

***PYMATUNING VALLEY
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT***



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Grades 7th-12th

Pymatuning Valley Local School District Athletic Handbook

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This handbook is presented to you because your son/daughter has expressed a desire to participate in interscholastic sports in the Pymatuning Valley Local Schools. Your family interest in this component of our school program is important to us. We believe participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences, which assist students in personal growth and adjustments. It is our intent to conduct a program that is educationally sound in purpose and will enhance each student's personal growth.

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. These are the reasons we place stress on good training habits. Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct means exclusion from the squad. This concept of self-discipline and self denial is tempered by our responsibility to recognize the rights of the individual within the objectives of the team. There is no place in high school athletics for students who will not discipline their minds and bodies for rigorous competition. We are striving for excellence and do not want to compromise excellence with mediocrity.

It is the role of the department of athletics to make rules that govern the spirit of competition for the school. These rules need a broad basis of community support, which is achieved only through communication to the parent. It is our hope to accomplish this objective through this athletic handbook for students and parents.

It is the role of the parent to set a good example for **sportsmanship**. The fundamentals are to show respect for the **opponent** and officials at all times, to know, understand and appreciate skills in performance, regardless of the team affiliation. Each parent wants their son/daughter to do well, but not at the expense of the team members. It is a parent's responsibility to encourage the athlete in a positive manner and not to belittle the other team members or the officiating crews at the event. Too many times, parents get caught up in the winning mentality and forget the importance of integrity and ethics. If we are to see our athletes succeed, parents need to stress the importance of integrity, moral values, and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. Generosity and genuine concern for others characterize sportsmanship.

Whenever the behavior of anyone (parent, citizen, adult, student or minor) becomes disruptive at a school event or dangerous to that individual or others at the event, school authorities have the right, authority, and affirmative obligation to take action. Consequences could include a warning, removal from the athletic contest, and/or suspension from future contests and other after school activities.

If at any time you have any questions, please feel free to contact the athletic director. (440-293-6263)

Sincerely,

Pymatuning Valley Athletic Department

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Pymatuning Valley Local School District Athletic Program should provide a variety of experiences to enhance the development of favorable habits and attitudes that will prepare students for adult life in a democratic society. The interscholastic athletic program shall be conducted in accordance with existing Board of Education policies, rules, and regulations. While the Board of Education takes great pride in winning, it does not condone "winning at any cost." It discourages any and all pressures, which might lead to neglecting good sportsmanship and good mental health. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted in such a way that it is an educational activity.

IT IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT, TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS.

CORE VALUES

The following are the core values of the Pymatuning Valley Local School District Athletic Department:

STUDENT-ATHLETES

Athletic teams will strive to improve the team GPA from the beginning of the season to the end of the season. No student-athlete will be lost because of ineligibility.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Pymatuning Valley Local Schools athletes will win without boasting and lose without excuses. Student-athletes will always show respect for officials and opponents.

MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION

Each athletic program will maximize participation by encouraging students to participate in sports. Students will also be encouraged to be multi-sport athletes.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT Every athlete and team will strive for continuous improvement by developing measurable goals for each season.

COMMITMENT Pymatuning Valley High School Athletes will demonstrate commitment in their attendance at practice, games, or events. From the first day of the season until the final second of play, athletes will be expected to give their best effort, regardless of the competitive situation.

ATHLETES:

Being a member of a Pymatuning Valley athletic team is a fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of **Pymatuning Valley Schools**, you have inherited a wonderful tradition that you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been to win with honor. We desire to win, but only with honor to our athletes, our school and our community. Over the years, our teams have achieved much. Many individuals have set records and achieved many awards.

It will not be easy to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. When you wear the colors of our school, we assume that you not only understand our traditions, but also are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them. However, the contributions you make should be a satisfying accomplishment to you and your family.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF: The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden and develop strength of character. *You* owe it to yourself to derive the greatest benefit from your athletic experiences. Your academic studies, your participation in extracurricular activities as well as in sports, help to prepare you for life as an adult.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR SCHOOL: Another responsibility you assume as a squad member is to our school district. **Pymatuning Valley Schools** cannot maintain its position as having an outstanding school district unless you do your best in the activity in which you engage. By participating in athletics to the maximum of your ability, you are contributing to the reputation of our school district. You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic team. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitude, on and off the field; because of this leadership role, you can contribute significantly to school and community pride. Make **Pymatuning Valley Schools** proud of you by your consistent demonstration of these ideals.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHERS: As a squad member, you also bear a heavy responsibility to your home. If you never give your parents anything to be ashamed of, you will have measured up to the ideal. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all of the training rules, that you have played the game "all out", you can keep your self-respect and your family can be justly proud of you. The younger students in the **Pymatuning Valley Schools** are watching you. They will model you in many ways. Do not do anything to let them down. Set good examples for all team members.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

BEHAVIOR

You are a student first and an athlete second. As a member of a team, you are expected to represent your team and school at all times. This means in the classroom, during extracurricular activities and in the community. It is a privilege to participate in athletics and you should be proud to be associated with a team and your teammates. Please follow these simple guidelines:

- I will respect others' property as I would my own
- I will respect adults (school personnel who deal with me on a daily basis and any other adult)
- I will conduct myself in an exemplary social manner at all times.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

A yearly physical examination is required. The physical form must be completed by the physician, signed by the parent and the athlete and submitted to the coach or Athletic Director **PRIOR** to the **first** day of that sport. The form will be kept on file in the athletic director's office. Each participant must have a medical examiner certify the individual's physical fitness no less than once each calendar year. We strongly recommend you have the physical in the summer, even if you will not be participating in a sport until the winter or spring months.

If the pre-participation athletic evaluation (physical) is conducted between May 1 and June 1, the pre participation evaluation (physical) signed by the medical examiner, is valid for one calendar year plus the remainder of the next school year. (OHSAA 3-4- 1)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

Each parent shall fill out an emergency consent form. That form gives permission to treat your son/daughter in the event of an injury and the parent is not at the event.

INSURANCE

The Pymatuning Valley Local School District **does not** carry insurance to cover sports injuries. The Ohio High School Athletic Association does carry catastrophic insurance that covers some cost above and beyond the family coverage. It is strongly recommended that students with no insurance coverage purchase the Student Accident Insurance made available through the school district.

SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY

All student-athletes must meet the scholastic requirements of the O.H.S.A.A. which require that the athletes pass a minimum of the equivalent of five (5) credits toward graduation during the immediately preceding grading period in order to be eligible the following grading period. **Changes of eligibility will become effective on the START of the fifth school day after the end of the nine weeks. All student-athletes in grade 9-12 must also earn a 2.0 GPA for the preceding grading period to be eligible.** A student earning a 1.8 to a 1.99 may apply for an exemption to the 2.0 provision one-time in his/her high school career. **The athletic director, guidance counselor and principal will consider the request and approve or disapprove. OHSAA 4-4-5 A student enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grade 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period and received passing grades during that grading period in a minimum of five of those subjects in which the student received grades.**

PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE SPORTS WITHIN A SINGLE SEASON

It is recommended that a student compete in one sport per season. However, it is recognized that from time to time an athlete has the ability and work ethic to compete in more than one sport per season. If this is the case, the following procedure will be used:

- Consensus among head coaches and athletic director
- One sport is designated as the primary sport for competitions and tournaments
- Student must appear on roster for both sports
- Student must comply with practice requirements mandated by the O.H.S.A.A.

DROPPING OR TRANSFERRING SPORTS

Quitting is an unacceptable habit. A quitter may lose the privilege of participating in athletics. On occasion, however, an athlete may find it necessary to drop a sport for a good reason. If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:

- **Consult with the immediate coach and the head coach**
- **Report the situation to the athletic administrator**
- **Check in all equipment.**

If an athlete wishes to change sports during a season, he/she shall consult with both coaches concerned and the athletic administrator. If an athlete quits a sport, he/she cannot practice with another sport until the season of the sport he/she quits is concluded; unless both coaches agree.

EQUIPMENT

School equipment checked out by the student is his/her responsibility. He/she is expected to keep it clean and in good condition. An athlete should not under any circumstances, trade or loan equipment to other team members without permission from the coach. End of the season awards will not be issued until equipment has been turned in or lost/stolen equipment has been paid for.

MISSING PRACTICE

Unless ill, an athlete should always consult with his/her coach BEFORE missing practice. Each athlete must communicate with his/her coach when they will miss a practice. Do not assume that your coach knows where you are. If an athlete misses the practice the day before a game without prior approval from the coach or athletic administrator, he/she will be ineligible to participate in that game. College visits and field trips are excused absences. If an athlete is not in school by 10:35 on a practice or game day, the athlete will not be able to participate in practice or in the game. Exceptions will be made for an official doctor's visit or prior-approved excused absence.

TRAVEL

All athletes must travel to and from out-of-town athletic contests in transportation provided by the athletic department, unless the parents make previous arrangements for an exceptional situation.

- **Athletes are encouraged to ride the bus to and from all contests.**
- Athletes will remain with their squad and under the supervision of the coach when attending away contests.
- Athletes that miss the bus will not be allowed to participate in the contest unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- An athlete may not drive to an event and participate in that event. All regular school bus rules will be followed.
- Riding home from an event with a parent is discouraged. However, this request may be granted by a coach. In this situation, the athlete may only ride home from the event with **those on the Emergency Form. The contact must sign a sign-out sheet** provided by the coach. The athlete is responsible for their own equipment if they choose to ride home with a parent. Coaches have the option of making this part of their team rules and informing parents of policy prior to the start of scrimmages and contests.
- Emergency situations should be brought to the attention of the principal **prior** to the event.

PICK UP FROM EVENTS AND PRACTICE

The athlete is to be picked up immediately following practice or an event. Beginning and ending practice times will be given to the athlete at the beginning of each season. Please consult these times for pick up. If the event is away, the coach will give the athlete an approximate pick up time. Please be considerate of the coaches' time and pick up your athletes on time.

COLLEGE RECRUITMENT POLICY

In the event a college recruiter should contact an athlete personally, he/she has an obligation to work through his/her coach and the athletic department. Coaches should be contacted as soon as possible. College recruitment information is available in the athletic office. NCAA registration forms and standards are available to students and families in the guidance office.

CONFLICTS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

An individual student who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities may create conflict of obligations and interests. The athletic department recognizes that each student has the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities, and will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts. Students have a responsibility to do everything possible to avoid continuing conflicts. Positive efforts might include being cautious about joining too many activities where conflicts are unavoidable. It also means notifying the faculty sponsors/coaches involved immediately when conflict arises. When a conflict situation arises, the advisor/coach will work out a solution so the student does not feel caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the principal will make the decision based on the following:

- ☐ **The relative importance of each event to the student**
- ☐ **The importance of the event to the school**
- ☐ **The relative contribution that student can make**
- ☐ **How long each event has been scheduled**
- ☐ **Conference with parents**

Once a decision has been made and the student has committed to that decision, he/she will not be penalized in any way by either advisor/coach.

ATTENDANCE

Students who miss part of the day due to illness must be in attendance by **9:55 a.m. (Start of 4th Period)** in order to play a contest or practice on that date. Exceptions will be made for an official doctor's visit or prior approved excused absence. Students missing school for reasons other than illness must have an excused absence in order to participate on that date. Final authority for infractions of this rule will rest with the principal. Students absent from school on Friday with a contest the following day (Saturday) will be eligible to participate provided a school administrator excuses the absence.

ATHLETIC COMMITMENT

It is imperative for athletes to practice their sport to improve their performance. Each sport at Pymatuning Valley features a crucial pre-season practice schedule meant to help coaches instruct athletes as they prepare themselves to compete at their personal best. It is understood that circumstances may arise where an athlete cannot be with a team from the very start of practices. However, rosters will be closed and final after the first sanctioned game, match, meet, or event. Thus, no athlete can join a team once competitions have begun. This would contradict the commitment necessary and, in some sports, take away from an athlete who made that commitment.

Ineligible athletes or athletes still participating in a previous sport season will be included on the roster and are exempt from needing to be with the team prior to the first contest. However, these students will be expected to begin full commitment once eligible, and should attend practice as often as possible until that point.

EARLY DISMISSAL FROM CLASSES FOR AWAY CONTESTS

It is the responsibility of athletes to see their teacher the day before the classes they will miss because of an athletic contest. All work should be made up at the convenience of the teacher.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR SCHOOL VIOLATION & CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS

If an athlete violates the school code of conduct, the principal in consultation with the athletic director and coach will have the authority to determine what disciplinary action will be taken in regard to the athlete and their sport. Depending upon the violation, the principal may dismiss the athlete from the sport or authorize removal from play. If the athlete has been charged with an alleged criminal violation, that athlete may be removed from play pending investigation. If the athlete is found guilty of the offense, the athlete may be dismissed from the sport.

VACATION POLICY

Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are to be discouraged during Varsity competition. Parents/athletes wishing to do so may wish to reassess their commitment to being an athlete. In the event of an unavoidable absence due to a vacation, an athlete must:

- **Contact the coach prior to the vacation.**
- **Practice one day for each practice and /or contest missed prior to resuming competition. (Contest day will count as a practice day.)**
- **Be willing to assume the consequences related to their status on the team (starter, reserve, etc.)**

SQUAD SELECTIONS

In accordance with our philosophy and our desire to see as many students participate in the athletic program as possible, we encourage coaches to keep as many students as they can without unbalancing the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. **IT IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT, TO BE ON A TEAM.** Coaches will be available to meet with individual players wishing to discuss the athlete's strengths and weaknesses when squad sizes are reduced. Coaches shall have criteria for squad selection.

REPORTING AN INJURY

All injuries that occur while participating in athletics should be **reported to the coach**. If the injury requires medical attention by a doctor or treatment center, it will be necessary to have an injury report completed. Once a physician treats athletes, the athlete must obtain the physician's permission to return to the activity. Each coach will fill out an injury report.

AWARDS

Awards will be given as follows:

- **Varsity award: chenille letter and numerals 1st year, first sport**
- **Sport pin and bars for each other year lettered**
- **Third and fourth year letter winners earn a plaque as well as bars**
- **Each coach is responsible for the guidelines to letter in the sport. These requirements will be explained at the beginning of the season, and will be on file in the Athletic Director's office.**

Awards will not be issued until fees associated with the sport have been paid and all equipment has been returned.

PARTICIPATION IN NON-INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

An athlete cannot compete in a **non-scholastic sport** (ex: Senior League, AAU, Jr. Olympics, etc.) during the season **if he/she is currently participating in the same sport at the high school level**. For example, if the athlete is playing baseball, he is not to PRACTICE, SCRIMMAGE, OR PLAY IN A SUMMER LEAGUE GAME during the high school baseball season. He will forfeit his eligibility for that season.

If an athlete participates in a tournament outside their season, he/she may not accept gifts, prizes, travel money, meal money, etc. over the monetary amount set by the OHSAA. Before an athlete enters a tournament, he/she should check with the athletic administrator to make sure they will not forfeit their amateur status at the high school.

POLICY FOR PRACTICES ON SCHOOL CALAMITY DAYS

- ☐ When school is closed due to "snow and/or the cold" or an emergency such as a power outage, the varsity coach will contact the **principal or athletic director to get permission to hold "voluntary" practice**.
- ☐ Saturday practices are up to the discretion of the head coach. If weather is questionable, the coach will cancel practice or hold a "voluntary" practice.
- ☐ There will be no practices for 7th/8th or 9th grade teams when school is closed for any reason.
- ☐ Under special circumstances, (tournaments, districts, etc.) the varsity coach may confer with the principal or superintendent for permission to practice or compete in a varsity tournament game.
- ☐ If any other weather or emergency situation occurs, the coach, principal and athletic director will confer and make a decision based on the safety of student-athletes.

HAZING PROHIBITION

"Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, which creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization. **Hazing will not be tolerated on or off of school property regardless of the person's willingness to participate.**

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Student athletes are responsible for information contained in written or electronic transmissions (e.g. mail) and any information posted on a public domain (e.g. Internet, chat room, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.). Inappropriate or embarrassing information or pictures should not be posted in any public domain. Student athletes are not precluded from participation in such online social networks; however, student athletes should be reminded that they serve as representatives of their team, the athletic program and their community. Texting, tweeting and use of other social networks to disparage or criticize the team, other students, opponents, coaches or other school personnel is inappropriate behavior and unbecoming of a Pymatuning Valley school student athlete. Any individual identified on a social networking site which depicts illegal or inappropriate behavior will be considered in violation and subject to athletic discipline or suspension per policy guidelines.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation.
- The school district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of hazing.
- Upon completion of the investigation, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but not be limited to, warning, removal from play, and exclusion of participation and or any other disciplinary action set forth in the student conduct code.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

You cannot compromise athletic participation with substance abuses. The athlete who wishes to experiment with such substances should remove himself from the team before he jeopardizes team morale, team reputation and team' success and does personal physical harm.

The communities of the Pymatuning Valley Local Schools are concerned with the health habits of student-athletes and are convinced that athletes and the use of these substances are not compatible. It is also a fact that when students have a strong interest to participate in athletics, their desire to use these substances is greatly reduced.

Students have to decide if they want to be athletes. If you do wish to be an athlete, you must make the commitment in order to be a competitor. A big part of this price is following simple training rules, which the athletic department believes to be reasonable.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES: There is no way to justify athletes using alcoholic beverages, even though social pressure may be hard to resist. The people, who would like to draw athletes into their drinking sessions, will be the first to criticize the athlete if he/she does not come through in a game.

DRUGS: Simply stated, drug use is the consumption of any chemical substance or the smoking of some plant derivatives for the purpose of mood modification. The use or misuse of drugs is a social problem. Students with a strong sense of purpose have no need for mood modifiers.

PENALTIES FOR DRUG & ALCOHOL VIOLATIONS

The Drug and Alcohol provisions in this handbook are in effect throughout the School year (July 1 to June 30) in and out of season 24 hours per day. The penalty for use, possession, transmission, or concealment of drugs or alcohol will be as follows:

The athlete will not participate in 25% of the currently scheduled season and must complete an assessment with a certified counseling service. The parents are responsible for the expense of the assessment and/or counseling. Written documentation that the assessment has been completed must be given to the athletic director before the athlete may continue. If the agency recommends further intervention, the athlete must abide by that recommendation in order to be eligible to return to the team. If the athlete does not meet the 25% removal of play during the current season, the remainder of the removal of play will be calculated on the next scheduled season in which the student participates.

A student cannot practice with the team until the assessment is complete. Once the assessment is complete, the student must participate in the recommended intervention if he/she wants to remain on the team. A student may practice during the suspension.

- **If a student refuses assessment and intervention, the student will not be allowed to participate in that season plus one season the student normally participates.**
- **The second offense results in a 12 month removal from from athletics**
- **The third offense will result in loss of the privilege of participation in athletics while a student at Pymatuning Valley Local Schools.**

If an athlete attends a practice or athletic contest under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the athlete will be immediately removed from the team according to the student conduct code. During the school-mandated suspension, the athlete cannot participate in his/her current sport, and will be removed for 25% of the currently scheduled season (contests scheduled during the mandated school suspension count toward the 25% removal) If the 25% removal is not met during their current sport, the removal will carry over to the next sport.

The same provisions for assessment and intervention are applied as well as the consequences for the second and third offense.

COMMUNICATION

Appropriate lines of communication are vital to all parties involved in high school athletics. Concerns are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. The staff should be given the opportunity to consider the issue and address the concerns. A complaint about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly however no such action will take place until it is in writing and signed. Anonymous complaints will be discarded. But parenting and coaching are extremely difficult locations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to student athletes. As parents, when your son or daughter becomes involved in the program, you have the right to understand expectations are placed on your child. This all starts from clear communication from the coach of your son or daughter. As your child becomes involved in the various athletic programs of Pymatuning Valley Schools, it is our hope that he or she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his or her life. It is important to understand that things may not always go as your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach may be desirable in fact encouraged to clear up the issues and avoid any misunderstanding. It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. It is imperative that certain matters be left to the discretion of the coach.

- Playing Time
- Play Calling
- Position Assignments
- Team Strategy
- Matters concerning other student athletes

Procedure to Follow if You Have a Concern to Discuss with a Coach

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and a parent. Such a meeting is encouraged when necessary. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other person's positions. Each would be willing to listen. The following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue:

- Contact the Coach the **day(allow 24 hours)** after a contest to set up an appointment.
- If a coach cannot be reached after a reasonable time, call the Athletic Director. An Appointment will be scheduled with the coach and arranged for you.
- Important: Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or after a contest or practice session. These can be emotional for both the parents and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coach

- The treatment of your child mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Proper Chain of Communication

1. The Coach
2. Athletic Director
3. Principal
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Education

THE NEXT STEP

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution? A total agreement may not always be reached, most often such a meeting provides the opportunity for productive discussion and better understanding. If the parent desires further communication, please call the athletic director.

A student athlete and his/her parents will sign an Athletic Participation Agreement once per school year. The agreement will be in effect for all sports in that school year.

All rules and regulations are in compliance with the Ohio High School Athletic Association. You can find current rules on the OHSAA website at www.OHSAA.org