

JOHNSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC POLICY HANDBOOK

**FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS OF
*Johnston High School and Ferri Middle School***

PHILOSOPHY

As the philosophy of the Johnston Public Schools (Johnston High School and Ferri Middle School) sets its goals to develop students both scholastically and socially so that they can enter into a lifetime of experiences with a well-rounded background, so too the objective of the Johnston Public School Athletic Department is to provide an atmosphere through which young men and young women who participate in its programs can not only hone their individual athletic skills, but can also develop positive social skills of cooperation, competition, self-discipline, and fair play through interaction with others.

It is with this in mind that coaches must remain cognizant that their job is not only to foster a winning attitude in those in their charge but also to temper the stress on winning by inculcating in their athletes the more important values of self-discipline, team play, sportsmanship, and tolerance that will make them aware of their own accomplishments and respect those of others. It is, then, the goal of this department to augment the overall philosophy of the school department to develop those skills through participation in our programs that foster both better citizens and individuals.

It is also the duty of coaches to adhere to the philosophy and regulations of the Rhode Island Principal's Committee on Athletics and the Rhode Island Interscholastic League.

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I. Eligibility

The rules and regulations regarding eligibility are a compilation of Rhode Island Interscholastic League rules and policies adopted by the Johnston Public Schools.

- A. You must be enrolled in the school for which you wish to compete, and your name must be included on an official eligibility list for any sport you play. Johnston residents who attend a school other than Johnston High School which does not offer a specific sport may be able to play for Johnston with official approval. Also, Johnston students who attend Cranston Vocational High School may compete with Johnston as long as they are eligible in all other criteria.
- B. A student is eligible if his/her nineteenth (19th) birthday does not occur before September 1st of the current school year.
- C. In order to compete, a student must have a valid physical examination, signed by a licensed physician, within the current calendar year.
- D. All students at Johnston High School must complete a valid Assumption of Risk form, once during his/her tenure at the high school.
- E. All students are eligible to compete for eight (8) consecutive semesters only, equivalent to grades 9 through 12. You cannot compete if you have graduated from high school.
- F. All students must maintain academic eligibility in order to compete. Academic eligibility consists of passing grades (in Johnston, 70 or above) in 60% of classes. Eligibility is determined at the end of each marking period (1st Quarter, Semester, and 3rd Quarter) and is valid until the next marking period. The final grade in June determines eligibility for the subsequent Fall Athletic Season in September. Note that Summer School is an option for athletes who fail in June.
- G. Transfer students who have not changed residence are ineligible in a sport in which they previously competed until 50% of the league schedule has been completed. They are immediately eligible for competition in sports which they have not played at a varsity level in the old school. A Transfer Affidavit must be prepared and submitted to RIIL's Executive Director. Transfers involving a change of residence incur no penalty and may compete immediately.
- H. Recruitment, the use of undue influence by any person, directly or indirectly associated with a school, to secure or encourage the attendance of a student for athletic purposes, is strictly prohibited. The penalty is ineligibility for one (1) year from the date of entry.

II. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ATHLETES

Student-athletes serve as role models and are admired and respected by schoolmates and younger athletes. As a result, their behavior and actions often have a significant impact on others. The student athlete must accept the responsibility to display high standards of sportsmanship.

- A. Follow the leadership of the coach and the community with regard to good sportsmanship.
- B. Each athlete should understand that drinking alcoholic beverages, taking illegal substances, and the use of tobacco products are harmful to the body and in violation of school department policy.
- C. Taunting and profanity are strictly forbidden.
- D. Athletes should demonstrate exemplary behavior in and out of school.
- E. Athletes should respect the role of officials in controlling the fairness of the contest.
- F. Athletes must obey all training and practice rules established by the coach.
- G. An athlete should care for all equipment that is issued as if it were personal property.
- H. Athletes should attend all practices, keep a good attendance record at school and avoid truancy and lateness.
- I. Athletes who participate in sports for the betterment of Johnston High School should view themselves as ambassadors of the school and community and maintain high standard of conduct.

Application of the Code of Conduct:

- A. An athlete's failure to follow the code conduct may result in disqualification.
- B. The coaching staff of each sport has the right to enforce their established rules and must apply penalties impartially.

C. Any matters which require administrative attention will be addressed by the Principal.

D. Student athletes who are dissatisfied with their treatment should address their issue with the coach. If they remain unsatisfied, they may ask for a meeting with the Athletic Director and, if that meeting is unproductive, schedule a hearing with the Superintendent of Schools.

III. Role of Parents in Interscholastic Sports

A. Parents have an important supporting role in Interscholastic Sports. Positive parental support and involvement enhance student growth and program quality. Unfortunately, the greatest peril and threat to interscholastic athletics are overzealous fans; therefore, parents and other spectators must maintain self-discipline and display the behaviors of good sportsmanship.

B. The essential elements of character-building and ethics are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and its six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

C. In athletics, it is **inappropriate** for parents and other spectators to engage in the following deleterious behaviors: violence, verbal abuse, throwing objects, vandalism, taunting the other team, obscenities or obscene gestures, harassment of officials, possession or use of alcohol, or using tobacco or illegal substances.

D. The life lessons learned through participation in athletic competition are held in high regard by current and former athletes. Particularly beneficial is the experience of working cooperatively toward a common purpose in a close-knit group, the values of teamwork, and development of the concept of fair play. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted in such a way as to justify it as an educational activity.

E. The Johnston High School Athletic Program, although it encourages and promotes competitiveness, does not condone "winning at any cost," and recognizes that the lessons learned from losing can also be beneficial.

F. Parents can help students learn the real value of winning by doing the following:

1. Offering congratulations for winning AND identifying and discussing the efforts made by individuals and the team.

2. Rewarding the winning effort AND rewarding the growth in individuals and in the team - the growth that contributed to the win.
3. Emphasizing competitiveness.
4. Emphasizing doing your best.

G. All parents should be proud parents. All parents should be advocates for their children. All parents should help and encourage their children to pursue their potential. When these important parental attributes are taken to extreme, however, athletes can miss important life learning, and can miss significant growth opportunities. Unfortunately, we have seen parents who seem satisfied *only* when their athlete is starting and/or winning. Some parents seem to have difficulty maintaining perspective.

H. Supporting student athletes, even though one may disagree with the coaches' judgment, regarding playing time and level or position placement, is an important parental role. However, challenging the coaches' judgment regarding playing time, etc. (which is the coach's assigned role), is not appropriate. Supporting the athlete in the pursuit of improved skills or alternate interests is the appropriate parent role.

I. Balance is the key, and includes maintaining a proper perspective between dreaming of the possibility of a child becoming a professional athlete and a realistic assessment of the athlete's skills and possibilities. A parent must also keep a balance between protecting one's child from adverse events and helping the athlete learn valuable lessons from adversity. There must also be a balance between blaming others and accepting responsibility and between dwelling on perceived injustices and moving forward positively.

J. Parents should also keep in mind that academics are the most important part of high school life, and that monitoring students' grades and performance in school is the real priority. They are also reminded that many scholarships are available for athletes as they further their education (see the Guidance Department), but all have an academic component and reward excellence in school. The Johnston High School Athletic Department encourages parents to become actively involved in the high school, to attend open houses and parent conferences, and to join the school Parent Advisory Group.

K. Time management is one of the most elusive skills for high school students. For student athletes, juggling school work and athletics is even more difficult. Parents should assist their son or daughter in the development of a time management program which allots appropriate amounts of time to academics and athletics.

- L. Student attendance is also critical to success in both academics and athletics. Students are expected to be present at school every day, unless they are truly ill or indisposed. When absent, it is important that a student solicit make-up work. Athletic teams traditionally practice every day during the sport season and excessive absenteeism is not tolerated. Student athletes are not allowed to participate in practices or games if they have been absent from school on a particular day. Attendance in school until 11:00 AM is considered present for the day, so a departure from school prior to that time is considered an absence. Attendance on Friday is required to participate in weekend activities.
- M. The Johnston High School Athletic Department gives out a number of awards, annually, to the best and/or most dedicated athletes. Student athletes are encouraged to participate in many activities and many sports while enrolled at Johnston High.
- N. Finally, high school athletic teams are not recreational activities. Not all prospective candidates will make the team; many of those who do make a team will see little playing time. This is the reality of competition at the high school level, and parents must discard the middle school and recreation attitude that everyone participates.
- O. The Johnston Athletic Department is planning to have an annual meeting for parents of incoming freshmen student athletes in the spring preceding their enrollment at Johnston High School. The first of these meetings will occur in May of 2011. During this meeting, parents will receive this handbook and be informed about the athletic program at Johnston High School. Attendance at this meeting is strongly recommended. If a parent is unable to attend, he/she must make an appointment with the Athletic Director prior to their son/daughter's participation in athletics.

IV. Required Forms for Athletic Participation

Your son/daughter has indicated that he/she intends to try out for a position on an athletic team offered by the Johnston High School Athletic Department. Before a student-athlete is allowed to actively practice or participate in any sport, certain forms must be filled out by a parent/guardian and returned to the respective head coach. **These forms are legal documents. Any falsification of information, especially on the physical examination form, will result in suspension from team activities. In addition, the incident will be turned over to the school administration for disciplinary action.** The required forms are listed and discussed below.

1. Physical Examination Form

It is mandatory that all student-athletes obtain a physical examination each year to be cleared to participate in a sport. It is recommended that this examination be performed by your family physician, a person who should have a thorough knowledge of the candidate's medical history. If this cannot be done, arrangements can be made to have the school physician perform the examination. Note, however, that if a "Yes" is answered in certain sections of the medical history portion of the form, the school physician will insist that the student be examined by your family physician.

2. Parent Permission Form

This form must be filled out and turned in for each sport in which your son/daughter participates. Most importantly, it contains a waiver which allows your child to receive medical treatment in the event of an injury which occurs when a parent or guardian cannot be contacted.

Please note that the Rhode Island Interscholastic League Injury Fund, which in the past has supplemented family health insurance and covered co-pays, has changed its policies. The Injury Fund has reduced its reimbursement schedules. They will consider paying 100% of uncovered expenses for bills up to \$1000, 75% for bills up to \$5000, and 65% for bills up to a maximum of \$10,000. Also, **the fund will no longer make payments to uninsured students**. Deductibles will not be reimbursed. For physical therapy, a maximum of ten (10) visits will be allowed for non-surgical injuries and fifteen (15) visits for injuries following surgery. There will also be no reimbursement for medications. For further information on Injury Fund policies and regulations, consult the fund website www.injuryfund.org.

3. Assumption of Risk Form

This form is required by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League (RIIL) for participation in Interscholastic League competition. It must be dated and notarized. **This form is filled out only once during a student's high school career and covers all sports activities.**

4. As a result of a recent Rhode Island State Law (Title 16-90-1, School & Youth Programs Concussion Act) regarding concussions, there is now a requirement that all parents and students receive a pamphlet explaining the dangers of concussions. A section of the pamphlet asks for parent and student signatures that the material has been read and understood. This section must be returned prior to the start of the student's first athletic season. The acknowledgement is required to be submitted only once during the student's tenure at Johnston High School. Understand also that mandatory concussion pre-screening is now required for football and will soon be

required for other sports. If a student receives a concussion during an athletic contest, they must be cleared by a licensed physician and submit to a post-concussion screening test before being able to resume play.

It is imperative that all information contained on these forms be accurate and legible, so you are asked to print all information clearly. Thank you for your cooperation.

V. Parental Misconduct

The Johnston Public Schools Athletic Policy Handbook outlines the responsibilities of coaches, student athletes, and parents during athletic contests. All athletic programs at Johnston High School and Ferri Middle School promote good sportsmanship and discourage disrespectful or rude behavior. As ambassadors of our school and community, coaches, players and fans must exhibit a spirit of respect, cooperation, and fairness. Rude or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

Parents or other spectators who are disruptive or disrespectful will suffer the following consequences:

1. Unofficial warning by an official, game supervisor, or coach. The offending fan or parent will be asked to refrain from his/her disorderly or disrespectful conduct.
2. Official warning by an official, game supervisor, or coach. The fan will be told that any further demonstration of the objectionable behavior will result in ejection from the stands/contest.
3. Removal from the school grounds. The game supervisor will escort the individual away from the playing area and he/she will be told to leave the school grounds.
4. Blatant disregard of step 2, above, will result in the local police being called to physically remove the person.
5. Any parent or spectator whose egregious behavior results in ejection will receive a memorandum (copy furnished to the local police force) from the Johnston High School Athletic Director (see page 9). The offending individual must comply with the requirements of the letter in order to attend further athletic contests at the school.

VI. Parental Misconduct Memorandum

JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Keith Cory-Athletic Director

345 Cherry Hill Road

Johnston, RI 02919

(401) 233-1920, Ext 2122 or 2123 FAX: (401) 233-0031

Email:

kcory@johnstonschools.org

To:

From: Keith Cory, Athletic Director

Subject: Behavior at Athletic Contest

Date:

It has come to our attention that your behavior at a recent athletic contest on _____ was unacceptable. We encourage the support of fans at our games, but the support must be positive and not disruptive or rude.

As a result of this incident, you are hereby prohibited from attending any other athletic contests at Johnston High School until you have complied with the following requirements:

1. You must take a course, entitled *The Role of Parents in Sports*, offered at no cost through the National Foundation of High Schools (NFHS). The course is available on the NFHS website, at www.nfhs.org
2. You must deliver your certificate, which you will receive upon completion of the course, to the Athletic Office at Johnston High School (the completion certificate may be faxed to the school at the number listed above).

VII. List of Sports Available at Johnston High School and Ferri Middle School

Fall Athletic Season (mid-August through November)

Johnston High

Boys' Cross Country

Girls' Cross Country

Boys' Soccer (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Girls' Soccer (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Football (coed) (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshman)

Volleyball

Cheerleading (Football-Basketball)

Cheerleading (Soccer-Hockey)

Majorettes

Ferri Middle School

Boys' Soccer

Girls' Soccer

Cross Country

Winter Athletic Season (late November to early March)

Johnston High School

Boys' Basketball (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Girls' Basketball (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Ice Hockey (coed)

Wrestling (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Indoor Track & Field

Ferri Middle School

Boys' Basketball

Girls' Basketball

Wrestling

Spring Athletic Season (mid-March to mid-June)

Johnston High School

Baseball (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshman)

Golf (coed)

Boys' Outdoor Track

Girls' Outdoor Track

Softball (Varsity and Junior Varsity)

Ferri Middle School

Baseball

Outdoor Track (coed)

Softball

Note: *The RIIL allows individual competition, in the absence of a team, in several sports. In the past, Johnston has funded individuals in Gymnastics, Indoor Track, and Swimming.*

VIII. Useful Websites

The following internet addresses contain information pertinent to interscholastic athletics and may be useful to student-athletes and to parents for various reasons.

www.injuryfund.org - The Rhode Island Interscholastic Injury Fund website contains information regarding athletic injuries and includes procedures for submitting claims in Rhode Island.

www.johnstonhighschool.org - This is the high school website; it contains athletic schedules as well as other events associated with students and athletes.

www.nfhs.org - The National Federation of High Schools is an organization which offers courses for the certification of coaches. It also dispenses other information to the public regarding athletic programs.

www.projo.com - The Providence Journal is Rhode Island major newspaper. It publishes schedules and results of athletic contests for high school sports.

www.riil.org - The Rhode Island Interscholastic League is the chief governing body for high school sports, and its website displays a wealth of information about high school sports, including schedules, standings, directions to sports facilities, etc.

www.ripcoa.com - The Rhode Island Principals' Committee on Athletics administers middle school sports in the state. Similar to the RIIL, above, its website provides schedules, standings, directions, etc.

IX. Contact Information

For further information about topics discussed in this manual and/or topics not covered, please contact the Johnston High School Athletic Office:

Telephone: 401-233-1920 ext. 2122 or 2123

Email: kcory@johnstonschools.org

Fax: 401-233-0031