretion of the coach. We require a 24 hour period before you make contact with the coach. Please do not approach or speak to a coach immediately after a game or in the parking lot because emotions are usually elevated at this time.

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Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

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

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, you should:

Call the Athletic Director at 233-1150 ext. 13441 to set up an appointment with a coach. Please do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These times can be emotional periods for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, you should call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

Continuous Notice of Nondiscrimination and Supporting Policies

The North Providence School Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestral origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. Individuals with disabilities may contact the Superintendent's office to request reasonable accommodation to participate in a program or activity sponsored by the North Providence School Department. The following individuals have been designated to coordinate Title IX and Section 504 compliance:

Title IX Compliance:

Matthew Hicks-Director of Human Resources
2240 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, RI 02911
401-233-1100x3720
hrdirector@npsd.k12.ri.us

Louise Seitsinger-Assistant Superintendent
2240 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, RI 02911
401-233-1100x3702
louise.seitsinger@npsd.k12.ri.us

Section 504 Compliance:

Cynthia VanAvery-Director of Student Services
2240 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, RI 02911
401-233-1100x3704
specialeddirector@npsd.k12.ri.us

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Tear Off and Return to Coach

My signature below indicates that I have received and agree to abide by the Athlete/Parent Handbook

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____