

# WEST OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to inform our coaches, student-athletes, and their parents/guardians of the West Ottawa athletic rules and policies. It should be understood that the rules set forth are intended to enhance the quality of the experience available through educational athletics by providing a program based on proper discipline and positive values.

## Philosophy of Athletics

The program of Educational Athletics in the West Ottawa Public Schools is an essential element of a student's instructional experience. West Ottawa Athletics is a part of the district's goal to advance and promote the community-developed "Learner Exit Outcomes". Participation in athletics increases instructional time, prepares young people for future life in society, and has been shown to be the highest correlating predictor for high school students' later success in life. Participation in a co curricular activity is an essential part of a complete learning experience. It should be viewed as an extension of the learning process. We are striving to provide a program of which the student body and community will be proud. Success shall be measured not only by the number of wins and losses but also by the type of individuals who graduate through our program. Student/athletes should understand that participation in athletics is an honor and carries responsibilities to the team, school, and community. It is important that we teach and practice good sportsmanship, respect, self discipline, teamwork, and self-esteem. While winning is always desired, it should not be the driving motivation of our program.

**Our goal is to help guide the student-athlete in his/her quest to be the best student-athlete and person he/she can be.**

## **PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.**

We offer the following interscholastic sports to all students, grades 9 - 12.

### GIRLS SPORTS

Cross Country-Fall  
Golf-Fall  
Sideline Cheer-Fall  
Swimming & Diving-Fall  
Volleyball-Fall  
Basketball-Winter  
Competitive Cheer-Winter  
Competitive Dance-Winter  
Sideline Cheer-Winter  
Lacrosse-Spring  
Soccer-Spring  
Softball- Spring  
Tennis-Spring  
Track & Field-Spring  
Water Polo-Spring

### BOYS SPORTS

Cross Country-Fall  
Football-Fall  
Soccer-Fall  
Tennis-Fall  
Water Polo-Fall  
Basketball-Winter  
Hockey-Winter  
Swimming & Diving-Winter  
Wrestling-Winter  
Baseball-Spring  
Golf-Spring  
Lacrosse-Spring  
Track & Field-Spring

### **Conference Affiliation:**

West Ottawa High School is a member of the O.K. Red Conference. Other members of the O.K. Red Conference are:

East Kentwood Falcons  
Hudsonville Eagle  
Rockford Rams

Grand Haven Buccaneers  
Jenison Wildcats

Grandville Bulldogs  
Muskegon Big Reds

### **Academic Eligibility:**

Players in all sports must meet all MHSAA and West Ottawa requirements. All rules regulating eligibility as set down by the MHSAA and West Ottawa High School will be enforced.

**Previous Semester:** Student-athletes must have passed at least four (4) classes, each worth .50 credits, during the previous semester of enrollment in order to participate. If you did not, you are ineligible to compete for 60 school days. (1st semester freshmen are exempt from this).

**Current Semester:** In-season athletes who do not pass four (4) classes at the end of each eligibility checking period are immediately ineligible until they are passing the minimum four (4) classes.

### **Athletic Eligibility:**

Players in all sports must meet all MHSAA and West Ottawa High School requirements. All rules regulating eligibility as set forth by MHSAA and West Ottawa High School will be enforced.

#### ***Player Eligibility***

- **Age:** Students must not turn nineteen (19) years of age prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>
- **Amateurism:** Students cannot receive money or other valuable consideration for participation in MHSAA sports or officiating in interscholastic athletic contests (unless registered with the MHSAA Legacy program for officials) or have signed a professional athletic contract.
- **Attendance:** Athletes must be in attendance at school at least 1/2 day or have the permission of the Athletic Director, in order to practice or participate in a contest. Any time out of school must be excused. Violation of this rule shall result in disciplinary action and or the athlete not participating in the next scheduled athletic contest.
- **Awards:** Students may accept a symbolic award that does not have a value over \$25.00.
- **Enrollment:** Students must be enrolled no later than the fourth (4th) Friday after Labor Day or the fourth (4th) Friday of February. Students cannot be enrolled in high school for more than eight (8) semesters. The seventh (7th) and eighth (8th) semesters must be consecutive.
- **Insurance:** The insurance program for injuries sustained in the inter-scholastic sports program in the West Ottawa Schools is provided by the First Agency, Inc. and the Guarantee Trust Life Insurance Company.

Although our schools have no legal liability, we do have a sincere interest in our players and their parents. It is our desire to make certain that no parent suffers financial loss due to any injury sustained in our sports program. The supplemental coverage is from the first dollar to a maximum of \$100,000.00 per injury. The cost to each athlete is **\$20.00** per sports season for 9th-12th graders and **\$15.00** per sports season for 7th & 8th graders. It is mandatory that every athlete pay the insurance fee. The insurance payment must be made during the first week of practice. All injuries must be reported to the Athletic Trainer. Medical treatment for a covered accident must begin within 60 days of that accident. Insurance claim forms are to be picked up and turned into the athletic office within ninety (90) days of the accident.

- **Limited Team Membership:** Once the practice season begins, students must end all outside competition on non-school teams. Exceptions are Ice Hockey and all individual sports, where the student may be allowed two (2) outside competitions in addition to the regular school schedule.
- **Physicals:** **No student-athlete may practice or try-out for a team without having a completed physical form on file in the Athletic Office.** All physical exams must be dated after April 15 of the previous year.
- **School Suspensions:** If a student-athlete is suspended from school, he/she will also be suspended from participation with his/her team for the duration of the suspension.

### **Attendance at Practice:**

Athletes are expected to be at all practices. Any athlete who accumulates three unexcused practices may be dismissed from the team, lose the right to any awards, and not be allowed to participate in that or any other sport during that season.

A student-athlete may be excused for the following: illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and excused absences from school. If interpretation is needed it will be done by the coach in conjunction with the Athletic Director. Up to three consecutive practices may be missed at the direct request of a parent or guardian once during a sport season. If an athlete will be missing practices/games that may be held during school vacation because of parental trip, it should be discussed with the coach before the vacation. Direct request must be made in advance with a signed note or phone call to the coach from the parent/guardian. These will be considered excused absences.

\* **NOTE:** Both the parents and athlete must understand that any absences may affect an athlete's performance and therefore his/her relative position on the team.

### **Awards:**

The following awards will be given to athletes should they meet the requirements established by the coach and Athletic Director.

**Freshman Award:** Certificate and Graduation Year Numerals

**Junior Varsity Award:** Certificate and Panther Head

**Varsity Award:** Certificate, Varsity Letter, and Chevron

- If an athlete earns a Varsity letter as their first award, he/she will also be awarded the panther head and numerals.
- If an athlete earns a Junior Varsity award as their first award, he/she will also be awarded the numerals.
- Only one set of Numerals, Panther head, and Varsity Letter will be given to an athlete during his/her high school career.

**Conference Championship:** Varsity team members whose team wins a conference championship will also receive a white WO to signify their conference championship.

**Scholar Athlete Award:** Presented to student athletes who achieve a 3.5 grade point average or higher during their season of competition.

**Tri-Sport Award:** Presented to student athletes who participate and complete a sport during the fall, winter and spring season during the same school year.

**Sportsmanship Award:** Is sponsored by the West Ottawa Athletic Boosters. Presented to one member of each team who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and serves as a role model for teammates and youth of the community.

Varsity Coaches are permitted to present four (4) plaques as special awards at the end of the season awards banquet.

### **Banquets:**

Each program is responsible for scheduling their banquet. Work with the athletic office to pick a date and finalize all other details. Please give the date of your banquet to the Athletic Office to reserve your date.

### **Behavior:**

Athletes shall conduct themselves in a manner becoming an athlete and in such a way as to bring no discredit to the athlete, parents, school, or team. Athletes are expected to exhibit good citizenship in and out of the classroom. No profanity or foul language will be tolerated at any time.

Disciplinary action for any behavior that is determined to be unbecoming of an athlete shall be left to the judgment of the Coach and/or Athletic Director.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension up to the remainder of the athlete's career.

\* A request for an appeal must be directed to the Athletic Director.

## **Boosters:**

### **The West Ottawa Athletic Boosters ....**

- Support all school sponsored athletic programs.
- Contribute approximately \$30,000 annually to the athletic program.
- Is a registered non-profit organization made up of volunteers like you.

### **How do the WO Athletic Boosters operate?**

- The Boosters generate most of our income through concessions sales.
- All concessions are regulated by the Ottawa County Health Dept.
- Varsity coaches solicit Parent Representatives from each team by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Concessions are staffed by volunteers organized by the Parent Rep assigned to the event according to the home event schedule for the current season.
- Other fund raising includes SCRIP. To learn more email [woscrip@att.net](mailto:woscrip@att.net)

### **How can you help support West Ottawa Athletics?**

- Volunteer to help at an event.
- Become a member of the West Ottawa Athletic Boosters by signing up on the Mail in Membership Form found on our website <http://westottawa.blogspot.com/2007/01/welcome-west-ottawa-athletic-boosters.html> or link in through the West Ottawa Schools Athletic web page at <http://www.westottawa.k12.mi.us/athletics>.
- Go to a game and show your support for West Ottawa Athletics!!

## **Cancellations:**

**Tornado Watch or Warning:** It is West Ottawa district policy that all events and activities are cancelled when a Tornado Watch or Warning has been issued.

### **School Cancellations:**

#### Practices

All 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> practices are cancelled.

All 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade coaches should contact the Director of Athletics prior to having any practice. Practices that are held will normally not begin until after 12:00 p.m. Coaches should call the athletic office with their practice schedule, so that the information can be put on the District Hot Line. Coaches will clearly communicate that practices are strictly voluntary, and that the athlete's safety of travel is their top priority. Any athlete who is not able to attend that day will be excused for that practice.

#### Contests

All 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade contests are cancelled. The decision to cancel or play 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade contests will normally be made after 12:00 p.m. The Superintendent and Director of Transportation will be consulted, whenever possible, prior to making a decision.

## **Coaching Assignments:**

The athletic director will make all head varsity coaching assignments. All other coaching assignments will be done by the varsity head coach of that program in consultation with the Athletic Director.

## **Code of Conduct:**

Athletes are representatives of our school and their participation in athletics is a privilege. Students and members of our community look to them as examples and role models. Because representing our school is a significant responsibility, and because we believe that athletes should not operate under "seasons of approval" and "seasons of disapproval" for inappropriate conduct, we expect compliance to the following code of conduct standards on a year-round basis. Such compliance is not limited to a particular sports season, to school sponsored activities, or to school property.

### **I. Conduct Standards:**

A. Athletes are expected to show behavior at all times that will display respect for people, the law, facilities, and equipment.

B. Athletes are expected to cooperate with teachers, students, and citizens of our community, and display good sportsmanship towards athletes, officials and spectators.

- C. Athletes are not expected to use, possess, conceal, sell, distribute or be under the influence of:
- Tobacco or tobacco products in any form;
  - Alcohol or alcoholic beverages in any form;
  - Illegal drugs including but not limited to those substances defined as controlled substances pursuant to Federal and/or State statute;
  - Mood altering substances;
  - Steroids, human growth hormones, or other performance enhancing drugs;
  - Substances purported to be illegal, abusive, or performance enhancing, i.e. "look-alike" drugs;
  - Drug paraphernalia.

D. Athletes are not expected to engage in acts of cumulative or gross misconduct, including stealing, cheating, but not limited to behavior addressed in the Student Handbook.

E. Athletes are not expected to engage in acts of student hazing. The Board of Education believes that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and prohibits all such activities. Hazing shall be defined as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes or creates a risk of causing mental, emotional, or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy. Hazing involves conduct such as but not limited to: illegal activity such as drinking or drugs, physical punishment or infliction of pain, intentional humiliation or embarrassment, dangerous activity, activity likely to cause mental or psychological stress, forced detention or kidnapping, undressing or otherwise exposing initiates. Michigan law also makes hazing a crime, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

F. Athletes are not expected to engage in any form of gang activity. Gang activity is described as individual or group behaviors associated with belonging to a band of youths that promotes juvenile delinquency and which has an adverse affect on the athlete's team, the school, or the learning environment. Students shall not engage in behaviors at school, while on school property, at school related activities, or within the community that promote gang activity as detailed in school board policy #5114. The administration and coaches reserve the right to determine which behavior, dress, or activities are gang related.

G. Inappropriate Use of the Internet: Pictures found on sites that show the student-athlete behaving inappropriately, will be considered a violation of the student code. Such acts can be pictures of students holding alcoholic containers, tobacco products, illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, or doing other inappropriate acts. Defenses such as the container was empty, etc. will not be a case of defense.

## **II. Enforcement Procedures:**

Violations may be reported to the Athletic Director by any coach, faculty member, civil authorities, or source judged to be reliable by the Athletic Director. Student-athletes who deny the reported violation and it is later determined that he/she is guilty of the violation, shall be disciplined in a more severe manner.

- A. Athletes in violation of the code of conduct will be reported to the coach for interpretation and/or disciplinary action. No athlete will be dropped from an athletic team without the prior approval of the Athletic Director.
- B. Athletes found guilty of section IC., IE., IF or IG. above shall be disciplined in the following manner:

### 1. Step One:

- a) The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference at which time the first, second, and third offenses shall be explained. Parents will be notified.
- b) The athlete's name, the date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded and kept on file at the athletic office.
- c) The penalty for step one shall be suspension from 1/4 of the contests in the present or next sport and successful completion of an approved counseling program. If a fraction results the number will be rounded to the nearest whole number, (i.e. if less than .5 round down; if .5 or higher round up). Suspension will begin immediately. If the athlete is not currently involved in a sport, they must serve their suspension during the next season in which they participate. Suspensions may continue into the next season if there are not enough contests left in the current season to fulfill the penalty. This will be determined and monitored by the Athletic Director. The athlete must be an active participant and complete the entire season that they have begun to satisfy the conditions of the penalty. Attendance at practices and contests during the suspension will be at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director.

The athlete will be on probation for two (2) years after the violation, and if during the probation period, the athlete commits no additional violations of the code, the student will be removed from step one. If further violations of the code occur during the probation period they will proceed to step two.

2. Step Two:

- a. The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference. Parents will be notified.
- b. The athlete's name, date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded.
- c. The penalty for step two shall be the following:
  - Suspension for one full season. Suspensions may carry over into the next sport season if there are not enough contests left in the current season to fulfill the penalty.
  - Successful completion of an approved counseling program.
  - Successful completion of 25 hours of community service. Community service hours are to be pre-approved by the Athletic Director.
  - Or suspension for one (1) calendar year (365 days). Probation will be for two years after the violation, and if during the probation, the athlete commits no additional violations of the code the student will be placed on step one probation with no further suspension from contests. If further violations of the code occur during the probation period they will proceed to step three.

3. Step Three:

- The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference. Parents will be notified.
- The athlete's name, date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded.
- The penalty for step three shall be suspension from all athletics. The suspension will begin immediately.

The athlete may petition the Board of Control for reinstatement under the following conditions:

- Completion of an Athletic Department approved assessment program.
- Completion of an approved counseling and rehabilitation program if appropriate.
- Completion of a one year suspension from athletics during which no further violations take place.

C. Athletes found guilty of section ID. above shall be disciplined in the following manner:

1. Step One:

- The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference at which time the first, second, and third offenses shall be explained. Parents will be notified.
- The athlete's name, the date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded and kept on file at the athletic office.
- The penalty for step one shall be suspension from 20% of the contests in the present or next sport. If a fraction results the number will be rounded to the nearest whole number, (i.e. if less than .5 round down; if .5 or higher round up). Suspension will begin immediately. If the athlete is not currently involved in a sport, they must serve their suspension during the next season in which they participate. Suspensions may continue into the next season if there are not enough contests left in the current season to fulfill the penalty. This will be determined and monitored by the Athletic Director. The athlete must be an active participant and complete the entire season that they have begun to satisfy the conditions of the penalty. Attendance at practices and contests during the suspension will be at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. The athlete will be on probation for two (2) years after the violation, and if during the probation period, the athlete commits no additional violations of the code, the student will be removed from step one. If further violations of the code occur during the probation period they will proceed to step two.

2. Step Two:

- The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference. Parents will be notified.
- The athlete's name, date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded.
- The penalty for step two shall be suspension from 50% of the contests in the present or next sport. If a fraction results the number will be rounded to the nearest whole number, (i.e. if less than .5 round down; if .5 or higher round up). Suspension will begin immediately. If the athlete is not currently involved in a sport, they must serve their suspension during the next season in which they participate. Suspensions may continue into the next season if there are not enough contests left in the current season to fulfill the penalty. This will be determined and monitored by the Athletic Director. The athlete must be an active participant and complete the entire season that they have begun to satisfy the conditions of the penalty. Attendance at practices and contests during the suspension will be at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. The athlete will be on probation for two (2) years after the violation, and if during the

probation period, the athlete commits no additional violations of the code, the student will be removed from step one. If further violations of the code occur during the probation period they will proceed to step two.

### 3. Step Three:

- The Athletic Director and athlete shall hold a conference. Parents will be notified.
- The athlete's name, date, and the nature of the incident shall be recorded.
- The penalty for step three shall be suspension from all athletics. The suspension will begin immediately.

The athlete may petition the Board of Control for reinstatement under the following conditions:

- Completion of an Athletic Department approved assessment program.
- Completion of an approved counseling and rehabilitation program if appropriate.
- Completion of a one year suspension from athletics during which no further violations take place.

D. When an athlete has been charged by civil authorities in connection with a felony or misdemeanor, he/she shall be suspended from competition until the Athletic Director, the Coach, and the High School Principal determine whether the code has been violated, and what discipline is appropriate. The penalty will be dependent upon the severity of the offense. Maximum Penalty: Suspension up to the remainder of the athlete's career.

E. Athletes found guilty of sale or distribution of the substances in IIB. or anabolic steroids shall immediately proceed to step three.

F. Athletes whose violation involves the use or possession of anabolic steroids shall advance an extra step in the discipline process.

G. Athletes whose violation involves acts of student hazing shall advance an extra step in the discipline process up to step three.

H. Athletes entering the ninth grade will be considered to be on the probation described in step one if they were in violation of the middle school athletic code during the eighth grade. The probation will last two years from the date of the violation.

I. Any violations may be disciplined at the school level as well.

J. The Department of Community Health shall periodically distribute to the district the list of banned drugs based on bylaw 31.2.3 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The following is a list of banned-drug classes; stimulants, anabolic agents, diuretics, street drugs, peptide hormone and analogues. This information and examples of substance under each class is available upon request from the Athletic Office.

### **III. Appeal Procedures:**

An appeal is initiated upon the request of a coach, the Athletic Director, or the student involved. Appeals must be filed within seven (7) calendar days of a decision, and shall be addressed within seven (7) calendar days of receipt.

A. The first level of appeal is the Athletic Board of Control. The Board of Control shall consist of varsity head coaches and the athletic director. This board shall either support or overturn a coach's or athletic director's decision as to whether or not the code of conduct has been violated.

B. The second level of appeal is the Athletic Executive Council. The Athletic Executive Council shall consist of the Superintendent or designee, the High School principal or designee, the Director of Athletics, the Middle School Athletic Director, the Assistant Superintendent and one Head Varsity Coach.

C. The decision to overturn a coach's, an athletic director, or board of control decision shall require a 2/3 vote.

**\* Ignorance of eligibility expectations shall not be considered a defense in the case of a violation. The Athletic Code of Conduct shall be published in the Athletic Handbook. The Code shall also be discussed with each team prior to each season.**

## **Communication- Parent/Coach:**

Communication between coaches and parents is encouraged so that decisions made are best for all of the participants. Clear communications allow for clear expectations and greater understanding.

### **Communication All Parents Can Expect From Their Child's Coach**

- Team Itinerary: Parents need to know the location and times of try-outs, practices, games, etc. Much of this information is given directly to the athlete.
- Team Rules: Parents appreciate knowing not only the philosophy of the coach but also any team policies, including consequences that the coach establishes to supplement the rules and regulations adopted by the school.
- Criteria For Team Selection: Parents want to know ahead of time the criteria that will be used in selecting the team.
- Criteria For Earning An Award: Parents want to know the requirements for earning a post-season award.
- Injury: Parents can expect to be immediately informed by the coach when an injury occurs that requires medical attention.
- Problem Behavior: Coaches will call when their child develops unusual patterns of behavior such as unexplained absences from practice, moodiness, attitude problems, etc.
- Discipline: the coach will inform Parents within forty-eight hours of all discipline that results in the loss of contest participation.

### **Communication Coaches Appreciate from Parents**

- Schedule Conflicts: Coaches like to know ahead of time about unavoidable absences, lateness to practice, or the necessity to leave early. Parents should inform the coach as soon as possible about schedule conflicts or when your child is going to be absent or late to practice.
- Emotional Stressors: Coaches appreciate knowing about any unusual event in the life of an athlete that is causing the young person additional stress. Parents should initiate contact with the coach to provide insight into changes in your child's emotional state.
- Volunteers: Coaches need help with so many aspects of managing the program that they are always glad to hear from parents who have ideas and are willing to work for the team.
- Forthrightness: Coaches would like to hear about parental concerns directly, not third hand, before a situation has escalated. Every coach wants to try to resolve a conflict before it is taken to the athletic director, principal, or other higher authority or before it is discussed "in the stands".

### **Areas Of Control That Belong To The Coach**

- Tryout procedures and selection criteria.
- Position(s) played, lineups and playing time.
- Offensive and defensive strategies and style of play.
- Practice plans, drills and scrimmages.

### **Appropriate Concerns for Parents to Discuss With Coaches**

- The treatment of your child.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's health and welfare, academic progress, or violations of the code of conduct.

*It is sometimes difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals and they make judgments based on what they believe to be best for all students involved.*

**Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. (Use the 24/48 rule. Wait to discuss the situation with a coach until 24 hours after the contest but not after 48 hours.)**

### **How To Discuss An Appropriate Concern With The Coach**

Whenever a question or concern arises regarding an athletic situation, please abide by the following steps.

1. Student-athlete meets with the coach to discuss the situation first.
2. If necessary, parents talk directly with the coach, in private, face to face, away from the practice site or game arena. A telephone call may be necessary to arrange an appointment. Making an appointment, sitting down and listening to both sides is productive in reaching a mutually satisfying resolution. Our coaches are expected and encouraged to meet with individual parents to discuss concerns that affect that parent's child.
3. If necessary, and if your concern is with a Sub-Varsity Coach, talk next with the Head Varsity Coach of the sport.

4. If necessary, talk next with the Athletic Director. A meeting may be arranged with the concerned parties to discuss the issue. Getting everyone together in the same room to communicate openly resolves most issues.
5. If necessary, talk next with the Principal. A telephone call may be necessary to arrange an appointment.
6. Once the parent and principal meeting have taken place and the conflict has not been resolved, the parent may schedule a meeting with the superintendent or designee.

### **Competition Expectations:**

Good sportsmanship, like good citizenship, sometimes is taken for granted. To achieve a reputation for good sportsmanlike conduct, a school must constantly strive for it. Students and faculty alike will have to remember that they constitute the medium by which school sportsmanship and citizenship is judged. Because athletes are respected and looked upon as role models, they carry a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of spectators. Therefore, athletes should:

- Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by their coaches.
- Help fellow athletes and fans maintain these standards.
- Be well versed in the rules and strategies of the game.
- Treat opponents with respect.
- Practice self-control in adversity and success.
- Respect the officials by accepting their decisions without emotion.
- Display positive public action at all times: shaking hands with opponents, showing concern for injured athletes, and asking fans to display good sportsmanship.

### **Evaluations:**

The athletic director will do all evaluations of head coaches. For assistant coaches and sub-varsity positions, the varsity head coach will work with the Athletic Director to complete evaluations.

### **Facility Care:**

All coaches are expected to care for our facilities. The coach should be the first to open the facility and the last to leave. **All doors should be locked when leaving, all lights turned off, and equipment put away.** Locker room control and team behavior is the responsibility of the coaching staff, please monitor these areas closely. If there is a problem with one of our facilities and damage has occurred, please contact the AD as soon as possible.

### **Fundraising:**

All fundraising activities must be approved by the Athletic Director and administration before they begin. Forms available in the Athletic Office.

### **Grooming and Dress Policy:**

A member of an athletic team is expected to be well groomed. Appearance, expression, and actions always influence people's opinions of athletes, the team, and the school. Once you have volunteered to be a member of a squad, you have made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of athletes in this community.

An athlete shall dress presentably at all times.... on trips, at assemblies, day of contests or at banquets. The coach shall set the standard for dress as it pertains to his/her sport. The coach shall also set the standards for hair and facial hair as it pertains to his/her sport.

Only uniforms issued by the Athletic Department will be permitted to be worn for contests. Clothing must be worn in a neat and mannerly fashion (i.e., shirts tucked in and buttoned, etc.). Uniforms can only be worn to school on the day of a contest and for the contest itself.

### **Head Coach:**

All Head Varsity Coaches are directly responsible to his/her building principal and the Athletic Director. The head coach shall be in direct charge of the varsity team, his/her assistants, and all coaches associated with his/her program. He/she should oversee all levels of the sport to assure the methods being taught follow the Head Coach's philosophy.

Pre-season meetings should be held with the entire staff in attendance to cover necessary information (i.e. techniques, coaching strategies, expectations of coaches, game plan, practices, conditioning, lifting, stretching exercises, etc.) for the sport.

Head Varsity Coaches should assume responsibility of extending his/her program to the "feeder programs" or to the age groups not in high school.

The Head Coach and those working with him/her are responsible for the details related to the successful operation of his/her sport. He/she is expected to make decisions of a nature that are in keeping with the established policies and procedures of the school.

All assistant and lower level coaches are directly responsible to their building Principal, Athletic Director, and the Varsity Head Coach. **Assistant coaches and lower level coaches are responsible to carry out any assignment designated by the head coach.** All lower level coaches are required to attend all staff meetings called by the head coach.

#### **Head Coach's Duties & Responsibilities:**

- The Head Varsity Coach must organize the overall program.
- Coaches should not infringe upon another season.
- Comply with and abide by all MHSAA rules.
- Be responsible for the care and treatment of minor injuries.
- Work in conjunction with the Athletic Director to assure athletes are meeting MHSAA and school guidelines in regards to academic eligibility.
- Impress upon the student-athlete the importance of good grades.
- Communicate with the media to provide game results, statistics, and recognition for deserving athletes.
- Work with the Athletic Director in scheduling, ordering equipment, arranging transportation, and anything else necessary for the particular sport.
- Be directly responsible for the condition of the locker room and all facilities used during the season of the sport. The Head Coach and or assistant coach should be the last person to leave these areas making sure that ALL doors and windows are locked, lights off and equipment properly put away.
- Entries for state tournaments are the responsibility of the head coach. The head coach must make sure that all entries are filled out completely and accurately. If the entries are turned in late, it will be the responsibility of the coach to pay the late fee.
- Support all other sports by attending athletic contests and by providing administrative support and positive feedback.
- All coaches should attend Booster Club meetings within their season and at least a few meetings outside their season.
- Coaches should assist in conducting athletic contests or projects when there is not a conflict with their coaching or teaching assignments.
- Coaches are to make sure no hazing or initiations take place.
- Head Coaches are responsible for providing updated information for the record boards.

#### **Keys/Swipe Cards:**

All Board hired coaches will receive a key to locker room, storage, practice, and office areas. **Keys are not to be loaned to anyone!** We need to work together to keep our facilities safe and secure. Coaches who are seasonal in nature may be asked to return their keys for other coaches to use. **If you loan your keys to someone else and a problem develops, discipline will result, up to and including, termination from your coaching position.**

#### **Medical Emergency Procedures:**

All coaches must carry information cards on each student-athlete. A first aid kit appropriate to the activity and location will be supplied by the Athletic Trainer and must be checked regularly for appropriate first aid supplies. In the event a medical emergency occurs, coaches should:

- Send someone to call the Athletic Director, trainer, physician, and/or ambulance.
- Keep calm and not be hurried into moving the injured person.
- **Do not attempt to move the injured student-athlete if there is any concern about the head, neck, or back.**
- Be sure nothing is done that will cause further injury to the athlete.
- Keep onlookers away from the injured person.
- Make the injured athlete as comfortable as possible.
- If possible, contact a parent immediately for instruction before the athlete is taken to the physician or hospital.
- If a parent cannot be reached, the responsible person on the scene must assume parental authority.
- A person should be stationed at the entrance to the school site to direct the physician and/or ambulance quickly to the immediate scene.
- All coaches should make a follow up call or visit with parents on all injured players.

- Fill out the accident report form and return it to the athletic office.

### **Medications:**

Diagnosis and treatment of illness by using drugs and medicines is **not** the duty of the public schools and will not be practiced by any coach or school personnel representing West Ottawa Schools. No members of the Athletic Department at any time are to prescribe, distribute, provide or encourage the use of drugs (prescription or non-prescription), medicines, vitamins, or food supplements. Staff should not provide any students with aspirin or any other medications. Any questions regarding medications should be referred to the building administrator.

Coaches should exercise great care in dealing with all injuries and particularly those that are of a serious nature. In all cases, the coach should assure that the injured student-athlete is receiving competent medical care. Following injuries of a serious or prolonged nature, the coach should secure the signed approval from the doctor and parent before the student-athlete is allowed to participate in athletic activities.

### **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA):**

Proposition 48 - Some West Ottawa student-athletes will possess the talents, skills, and attitudes necessary to compete at the college level. Any student-athlete wishing to participate at a Division I or Division II School must meet eligibility requirements as established by the NCAA.

**Student-athletes must pick up NCAA INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY CLEARINGHOUSE Information from the High School Athletic Office if they plan to participate in athletics at the college level.**

Information about eligibility requirements for freshman athletes at Division I and II institutions is available by contacting the NCAA. A pamphlet has been produced and is available by contacting the NCAA Legislative Services Department, 6201 College Boulevard, Overland Park, Kansas 66211-2422; Phone # (913) 339-1906.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy:**

Unlawful discrimination of a Board member, employee, applicant, student, volunteer, or contractor on the basis of religion, race color, national origin, age, gender, marital status, height, weight, disability will not be tolerated by West Ottawa Public Schools. Harassment on the bias of a protected classification is a form of discrimination. Discrimination and harassment may arise from verbal or physical conduct. Sexual harassment, which is a form of sex discrimination, is governed by Policies #3315, #4111.2, #4212, and #5140, #5143, #5150.

All Board members, employees, students, volunteers, and contractors, of the district are required to comply with this policy. Appropriate disciplinary or corrective action designed to stop the discrimination and to prevent its recurrence will be taken against persons who violate this policy.

A Board member, employee, volunteer, or student (“complainant”) who believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination should promptly notify the building principal, guidance counselor, or Civil Rights Coordinator whose office is located at the Administration Building Office of Human Resources and whose office phone number is 738-5780. Complainants are encouraged to report any conduct, statements, or physical contact, which they believe to be discriminatory.

### **Officials:**

Officiating is not an easy job. Please make every effort to treat game officials with respect before, during, and after any contest. **All communication with officials during a contest will be done by the head coach and the head coach only!** If a comment or point must be made, make it and move on. **At no times will a student-athlete address an official other than to answer a question from that official.**

### **Participation:**

**Participation on a West Ottawa athletic team is a privilege and not a right.** Membership on a team is to be earned by continuously adhering to the standards of conduct, both in and out of school. No playing time is guaranteed at any level.

### **Participation/Trying Out for a Sport:**

Current West Ottawa students must join the respective team at the beginning of the season. Any student who desires to join a team after the first official practices as designated and announced by the coach must do so within the first week of practice and must have permission and/or make special arrangements with the Coach and/or Athletic Director.

### **Philosophy of Winning:**

Winning is one of the goals of the West Ottawa Athletic Teams, within the guidelines of the different levels of the program and always remembering academics, sportsmanship, and citizenship comes first.

### **Physical Education Participation:**

All student-athletes **must** participate in all physical education activities during PE class. Student-athletes are expected to perform all activities performed by other students, regardless evening practice or game commitments. If modifications need to be made, the student should speak with the instructor.

If a student-athlete chooses not to fully participate or dress for a PE class, they are ineligible to participate in a game or practice later that day. **If a student-athlete fails to comply with this policy, a one-contest (game, meet, and match) athletic suspension will be enforced upon discovery of the non-compliance.** This also applies to student-athletes who are injured and cannot participate in PE; if this is the case, the student-athlete cannot participate in athletic practices and games on those days they do not dress and participate. If a unique situation arises, the affected student-athlete should set up a meeting with the instructor and Athletic Director.

### **Policy for Extra Curricular Education:**

Recognizing that at times students are placed in uncompromising situations where they are obligated to more than one co/extra curricular activity, the following policy has been established to clarify student and advisor responsibilities, and to assist all parties in the appropriate resolution of situations resulting from co/curricular scheduling conflicts.

When a student is confronted with a conflict resulting from two or more school-related co/curricular activities being scheduled at the same time, the following procedure shall apply:

1. When a conflict occurs between scheduled practices, the students may choose either activity without loss of membership, academic penalty, or status in the other activity.
2. When a conflict occurs between a competition/performance and a scheduled practice, the student is expected to attend the competition/performance without loss of group membership, academic penalty, or status in the other activity.
3. When a conflict occurs between two competitions/performances, the student may choose either activity after consulting with the adult advisors in a timely manner. If a serious difference of opinion arises, the student and the adult advisors will resolve the conflict jointly.
  - a. The overall importance of the conflicting events will be weighed against each other in this decision process and will serve as a determining factor.
  - b. If, in the opinion of the advisor, both competitions/performances, can be attended, the student will be expected to attend both activities.

Adult advisors will make every effort to coordinate schedules annually to avoid scheduling conflicts.

### **Potential Dangers in Athletic Participation:**

Parents and student-athletes should fully understand and appreciate the risk of injury associated with participation in sports programs provided by West Ottawa Schools. Athletic activities can be hazardous and taking part in such activities involves risk taking on the part of the student-athlete and the parents. While reducing injuries to a minimum is a goal of our coaches and administration, the possibility of injuries still exists.

### **Practice Policies:**

Practices for a sport shall not begin earlier than normal season practice without prior approval of the Athletic Director or Principal. MHSAA rules will be followed.

Length of practice will vary due to coaching circumstances. Athletes must have time for normal home activities, study and other school activities.

### **Publicity:**

Each coach is responsible for reporting information that is needed for local news media. All head varsity coaches are responsible for reporting all **home** contests to the *Holland Sentinel* [sports@hollandsentinel.com](mailto:sports@hollandsentinel.com) , 392-2314 or 800- 968-3497 and *Grand Rapids Press* 447-9399, fax-222-5224 immediately after the contest. Varsity football

and basketball coaches also need to contact local TV outlets after home contests. All comments made to media outlets should positively promote our program and student-athletes.

### **Purchase Orders:**

All purchases need to be approved by the Athletic Director ahead of time (including purchases from fundraising). No staff member shall make a purchase without prior authorization from the athletic director by issuance of a PO number. **Anything that is ordered without a PO will become the financial responsibility of the staff member.**

### **Quitting A Sport:**

We realize that some students are unfamiliar with certain sports and may desire to drop out after trying the sport. They do so without penalty if they drop out prior to the first game. No athlete should quit any sport without first consulting the coach and explaining his/her intentions. An athlete who quits after the first contest will not be permitted to participate in or prepare for another sport until the season of the dropped sport has been completed, or he/she has the authorization of both coaches involved and the Athletic Director.

### **Scrimmages:**

All scrimmages must fall within the scrimmage limitation guidelines of the MHSAA. Each scrimmage should be discussed with the Athletic Director prior to agreeing with any other school.

### **Sportsmanship:**

It is expected that proper sportsman like behavior at athletic contests is ongoing and adhered to by all athletes, coaches, and spectators. The guidelines that the O.K. Conference has adopted for fans will be followed at all school sponsored events, at home or away. Cheers and signs are to be positive and respectful, fans should be considerate and courteous, and the throwing of objects will not be tolerated by West Ottawa Public Schools. Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct as printed in the student handbook at all school-sponsored activities, home and away.

Administration and contest management will determine if these guidelines are being followed. Failure to adhere to behavior expectations may result in a warning, an ejection from that contest, and/or a suspension of privileges to attend school activities for a specified period of time. Disciplinary action will be determined based on prior occurrences and/or the severity of the offense.

### **State and Local Rules:**

All MHSAA and West Ottawa School rules, regulations, and policies must be followed. Failure to follow these rules may result in immediate dismissal from the coaching position. Each coach is responsible for knowing the following:

- National Federation, MHSAA, and OK Conference rules as they pertain to their sport.
- West Ottawa Athletic and Student Handbook
- School/Board Policy

\*It is the responsibility of all varsity head coaches to attend the annual MHSAA rules meeting in their sport.

### **Squad Selection:**

We encourage coaches to keep as many students as possible within the framework of high school interscholastic competition. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport.

Prior to trying out, the following information will be made available to all candidates for the team:

- Extent of try-out period (a minimum number of practice sessions).
- Criteria used to select the team.
- Practice commitments if they make the team (including possible holiday conflicts and/or commitments).
- Game and season commitments.

### **Squad Reduction:**

Choosing the members of the athletic squads is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. When a squad reduction becomes a necessity, the process will include three important elements. Each candidate shall:

- Have a predetermined minimum number of practice sessions.
- Have performed in at least one game-like setting. (unless extenuating circumstances prevent such a setting, e.g. weather and spring sports)

- Be personally informed of the cut by the coach. Coaches will discuss alternative possibilities for continued participation in the sport, or in other areas of participation within the athletic program with the student-athletes.

### **Supervision:**

The head coach of each team shall:

- Assign at least one coach to be with the squad at all times and to supervise the locker room until all team members have left.
- Assign at least one coach to ensure that all doors, windows, and gates are locked in any area that has been used.
- Be on the bus both to and from all away contests (the head coach should see the Athletic Director if there are any conflicts in riding the bus to and from away contests).

\*Coaches are responsible for their student-athletes at all times while under their direct supervision, here on school property, at away contests, or in transport to or from a contest. This direct supervision begins one half hour before any practice session and ends after all student-athletes have left school property.

### **Team Advancement:**

The intent of advancement of a student-athlete to a higher level team (beyond that which he/she would normally play) is to provide the talented student-athlete the opportunity to compete at a level which provides maximum experience and skill development for the student-athlete, as well as to contribute to the success of the team.

The following Team Advancement Guidelines must be met before a student-athlete will be moved to a higher-level team.

- The head coach of the sport will make the initial recommendation for advancement.
- The proposed team advancement of a student-athlete must be discussed with the athletic director, team coach, the varsity head coach, parents, and the student-athlete.

### **Team Rules:**

If team/program rules are to be used in addition to the athletic handbook, they must be submitted to the Athletic Director prior to the start of the season. These team rules may cover such things as practice attendance/opportunity to play, behavior expectations, etc.

### **Ticket Procedures:**

All ticket prices are regulated by the O.K. Conference and our Board of Education. Conference passes will be issued to all members of the coaching staff and are intended for your use only. These passes shall not be given to someone else for admittance.

### **Transfer Students:**

Student-athletes who transfer to West Ottawa must be in good standing academically and with code of conduct. Each transfer student must meet with Director of Athletics before participating. Those student-athletes who were ineligible at their previous school are unable to participate until they have permission from the Head Coach and Director of Athletics. The Head Coach and Director of Athletics will determine suspensions for ineligible student-athletes.

### **Transportation:**

General policy is that all athletes must travel to and from a contest under the direct supervision of the coach. In exceptional cases, parents may arrange with the coach to take their child home with them after a contest. A travel release form must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian accepting full responsibility for his/her son/daughter. Coaches should retain the release form and return it to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director along with the coach of the particular sport may refuse any request. Under no condition will an athlete be permitted to return with anyone other than his/her own parents or guardian. It is encouraged that athletes make trips as a team unit. Violation of this policy will justify immediate suspension from the squad.

### **Trip Conduct:**

Representatives of West Ottawa High School are expected to look and act like ladies and gentlemen. This is especially important when they are on the road. Discipline in this area is manifested in the following manner:

- Everyone should be on the bus, ready to leave, at the set time of departure.
- Everyone should be properly dressed and remain so throughout the trip.

- Coaches must outline what is expected of players and managers and not accept anything less.
- Coaches are responsible for the control of students on buses and the cleanup of said bus at the return to school.

Athletes riding the bus will return home on the bus unless the coach allows them to ride home with his/her parents. Athletes may be given permission to ride home with another parent when one-way busing is being used by supplying the coach with a special permission form given by the coach of that specific team. Under no circumstances will an athlete be allowed to leave an away contest with anyone other than the coach, supervised bus driver or parent.

### **Uniform/ Equipment Regulations:**

School equipment issued to an athlete is his/her personal responsibility and he/she is expected to return the equipment in good condition upon completion of the season. If he/she leaves the squad for any reason, he/she has one (1) week to turn in all equipment. Where there is damage or loss due to carelessness or destructiveness, the athlete will pay for the replacement of items. Equipment should be turned into the coach and not the athletic office. If equipment is not turned in, the following procedures need to be followed:

- Coach must contact the athlete.
- Coach makes a 2nd contact and also contacts the parents.
- Coach makes a 2nd contact with the parents and contacts the Athletic Director.
- Athletic Director contacts athlete and parents.
- Equipment will be treated as stolen property if it is still not turned in.

Failure to fulfill this requirement will prevent the athlete from any further participation in athletics until the matter has been cleared up. No athletic awards will be given to such individuals.

It is suggested that coaches collect all equipment on the day of the last contest to avoid these types of problems.

### **Volunteer Coaches:**

All volunteer assistant coaches **must** be approved by the Athletic Director before they assume any duties working with our student-athletes. A background check must be done as well as registration with the MHSAA.

### **Weight Room:**

All coaches are expected to encourage their student-athletes to strength, speed, and agility train throughout the year.

All coaches should supervise and teach proper techniques to their student-athletes while using the weight room.