

ATHLETIC/EXTRA-CURRICULAR HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of interscholastic athletics at Black River High School is to promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of all participants. Participants are defined as all persons involved including players, coaches, fans, parents, and officials. It should be understood that while athletics are an important component of our school and community, it complements our primary educational purpose.

GOALS

The program goals are to:

1. Promote good sportsmanship and morals among all participants.
2. Encourage the principles of teamwork and competition (winning and losing).
3. Encourage greater participation.
4. Promote the concept of mental and physical fitness.
5. Promote athletics as a positive and enduring experience and lifestyles.
6. Encourage the values of responsibility, dedication, commitment, loyalty, and self-discipline.
7. Support Vermont's Frameworks of Standards and Learning Opportunities.

PLAYING TIME PHILOSOPHY

Middle School Teams

All members participate and every effort is made to assure that playing time is equal for each team member. Goals are to have fun, gain experience and acquire a positive attitude toward the sport and improve the individual's skill. No player will play the equivalent of more than one game per day, exclusive of overtime periods.

Junior Varsity

While there must be more emphasis on the competition between teams, all team members should be given the opportunity to gain substantial experience. Goals are to further develop one's skills while maintaining a positive attitude and experiencing enjoyment of the sport and the spirit of competition. Junior varsity members may be asked to play up at the varsity level. Varsity players may be required to play junior varsity to provide depth to the program. No player will play the equivalent of more than one game per day, exclusive of overtime periods.

Varsity Teams

At the varsity level, athletes who display the best of both skills and attitude will receive the greatest amount of playing time. The competitive nature of interscholastic athletics at this level makes the goal of varsity teams to put the best players on the playing field or court. It is expected that, at appropriate times, all varsity members will have the opportunity to experience varsity interscholastic competition. This would be particularly true in those contests where the outcome is no longer in doubt. No player will play the equivalent of more than one game per day, exclusive of overtime periods.

Participating athletes who are seniors and have previously participated at the varsity level should receive strong consideration to continue at that level.

The coach will have discretion over playing time within the above guidelines.

ATHLETIC REGULATIONS

The Athletic Department is dedicated to interscholastic athletics as a vital component of a Black River High School education. Athletics will be a positive learning experience for our student athletes. **The selection to participate on a team or club is both an honor and a privilege.** The athletes are visible representatives of Black River High School and have the obligation to represent themselves in an exemplary manner.

Any student participating on an athletic team or club at Black River High School will abide by the policies set by Union School District #39 Directors and the rules and regulations prescribed by the Vermont Principals' Association (formerly the Vermont Headmasters' Association). In the absence of the Principal, the Superintendent or an individual designated by the Superintendent of R.W.S.U. shall take the place of the Principal.

As team members at Black River High School, athletes should recognize the following responsibilities:

- a. They are official representatives of Black River High School.
- b. They are expected to be leaders in promoting good citizenship.
- c. Their actions in and out of school build student respect and contribute to school spirit. This implies that proper respect be given to the administration, teachers, coaches, officials, fellow athletes and the student body.
- d. Players are expected to follow the school's dress code when traveling to and from athletic events.
- e. Foul language and obscene gestures will not be allowed. The student represents himself or herself, Black River High School, and the community. The student must make every effort to refrain from using foul language and obscene gestures during contests, practices, and assembling before and after these events. Coaches will discipline the offending student in a reasonable fashion.
- f. Any student removed from a game by the official for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct shall be subject to the rules established by the league and the Vermont Principals Association. Depending on the severity of the infraction the athlete may be subjected to a one- or two- game dismissal. A student who has been ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct for a second time in a season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport. The coach shall notify the Athletic Director and Principal as soon as possible in writing of any student involved in fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct. A determination shall be made by the Principal whether the conduct involved requires further consideration and action under the rules stipulated in the Student/Parent Handbook.
- g. All athletic regulations will go into effect in August, the date set by the Vermont Principal's Association for the start of 2010-2011 sport seasons.

PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR

Black River coaches, athletes, and fans have gained a favorable reputation for practicing good sportsmanship. This image must be maintained. The following guidelines must be supported by all interscholastic participants, if we are to continue this perception.

- a. A meeting of athletes and their parent/guardians shall be held at or near the start of the season to go over rules, regulations, and procedures. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to inform parents/guardians and athletes of their roles in supporting sportsmanship guidelines and participant behaviors.

- b. Prior to the start of the season, a letter will be sent to all athletes and their parents explaining the coach's philosophy, rules, and expectations for the season.
- c. **Behavior at Athletic Contest:** Interscholastic athletics is one of the most common ways by which schools gain impressions of other schools. A critical factor contributing to the reputation of a school (whether right or wrong) is the manner in which the school's participants (players, coaches, fans, and parents) conduct themselves at athletic events. This behavior reflects on the individuals themselves, the players, the coach, the student body, and community. It is imperative that the following guidelines be stressed and followed by all participants. Consequences for noncompliance may include:
 - 1) Removal from the contest site.
 - 2) Suspension from future contest(s).

FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Show respect for opponent at all times. The opponent should be treated as a guest; greeted cordially on arriving; given the best possible accommodations; and accorded the tolerance, honesty, and generosity which all humans deserve. **Good Sportsmanship is the Golden Rule in action.**

Know, understand, and appreciate the rules of the contest. A familiarity with the current rules of the game and recognition for their necessity for a fair contest is essential.

Show respect for the officials. Officials should be recognized as impartial judges who are trained to do their job and who can be expected to do it to the best of their ability.

Maintain self-control at all times. A prerequisite of good sportsmanship requires one to understand his or her own bias or prejudice and the ability to prevent the desire to win from overcoming rational behavior.

Recognize and appreciate skill in performance regardless of affiliation. Applause for an opponent's good performance is a demonstration of generosity and good will that should not be looked upon as treason. The ability to recognize quality in performance and the willingness to acknowledge without regard to team membership is one of the most highly commendable gestures of good sportsmanship.

COMMITMENT

As a participant on an athletic team it is the student's responsibility to attend all regularly scheduled practices and events. Athletes may expect practices to run between one and a half hours to two hours. A practice session should not exceed two hours in duration. If the athlete is unable to attend a practice or game they are obligated to notify the coach as early as possible. Any athlete who quits the team should notify the coach personally and return any equipment issued at that time. An athlete that quits may not participate in another activity for the remainder of the season unless both coaches involved agree to allow her or him to do so.

ATTENDANCE

a. Regular school attendance is required of all athletes. Athletes need to be in school for at least 1/2 of the school day (arrive no later than LUNCH and dismissed no earlier than LUNCH) on the day of a game, event, or practice; otherwise, the student may not participate in that game, event, or practice. In the event of an appointment make sure you are excused ahead of time. ***If in question, call the Athletic Director.***

b. **Attendance in school/class the day after a game or event is expected unless the player has sustained an injury such as to cause the absence.**

Attendance problems may result in suspension from future participation in that sport season.

c. Any unexcused absence from class during the day and/or students leaving school grounds during lunch without administrative approval, will result in the athlete not participating in the game, event, or practice that day.

d. Any absence from class due to an athletic event shall not count as an official school absence. Students are responsible for completing all missed assignments.

e. **Habitual tardiness to school may result in athletic disciplinary action which could include suspension from practice or games.**

TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENT ATHLETES

Any student involved in the afternoon technical education program may be excused for away games. It is the student's responsibility to notify the teacher prior to the athletic event and get any assignments for that day. The student is expected to attend technical education classes on days of home games. In the event of a home tournament or playoff game, it may be necessary for a student athlete to be excused on that day.

TRANSPORTATION

1. All team members shall travel to and from away games on the team bus.
2. Black River High School discourages the transporting of students in private vehicles. However, it is possible for students to return home from a school activity with a parent/guardian, family member, or parent of another team member when prior arrangements have been made. **A written request from the parent/guardian that is approved and signed by the Principal, Student Support Specialist, or Athletic Director must be presented to the coach before departure to the event.**
3. Any team member not excused who does not return with the team may be given consequences by the Athletic Director.

UNIFORMS

Team uniforms are not to be worn on the street unless authorized by the coach in special circumstances. Violation of this rule means the athlete may be asked to turn in his or her uniform.

Within one (1) week after the end of the season all uniforms are to be turned in cleaned, washed in **cold water**, and any lost articles of the uniform reported and paid for by the student. If uniforms are not returned on time students will be fined \$1.00 per day (not to exceed the replacement value of the uniform). It is the student athlete's responsibility to maintain and clean the uniform during the season.

TEAM RULES

Coaches and teams may adopt their own set of rules supplemental to the rules of the Athletic Handbook with prior approval from the Athletic Director.

CLUB TEAMS

Club teams are sponsored by Black River High School to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a sport that may not be sanctioned by the Vermont Principals Association, or if enrollment in that sport is not sufficient to warrant varsity level competition. Athletes participating in a club sport are subjected to the same rules and regulations as stated in the Athletic Handbook.

AWARDS & CERTIFICATES

Upon completion of the athletic season all players will receive a certificate of participation at the sports banquet. Players should make an effort to attend this banquet. Varsity athletes who participate in a majority of the regular and post season contests will be eligible to receive their varsity letter and pin for that sport. Varsity level players who are repeat recipients of the varsity award will receive a service pin.

Each team may also select a Most Improved and Best All Around Award. The coach may select a candidate for the Coaches Award.

ELIGIBILITY

Students are encouraged to participate on the athletic teams offered at Black River High School. However, students must maintain a minimal average to remain eligible for interscholastic athletics. Students must have an overall average of 70% or better and no incomplete grades at the end of the marking period. A student failing two classes or more is ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the marking period. Eligibility will be determined on the date of report card distribution. Fall eligibility is based on the last marking period of the previous year.

For students attending classes at the River Valley Technical Center or Stafford Technical Center, academic eligibility will be determined by their quarterly grade report. In the event that the technical school is not on a quarterly system eligibility will be determined by an official progress report from the school to BRHS effective the day BRHS issues report cards.

All seventh graders and incoming freshmen are initially eligible to participate in the fall sports season.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student who has an average below 70% will be on Academic Probation and may be allowed to participate after one week if the following conditions are met:

- a. He or she is in good standing, passing all courses and has achieved a 70% overall average in all classes
- b. He or she must continue to maintain the 70% overall average and submit progress reports to the Athletic Director weekly. The Athlete is responsible for completing and submitting progress reports to the Athletic Director weekly.
- c. He or she has the approval of the guidance counselor.
- d. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed by the administration.

Students ineligible due to an “Incomplete” may participate after completion of their work and provided they meet eligibility requirements and the conditions stated above.

Students participating in fall sports may begin practicing at the beginning of tryouts. Their one week probation period will begin the opening day of school. For all other sports seasons, probation begins the day of report card distribution.

**** It is the student’s responsibility to get the progress report(s) from the Guidance Office.**

****Students must complete ten (10) practice sessions before playing in a contest.**

TRANSFER STUDENTS

All students transferring to Black River High School/Middle School will not be allowed to participate in athletic programs until a transcript has been received from their previous school. Grades on the transcript will be used to determine eligibility. Transfer students must complete five (5) practices before competing in a regular season game. All transfer students are subject to the rules and regulations set forth by the V.P.A.

UNLAWFUL CONDUCT

All participants in athletics are subject to rules of conduct specified in the Black River High School Student/Parent Handbook. Any activity which is prohibited on the school property is also prohibited in Black River High School athletic activities. If a student engages in prohibited conduct in athletics, such student shall be suspended from participation for ten calendar days. Prior to returning to athletic participation the offender shall be obligated to meet with the Athletic Director, Principal, and any offended party for the purpose of understanding the impact on the offended party. Athletic participants are particularly cautioned that acts of unlawful conduct **including but not limited to hazing, harassment and bullying** are prohibited. **See the Union #39 Harassment, Hazing and Bullying Policies.**

ATHLETIC SUSPENSIONS Due Process/Appeal

Prior to suspension from athletics, a due process meeting will be called by the Principal as soon as feasible after the incident is reported. The meeting will include the student, the student's parent/guardian, such counsel as may be requested by the parent and/or Principal, other members of the Administration, the Athletic Director, the Coach(es) involved, and witnesses. These meetings will be considered "closed" to the public unless otherwise requested by the family of the alleged offender and/or counsel.

The Principal will render the decision on all suspensions from athletics within 5 school days. An appeal to the Superintendent of the Principal's decision may be filed by the alleged offender within 5 school days after the date of the Principal's decision. The Superintendent will act on the appeal promptly, but not later than 5 school days after the appeal has been filed with the Superintendent.

The alleged offender may appeal the decision of the Superintendent to the School Board within 5 school days after the date of the decision of the Superintendent. The School Board will meet with all parties within 3 school days following the date of filing of the appeal and will act on the appeal as promptly as possible.

These sessions shall be "closed" unless otherwise specified by both parties. Suspension ordered by the Administration will be in force until the appeal is resolved.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The following need to be filled out, signed by both student and parent as indicated on forms, and returned to Athletic Director prior to participating in any athletic team/club activities:
 - a. Sports Participation Permission Form
 - (1) Proof of insurance
 - (2) Parent/Guardian Signature
 - (3) Proof of current physical examination every other year
 - b. Athletic Contract
 - c. Release For Medical Treatment Form (this form is given to the Coach)
2. Students must complete ten (10) practice sessions before playing in an athletic contest. A double session practice, being a practice session held at two different times during the same day, may count as two practices.

UNCOMFORTABLE/CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

All student athletes at Black River have the right to discuss uncomfortable or controversial issues with their coach without fear of retribution.

If for any reason the athlete or their parent feels that they cannot discuss an issue with the coach, then they should contact the Athletic Director or School Counselor where they can feel more at ease.

All issues discussed should also be put in writing and must be signed by the athlete, their parent, or both if the concerns are to be considered a formal complaint.

EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION POLICY

All students have the right to a drug-free school and it is the responsibility of our community and specifically, all students, parents, and school personnel, to work together to achieve this goal. The school recognizes that alcohol, tobacco and other drug use is illegal and interferes with behavior, learning, health, and the full development of each student and seriously impacts the entire school community.

In support of this philosophy it is the policy of the Union #39 School District that each student participating in any and all extracurricular activities is expected to abstain from the possession or use of any alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products regardless of the time, place, or occasion. Abstention will be enforced by the school district from the beginning of the first day of practice or student activities in August through the last day of school and/or the last student activity, whichever is later. All students who participate in any school activity will abstain through this entire period. Before participation in any extracurricular activity the student must have returned a **Policy Acknowledgement Form** signed by both the student and parent or legal guardian to be kept on file with the Principal. A student who is found to have used or been in possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products during this time but prior to signing the extracurricular/athletic form will be held to the same expectations and will be subject to the same sanctions when they begin participation in an extracurricular activity that begins later in the year.

The consequences for all violations of this policy shall be:

Using/Possession

First Offense:

- The student will be suspended from all athletic/extracurricular programs for 10 calendar days and be placed on a minimum 3-month probationary period starting on the first day of suspension.
- The student cannot attend any team practices or team games during the 10 days of suspension.
- At the conclusion of the ten-day suspension, the student may be eligible for reinstatement. The student must sign an agreement to complete 30 hours of community service – 15 hours to be completed before rejoining the team, and successfully complete a substance abuse program approved by the Principal before returning to team practices.
- On the 11th day, upon meeting the requirements for reinstatement, the student may return to the team/activity to only practice with the team and/or club.
- The student may participate in actual activities and games once they have completed five days of practice with the team, 15 hours of approved community service, and completed a drug and alcohol assessment.
- The student will not hold any leadership positions on the team or club during the probationary period.
- A student will not be eligible to participate in a new athletic/extracurricular program until they have successfully completed all the written conditions of their probation. The probationary period will remain in affect until it has been successfully completed.

Second Offense:

- Any student who commits a second offence during their high school career may not represent the school and consequently the student will immediately be dismissed from all co-curricular activities (athletic and non-athletic).
- The student will be placed on a 12-month probationary period starting on the first day of the suspension. Students must sign an agreement to complete 60 hours of community service and complete an approved treatment plan.
- After six months, the student can appeal to a committee for reinstatement consisting of teachers, coaches, school principal, and the athletic director. Prior to scheduling an appeal hearing, the student must have completed 60 hours of community service and completed the approved treatment plan.

Third Offense:

- A student who commits a third offense during their high school career will be dismissed from all co-curricular activities (athletic and non-athletic). The student will be prohibited from participating in any co-curricular for the remainder of their school career.

Selling

- The police will be notified by a school administrator.
- Suspension for one calendar year in all co-curricular activities (athletic and non-athletic) starting with the date of suspension.

- Student must participate in a substance abuse program at their cost and successfully complete the program. The student will be referred to the school's student assistance program counselor for participation in a substance abuse program.
- After six months, the student can appeal to a committee for reinstatement consisting of teachers, coaches, school principal, and the athletic director. Prior to scheduling an appeal hearing, the student must have completed 60 hours of community service and completed the approved treatment plan.

Please realize, in joining a Black River team/club/organization, you are pledging your word that you will abide by the rules. You are committing to your team, your parents, your school, and to yourself, that you will not use tobacco, alcohol or drugs while involved in athletics and/or student activities at Black River High School and Middle School. Parents, you too, are making a commitment that you understand and accept these rules, and that you will aid in their enforcement by reporting any violations you witness, even it is your own child.

ANONYMOUS ACCUSATIONS, INCLUDING ELECTRONIC IMAGES, WILL NOT BE THE SOLE DETERMINING FACTOR IN DISCIPLINING A STUDENT. ALL CONSEQUENCES APPLY TO THE STUDENT'S SCHOOL CAREER.

Self-Referral for Assistance

When a student recognizes that he/she has a problem with drugs or alcohol use and chooses to do something about the problem, the school will cooperate as fully as possible with the individual.

An individual who seeks the assistance of a school counselor, school nurse, or student assistance program counselor shall be offered educational resources, individual or group counseling, and/or referral to a community agency. These services shall be provided without reprisal provided **all** of the following conditions are met:

1. The student is self-referred, not "caught" in violation of school or legal policies.
2. There is no immediate or apparent threat or harm to self or others.
3. There is a commitment to participate in a substance abuse program.

Cyberimages and Appropriate Use of Technology

Black River encourages safe and responsible student behavior with regard to internet use. We highly recommend our students avoid inappropriate use of social networking sites, including but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, or Twitter. We also encourage safe and appropriate use of cellular phones. Any identifiable image, photo, video, posted online or in a text message which implicates a student to have been in violation of our training rules will be investigated immediately by school officials.

Use of Student-Athlete Photographs

The Black River School does publicize photographs of student in performances and games including team pictures and action photographs. Photographs are publicized in a variety of places including, but not limited to, on the school's web page, on publicized schedules, and in pictures displayed at the school. Any parent who does

not want his/her child's photograph used for these purposes – please contact the Principal.

Performance-Enhancing Drugs/Supplements

Healthy student-athletics do not need supplements. Our students are encouraged to maintain a healthy diet, lifestyle, and exercise regimen in order to optimize performance. Use of illegal performance enhancing substances will result in dismissal from the team. There are many other commercially available products marketed for the purpose of enhancing athletic performances. We advise against use of these products – studies on their long-term affects are incomplete, and they may be detrimental to the health and performance of young student-athletics. They can also be dangerous when used inappropriately. The Athletic Director is available to answer questions from students and parents.