

Otsego Middle School Athletic Handbook (2008-09)

(Consent form is also on the web page)

To The Parent:

On behalf of the athletic staff at Otsego Middle School, we would like to thank you and your son or daughter for becoming part of the athletic program. Your family interest in this phase of our school program is gratifying. Participation in athletics provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences which will assist students in everyday life.

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. There are reasons we place such an emphasis on good training habits. Good training habits are essential for the middle school athlete in preparation for interscholastic competition. Attaining this goal would be a cooperative effort by all involved.

Parents are directed to follow the proper chain of command in the event of a question or disagreement with a coach's general philosophy, amount of playing time your son/daughter receives, or other area of concerns. Parents should first have their athlete contact the coach. After this initial contact, parents should contact the coach, followed by the athletic director, and then the middle school principal. Parents should maintain a supportive relationship between the coach and the athlete. Parents are welcome to observe practice sessions, realizing that the field/court serves as an educational classroom in nature. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the pre-season meeting where coaches explain rules, philosophy and answer any questions you may have.

When your son/daughter elects to try out for a sports team, we feel there is a commitment to certain responsibilities and obligations. This is our opportunity to acquaint you with specific policies necessary for a well organized program of athletics. Please read this information with your son or daughter.

To the Athlete:

Being a member of an Otsego athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition for many students.

It takes a lot of work to become a dedicated athlete. To compete as an athlete for your school is a privilege and not a right. That may mean that you will have to say no to temptations an athlete cannot afford. It will be necessary that you not only understand the traditions of your school, but also be willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them.

You will inherit a leadership role when you join an athletic squad. The student body and citizens of the community will know you, and you are on stage with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community, and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitude both on and off the field/court. As a result of this leadership role, you can do a great deal to promote school spirit and community pride.

As a squad member, you assume a serious responsibility to your home, school, and community. When you know that you have lived up to all of the training rules, that you practiced to the best of your ability every day, and that you have played the game "All Out," then your family, school, and community can be justly proud of you.

Don't do anything to let yourself or your family down. Make Otsego proud of you and your community proud of your school by setting a good example and contributing your best to the success of athletics at Otsego Middle School.

Athletic Philosophy and Objectives

Athletics is an integral part of the total educational program and contributes substantially to the learning of all students. Through interscholastic athletics, an opportunity is provided for students to achieve beyond the normal school and physical education curriculum. Our program is tailored to provide meaningful learning experiences that fit harmoniously into the overall educational program. We recognize that vigorous physical activity is vital to healthful living, and participation in athletics should be founded on a clean and disciplined life. We endeavor to develop a young athlete to the full extent of his/her capabilities. Each athlete is strongly encouraged to participate in as many different school-sponsored sports as possible throughout the entire school year. Success, school unity, and pride are enhanced by a wide range of individual involvement in school sponsored sports.

Objectives of Interscholastic Athletics:

1. To provide a diversified and balanced athletic program.
2. To encourage each student to excel to the best of his/her ability.
3. To develop winning teams and programs, realizing that losing is not a disgrace if one had done his/her best.
4. To learn and practice good sportsmanship at all times.
5. To develop and promote the values of physical fitness and sound physical and mental health.
6. To educate and inform the community as to the purpose and place of interscholastic athletics.
7. To promote fun and enjoyment for all participants.
8. To build a winning attitude while also making every effort to involve as many athletes as possible in school-sponsored interscholastic athletics.

Michigan High School Athletic Association Rules

Enrollment- Have been enrolled in a middle school by the 4th Friday after Labor Day (1st Semester) or the 4th Friday of February (2nd Semester).

Age- No student who is enrolled in the sixth grade or below may compete on the same team with and/or against 7th or 8th graders.

7th grade - Under age 14 unless birthday is after September 1st

8th grade - Under age 15 unless birthday is after September 1st

Physical Examinations- Have passed a current year physical examination from an examining physician (M.D., or D.O.). Record must be on file in the school office. The exam must be given after April 15th of the previous school year. The primary purpose of the examination is to screen each athlete for any major or glaring medical deficiency.

Semesters of Enrollment- Students enrolled in grades 7 or 8 are not limited in the number of semesters in which they may be eligible for interscholastic athletics.

Semesters of Competition- Students enrolled in grades 7 or 8 are not limited in the number of semesters of competition.

Previous Semester Record- Have received at least 50% of the work taken during the previous semester of enrollment.

Current Semester Record- Be carrying passing grades in at least 50% of the present semester classes up to within seven (7) days of contest.

Awards

- A. A student may accept for participation in athletics a symbolic or merchandise award which does not have a value or cost in excess of \$25.00.
- B. Awards for athletic participation in the form of cash, merchandise certificates, or any other type of negotiable documents are never allowed.
- C. Banquets, luncheons, dinners, and fees or admissions to camps or events, if accepted in kind, are permitted under this regulation.

Amateur Practices

- A. No student shall be eligible to represent his/her school who: (1) has received money or other valuable consideration from any source participating in athletics, sports, or games listed in Section B, (2) has received money or other valuable consideration for officiating in interscholastic athletic contests, or (3) has signed a professional athletic contract.
- B. A student shall be ineligible under this regulation if he or she violates its amateur provisions, only in the following activities: Baseball, Cross Country, Football (11-man, 8-man, or 6-man), Golf, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, Cheerleading, Skiing, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, or Wrestling.

Limited Team Membership

- A. A student who, after practicing with or participating in an athletic contest or scrimmage as a member of a middle school athletic team, participates in any athletic competition not sponsored by his or her school in the same sport during the season, shall become ineligible for a minimum of the next two (2) contests, and maximum of the remainder of that season in that school year.
- B. A student shall not compete at any time in any sport under MHSAA jurisdiction in any of the following events: (1) All star contests, regardless of the method of selection, (2) All star fund-raising events of similar exhibitions if they involve contestants other than the students and faculty of that student's school, (3) Any event which is a national middle school championship, or the qualification thereto. Participation in such a contest by a middle school student shall cause that student to become ineligible for all interscholastic athletics for a maximum period of one year of the school enrollment from the date of the athlete's last violation of the regulation.
- C. Outside athletic participation by an athlete in programs such as AAU, AYSO and JO are viewed as complimentary in nature to school-sponsored athletics. Such programs should not detract from or take away from school-sponsored athletics. When conflicts arise, it is understood that school athletics will assume priority.
- D. Team membership during boys and girls basketball season and girls volleyball season may be limited due to practice facilities and coach availability. Intramural programs will be offered to those students who do not make the middle school sponsored basketball or volleyball teams. These programs will be offered through the Community Education.

Otsego Middle School Eligibility

1. All athletes participating in middle school athletics are expected to maintain a high standard of grades and personal behavior.
2. Eligibility will be checked on a weekly basis. A compiled eligibility report will be given to coaches on Friday and will affect in-season athlete's eligibility to play for the following week Monday through Saturday. Ineligible students will be given a progress sheet indicating any problems. The progress sheet must be signed by athletes' parents and returned to coaches on Monday of the following week. The students will then be expected to take responsibility to meet with each teacher during Strive, after the Monday morning meeting, to obtain information and practice work which will help to improve their grades. Practice work must then be brought to study table on Tuesday and Thursday if applicable.

3. An athlete must be passing all but one class. If an athlete is failing two or more classes they will be ineligible. Athletes will also be graded as passing or failing in terms of citizenship. A failing mark in citizenship is worth one point. If an athlete accumulates three points in citizenship they will be ineligible. An athlete receiving a D in three classes or more will be placed on a warning list. An athlete receiving two failing marks in citizenship will be placed on a warning list.
4. Athletes that are ineligible they will be out for the next eligibility period.

Attendance: A student must arrive to school no later than 9:56 a.m. in order to participate in after school activities that same day. Any exception must be pre-arranged and approved by the Athletic Director or Principal.

Penalties for Violations of Rules

Drugs/Tobacco/Alcohol

First Violation

Penalty - After confirmation of the first violation, the student will be suspended immediately for 25% of the scheduled contests in the sport in which the student is a participant. If the penalty is not fully administered during that sport season, the remainder of the penalty will be applied to the next interscholastic sport season in which the athlete participates and completes.

Second Violation

Penalty - After confirmation of the second violation, the student will be suspended immediately for 75% of the scheduled contests in the sport in which the student is a participant. If the penalty is not fully administered during that sport season, the remainder of the penalty will be applied to the next interscholastic sport season in which the athlete participates and completes.

Within 5 school days of confirmation of a violation the student must meet with parents, Athletic Director and a school counselor for the purpose of: (1) determining and discussing the severity of the problem, (2) counseling the student and parents on alternatives for the prevention of the behavior(s) related to the said violation.

The penalty period will begin from the date of confirmation provided the student/athlete fulfills the counseling requirement within the five-school-day period.

If the student/athlete fails to meet the counseling requirement within the five-school-day period, he/she will remain suspended until a counseling session takes place. The penalty period for the violation will then begin from the date of the counseling session.

No deviation will be allowed without prior approval of the Athletic Director.

Third Violation

Penalty - After confirmation of the third violation, the student will be suspended from participation in athletics for the remainder of his/her middle school career and referred to the high school counseling department.

Athlete/Parent Appeal Procedures

Under present law, the Principals of Otsego Public Schools are delegated the authority to temporarily suspend a student from school. The school's appeal procedure is as follows:

1. Parents or legal guardians may request a conference with the principal or designee. Such requests must be made within the period of suspension. The principal shall affirm or modify the

decision of the athletic director within two school days from hearing the appeal. The principal's decision in cases of temporary suspension shall be final.

2. Within five school days from the principal's decision, the parent or legal guardian may appeal such a decision to the superintendent of school or his designee. The superintendent shall affirm or modify the decision of the principal within two days from the appeal.

3. The superintendent's decision may be appealed to the board of education within five days from hearing the appeal.

4. The board of education shall schedule a hearing within ten days after receiving the appeal and shall notify the parent or legal guardian.

a. Written notice shall be given of the date, time and place of the hearing.

b. The student or parent/guardian may be represented by an attorney or other advisor of their choosing.

c. Witnesses may be presented at the hearing and may be questioned by the board and its representatives and by the student and the student's representatives.

d. The hearing is not a court proceeding and court rules of evidence shall not be enforced at such a hearing.

e. There may be present at the hearing the principal, the Board of Education's attorney, and such resource persons as the president of the Board of Education deems essential to the proper adjudication of the case.

f. The Board of Education shall render a written opinion of its determinations within three school days from the date of the hearing. Such a written opinion shall be forwarded to all parties concerned.

Miscellaneous Personal Insurance That Have Limitations

HMO (Health Maintenance Organizations) or
PPO (Preferred Provider Organizations)

Enrollment in these type of organizations is growing by leaps and bounds. For the parents to have payable coverage on their son or daughter, members of these organizations must use the authorized medical vendors from the list provided them. Athletic coverage through the school's carrier is excess coverage and does contain an exclusion for those bills incurred that were "payable" by other insurance or plan. If the parents chooses not to use authorized medical vendors of their plan, they should be aware that the school's coverage will not be able to pay the bills incurred, which would have been honored had they used the proper medical vendors.

OUR CARRIER WILL NOT PAY BILLS IF THESE ATHLETES GO TO UNAUTHORIZED DOCTORS. ATHLETES SHOULD NOT GO TO SPORTS MEDICINE CLINICS WITHOUT PARENTS FIRST CONSIDERING THEIR PRIMARY CARRIER INSURANCE COVERAGES.

Potential Dangers in Athletic Participation

Parents and student athletes should fully understand and appreciate the risk of serious personal injury associated with participation in the educational sports programs provided by the Otsego Schools. The safety and well-being of the participant shall be of prime importance to those in charge.

Rules and Regulations Not Specifically Covered

The school reserves the right to set forth as part of the Athletic Code of Conduct those rules and regulations necessary and proper for carrying in to execution the athletic program of the school, which are not specifically stated here or as the need arises. When in judgment of the administration, a student's behavior reaches such proportion or is of a nature that it tends to

adversely influence others and/or interfere with the athletic philosophy, or infringes on the right of others, this behavior is grounds for suspension.

Governing Policy

Athletes and parents should be aware that the rules, policies and information contained in this handout will govern the athlete once the student has committed him/herself to any of our interscholastic programs at the high school level, freshmen through senior level. Carryovers and records will be kept on file for up to four (4) years.

Non-Discrimination Requirements

All students at Otsego Middle School shall have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all academic and extracurricular activities and services. No student, on the basis of sex, race, or nationality will be excluded from participation in any program directed by the school unless the exclusion is lawful.