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— **JPII** —

## **2025-2026 Athletics Handbook**



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## **ATHLETICS PHILOSOPHY**

St. John Paul II School provides students with opportunities in interscholastic athletics in accordance with the mission of the school. The primary goal of JP II Athletics is to know and serve our Lord more perfectly. As such, athletics at St. John Paul II School seek to develop character, virtue, and knowledge of God's role in the lives of our student-athletes. This guiding principle directs our efforts beyond wins and losses to the enduring truths of our faith.

St. John Paul II School believes that participation in athletics provides opportunities and experiences for student-athletes to develop their full potential physically, academically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. These experiences prepare student-athletes for the challenges that they will encounter during and beyond their high school years.

Participation in athletics is a voluntary endeavor. Such an endeavor requires student-athletes to develop self-discipline and engage in good training and practice habits. Parents, too, have an important role in ensuring that these habits of character and hard-work are developed through athletics.

JP II student-athletes' priorities are

1. Faith,
2. Family,
3. Academics,
4. Athletics.

The best interests of the student-athletes are at the forefront of decision-making.

St. John Paul II School Athletics follow all policies, rules, and regulations established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), the Diocese of Fall River Catholic Schools, and the leagues and conferences to which its teams belong.



## **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **General Expectations: Student-Athletes**

Participation in athletics at JPII is a privilege. With this privilege comes high expectations. In order to achieve excellence, JPII student-athletes are expected to:

1. Represent JPII with class, dignity, and sportsmanship at all times. JPII student-athletes are expected to represent themselves and the school positively through their actions and language on and off the field of play.
2. Attend all scheduled practices and games.
  - In-season practices are mandatory and should not be missed except for additional academic work, illness, or family emergency.
  - Participation in off-season and summer workout programs when conflicts do not exist.
3. Follow all MIAA, school, athletic department, and team rules.

### **General Expectations: Parents/Guardians**

Parents are asked to demonstrate good sportsmanship by displaying the following behaviors:

1. Understand the game is for students and not for the adults.
2. Recognize that student participation in athletics is a privilege.
3. Use good sportsmanship as spectators and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects well on both the team and the school.
4. Promote the team by being supportive and helpful of the school program.
5. Refrain from coaching their child from the stands or the sidelines.
6. Expect consistent student-athlete attendance at practices and games.

### **General Expectations: Athletic Department**

Parents/guardians and student-athletes have a right to expect professionalism in athletics rooted in ethical conduct and care for each student and family. Specifically, the Athletic Department strives to:

1. Communicate with parents/guardians in as timely a manner as possible.
2. Impart correction based on identifiable skills and measures. Coaches will not disrespect the person or reputation of student-athletes.
3. Be fair and consistent in Athletic Department policies and procedures as well as team policies and procedures.

### **Relationship Between Parents/Guardians, Students, and Coaching Staff**

Parenting and coaching are difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each role, parents and coaches are better able to accept and respect the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to student-athletes. Parents have a right to understand the expectations placed on student-athletes. This begins with clear communication from the Athletic Department, and coaching staff.

1. Communication parents should expect from the JPII Athletics Department and coaching staff:
  - a. A pre-season parent meeting.
  - b. Notification of team rules.



- c. Expectations the coach has for student-athletes.
  - d. Location and times of all practices and contests.
2. Communication coaches should expect from parents:
  - a. Concerns expressed directly to the coach in accordance with the policy outlined below.
  - b. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
  - c. Any medical or injury issues that need to be monitored.

#### Parent/Guardian Communication Process: Issues of Concern

Student-athletes experience many rewarding moments. Also, there will be times when things do not go the way they wish. At these times, please follow these steps in order:

1. Student-athlete requests a meeting with his/her level coach.
2. Student-athlete requests a meeting with the Varsity coach & his/her level coach.
3. Parent/guardian requests a meeting with the level and/or Varsity coach; student-athlete is in attendance.
4. Parent/guardian requests a meeting with the AD; level coach & student-athlete are in attendance.

#### Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:

1. The treatment of your child mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child where the staff may provide assistance

#### Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss With Coaches:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Other student-athletes

#### Guidelines for 5-8 and High School Level Athletics Configuration

- Students in Grades 5-8 are eligible to participate in 5-8 level interscholastic teams and intramural athletics opportunities.
- Students in Grades 7-8 are eligible to participate in 5-8 level interscholastic teams and intramural athletics opportunities or try-out for High School athletics teams. Exceptions for safety and/or competitiveness may be made at the discretion of the Athletics administration. Due to safety concerns, 7th grade students are ineligible to participate in varsity-level games in football and hockey, but may practice with the team. Following High School tryouts, should a student-athlete not be selected for the High School team, he/she can opt to participate in 5-8 level teams and opportunities. Student-athletes selected for the High School team may only return to the 5-8 level team by the end of the try-out week.
- Students in Grades 9-12 are eligible for High School athletics only.

#### Athletics Fee

There is a new annual Athletics Fee of \$125 for students participating in high school athletics. This annual fee is per student, not per sport. The fee will be added to your FACTS account.



## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Student-athletes choosing to participate in athletics assume responsibility as representatives of their school and community. These responsibilities require a high standard of conduct as a condition of participation. JPII Athletics particularly expects student-athletes to meet high standards with regard to morality, honesty, school citizenship, sportsmanship, and leadership. Students who choose to participate in the athletic program are responsible for behaving in accordance with this Code, and those whose behavior or conduct does not meet this standard may lose the privilege of participating in athletic programs.

### **Code of Conduct: Basic Expectations**

1. Student-athletes must not possess or use tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances.
2. Student-athletes may not host or knowingly attend a party at which the following are present: illegal consumption of alcohol, use of controlled substances, steroids, or look-alike drugs.
3. Student-athletes shall practice good citizenship in all environments by respecting the property and rights of others (Poor citizenship includes actions such as stealing, vandalism, and other illegal acts).
4. Student-athletes shall display proper sportsmanship.
5. Student-athletes must not utilize social media and/or other websites in an inappropriate manner.
6. Bullying and hazing are prohibited at all times.

### **Chemical Health Policy**

St. John Paul II School is committed to maintaining a school community that is drug, alcohol and tobacco free. It is the responsibility of all students, parents, faculty and administrators to work together to achieve this goal. It is a major violation of school and athletic rules for any student to possess, use, sell or distribute alcohol, drugs (including steroids), and any tobacco products.

Student-athletes in violation of this policy are subject to sanctions outlined in the MIAA Handbook (Rule 62) and subject to being suspended from the team. Specific school policies regarding violations of the chemical health provision for athletes are published in the *Parent-Student Handbook*.

### **Contest Discipline**

Any student that is ejected from a contest will, at a minimum, be subject to the MIAA by-laws regarding contest expulsion. There are no exceptions to this rule. Moreover, the Head Coach will report all such ejections to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will review all facts from the incident and has the discretion to impose additional penalties, including (but not limited to) a longer suspension or removal from the team.

### **Hazing**

Hazing will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including a permanent ban from athletics in addition to school administrative discipline that may be levied. Each incident will be handled on an individual basis by the school administration. Students who are witnesses to or are the subject



of hazing should immediately report the incident to their level coach, the varsity coach, the Athletic Director, or any other school personnel. More complete school policy can be found in the *Parent-Student Handbook*.

#### Process for Investigation and Determination of Findings

Student-athletes who are alleged to have violated the Athletic Code of Conduct shall meet with the Athletic Director to explain the incident prior to any consequence being applied. The Athletic Director will then determine the consequences based on the Code and the facts at hand. Parents/guardians will be informed by the Athletic Director when allegations are pending and of the Athletic Director's determination.

Student-athletes and parents/guardians who wish to appeal a consequence administered under this Code may seek a review of the Athletic Director's determination and consequence by requesting a review by the Head of School. The Head of School or designee shall convene a meeting with the student-athlete and his or her parent/guardian to allow the student and parent/guardian to offer an explanation, and/or demonstrate that the Code was not violated. During the appeal process, the decision of the Athletic Director shall be enforced. The decision of the Head of School after an appeal is requested will be final and binding.

#### Social Media

Student-athletes are responsible for their actions on social media and other websites, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Any photos, comments, or other evidence that suggests a Code violation has occurred will be investigated by the Athletic Director. Photos that show a student-athlete in possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances will fall under the consequences of a violation related to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, and citizenship as outlined. Inappropriate postings to social media by a student-athlete will be handled on an individual basis by the Head Coach or Athletic Director. Inappropriate postings include but are not limited to obscene or vulgar language; graphic images or videos; sexually explicit language, imagery, or videos; threats; and unkind or inflammatory remarks about JPPI, its faculty, staff, and administration, coaches, and students, or other high schools and their coaches and athletes.

#### Sunday Scheduling

Every effort must be made to avoid scheduling any athletic or school events on Sundays. Sundays are set aside for Mass attendance and to provide rest from the week's labors. Only in special circumstances will Sunday scheduling be permitted, and in these cases, events must be scheduled to commence after 1 PM. Any event requiring students at school prior to 1 PM on Sunday must include provision for Holy Mass. Such provisions should be made in consultation with the School Chaplain.

#### Sportsmanship

Student-athletes are representing not only themselves, but also teammates, adults and the entire school community. As role models, student-athletes are expected to exhibit the following characteristics of sportsmanship:

1. Respect for the sport
2. Respect for officials and rules of the contest
3. Respect for opponents
4. Maintain self-control at all times
5. Recognize and appreciate opponent's skill level



If a student-athlete is deemed to have exhibited poor sportsmanship, he/she may face disciplinary action set forth by the Athletic Director.



## **OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Academic Eligibility - 5-8 Level Sports**

If a student receives three course grades below 70, or two grades below 60, then he/she is academically ineligible for their sports team. This standard applies to 5-8 students playing on High School teams as well. Eligibility may be regained at the interim reporting period. Ineligible student-athletes may not practice, play, or attend contests until eligibility is regained.

### **Academic Eligibility - High School Level Sports**

In order for a student to participate in athletics in any season, he or she must be in good academic standing on the first official day of that season. The school's policy regarding academic eligibility for athletics is published in the *Parent-Student Handbook*.

### **Awards - 5-8 Level Sports**

There will be three Sports Awards ceremonies, each at the conclusion of the sports seasons. Student-athletes are required to attend the awards ceremony as they would a practice. Coaches will make the presentation of awards, pins, and certificates.

*Eligibility:* A student must finish their season in good standing in order to qualify for a pin or any special award that would also include the Scholar Athlete Award. If a player quits the team at any time or is removed from the team by the coach, Athletic Director, or the Head of School then they would not qualify for an award. If a player becomes injured at or near the end of the season and has fulfilled all their team responsibilities to that point they qualify for an award. If a player becomes injured at the start, or very soon after a season has started, then they must remain an active member of the team at practices and events to qualify for an award.

### **Awards - High School**

There are awards ceremonies at the conclusion of each season. Student-athletes are encouraged to attend the awards ceremony. Coaches will make the presentation of awards, pins, and certificates.

Each varsity sport will select individual team award recipients. The coaches of the varsity team will select the award winners based on performance on and off the playing field.

Student-athletes on a varsity team that complete the season and play in a minimum of 25% of the varsity games will receive a varsity letter. After the first varsity letter is awarded, student-athletes will receive a pin. Adjustments to the playing time requirement may be made for injured athletes or in extenuating circumstances with approval of the Head Coach and Athletic Director.

### **Captaincy**

The position of captain is not just an honor, but a privilege. The position comes with responsibility that needs to be taken seriously. This honor will require the utmost leadership knowing that the captain will be a role model for other team members. Failure to comply with rules and regulations of the Athletic Department



and/or team may lead to dismissal. Captaincy determinations must be approved by the Athletic Director and Head of School.

### Dismissal

A student-athlete may be dismissed from a team for serious and/or repeated violations of team rules or the demonstration of grossly improper conduct. The decision to dismiss a student-athlete can only be made by the Athletic Director.

### Equipment and Uniforms

All student-athletes will be issued equipment and uniforms that are appropriate for the sport. All equipment and uniforms are school property and are loaned to student-athletes for the duration of the season. Student-athletes are responsible for the care and clean return of all issued equipment and uniforms. Should equipment not be returned in satisfactory condition, the individual student-athlete will be responsible to reimburse the school for repair or replacement. In addition, student-athletes are not eligible to play in games or scrimmages until uniforms from their previous athletic season have been returned to the athletic department.

### Fitness Center and Locker Rooms

Student-athletes and students using the fitness center have permission to use the locker rooms. Students will only be permitted to use these areas under the direct supervision of a coach, trainer or teacher.

The locker rooms are to be used for the purpose of changing clothes, restroom use and showering before and after practices and/or games. Locker rooms are not intended to be a place of gathering for students and the following guidelines must be followed at all times:

1. Respect other people's privacy and property
2. No hazing or harassing
3. No physical contact or confrontations
4. Properly secure all valuable items
5. Pick-up after yourself when leaving the locker room area

The fitness center is intended to further develop an athlete's physical strength and conditioning. All users must leave the Fitness Center in an organized and orderly manner once workouts are completed.

### Injuries

All injuries, minor or serious, must immediately be reported to the coach or athletic trainer. Any injury that requires medical treatment will be documented with a medical injury report. This medical injury report will then be submitted to the Head of School, Athletic Director and School Nurse within a reasonable time frame (generally 24 hours). Any student-athlete who requires medical treatment, physical therapy, or any other form of rehabilitation must receive medical clearance from their doctor before resuming participation in any sport.



### Non-MIAA Teams

For the purposes of school policies and guidelines, non-MIAA teams such as cheerleading and sailing must adhere to the same standards and expectations as sanctioned MIAA teams.

### Parent Meeting

Parents and student-athletes are required to attend preseason sports information sessions prior to the start of each athletic season in order for the student-athlete to participate.

### Participation - 5-8 Level Sports

Attendance at practice and games is expected and mandatory. Written attendance will be recorded by the coach throughout the season. While most athletic practices and games are scheduled from Monday-Thursday, some sports may have games, special events, and/or tournament games scheduled on Fridays and weekends. All attendance policies remain in place in these circumstances.

*Cancellations:* If school is dismissed early due to weather conditions, then all practices and games are considered postponed or cancelled.

*Class and School:* A student must be in school by the start of fourth period to be eligible to participate in a game or practice that day. If a student is absent from school, he/she may not participate in practice or games that day. This includes 8th grade shadow days. A player should request a shadow day other than a game day.

*Early Dismissal from Practice:* Some of our 5-8 student-athletes play on both a 5-8 team and an outside team. It is expected that 5-8 student-athletes make their school team their first priority. It is required that a 5-8 athlete never leave early or miss a 5-8 game to go to an outside team practice or a game. If there are two practices on the same day, the 5-8 coach may make some compensation with their student-athletes that would allow them to leave a 5-8 practice early on some days.

*Excused Absences:* A student may be excused from practice due to medical appointments and family emergencies. A student who has a medical appointment during practice time should inform the coach personally before the scheduled absence in person or by email. A student may be tardy to practice if they are staying after with a teacher for necessary extra help. Students are required to bring a pass from the teacher to the coach in such circumstances.

*Unexcused Absences:* A student who misses a practice because they forgot their clothes or forgot there was a practice will be considered unexcused. Students who forget their practice clothes are still expected to attend practice. A student missing practice to attend study hall is considered unexcused. A student who has an unexcused absence will receive some form of team discipline. This could range from not playing in the next game to very reduced playing time depending on the student's individual circumstances. A student who has an unexcused absence will never start the next game. A second unexcused absence will result in some form of team discipline and the coach will inform the Athletic Director. A third violation may result in the student being removed from the team.



## Participation - High School

All student athletes may participate in only **one** sport per season (maximum of 3 per school year)

### Participation: Attendance Policy

Student-athletes absent from school are not permitted to participate with the team in any capacity on the day of absence. Student-athletes are considered absent from school if they have not attended sixty percent of the school day. Students must arrive no later than 10:30 am on a regular school day to be considered present for the day, or they cannot be dismissed before 12:15.

Student-athletes will not be permitted to participate in athletic contests should they be absent from school on that same day, even in cases of an excused absence. However, student-athletes will not be penalized for excused absences for medical/dental appointments, but they must bring a doctor's note to school documenting this absence. Also, student-athletes will not be penalized when utilizing excused college visit days (Seniors are permitted three days of excused college visit absence. Juniors are permitted two days of excused college visit absence). Absences from team contests will not be considered excused.

### Participation: Transferring Sports

Student-athletes desiring to transfer from one sport to another in the same season will be permitted to do so within the first two weeks of that season, provided the student athlete is in good athletic standing (no unexcused absences). Such student-athletes must meet with the Athletic Director and head coaches of the sports that are affected to explain their situation. Student-athletes will not be allowed to transfer sports if he or she has had any unexcused absence during the initial two weeks of that season.

### Participation: Late Participation

Student-athletes may request permission to join a team after the sport season has started. Such student-athletes must obtain permission from the Head of School, Athletic Director and coach involved. This permission will only be considered within the first one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the season and may vary per sport due to safety concerns.

### Participation: Dropping of a Sport

Although the JPII athletic staff does not promote quitting and believes it can become a dangerous habit, on occasion it may be necessary for a student-athlete to drop a sport in the midst of the season. Student-athletes who drop a sport, however, may lose the privilege of participating in that sport in the future if he or she does not follow the following procedure:

1. Inform and discuss the situation with the Head Coach
2. Report and discuss the situation with the Athletic Director
3. Return all team gear assigned in satisfactory condition



Should a student-athlete drop more than one sport spanning multiple seasons, a parent and student athlete conference with the Athletic Director will be mandatory if the student athlete wishes to participate in any other sports in the future.

### Physical Examination Requirement

All student athletes must complete and pass a physical examination administered by a certified professional, i.e. physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, prior to participation in athletics. Physical examinations cover student-athletes for 13 months from the exam date. Student-athlete's eligibility will terminate once their physical has reached the 13 month limit. Student-athletes will not be allowed to try out, participate in practice, scrimmages or games until they have a valid physical on record that satisfies MIAA requirements. Please refer to rule 56 in the *MIAA Handbook* for a detailed explanation of this policy.

### Practices

Student-athletes who willingly elect to participate in athletics commit themselves to their team.

Student-athletes will be required to attend all practices, games, and team activities required by the coaching staff. Student-athletes who fail to comply with this rule will be subject to the following penalties:

1. First unexcused absence will result in the student athlete sitting out the next scheduled contest. Multiple day absences will result in suspension from contests equal to the number of missed practices/games.
2. Second unexcused absence may result in the student athlete being dismissed from the team.

Any unexcused absence from a scheduled contest is a serious offense against the team and will result in sanctions, which may include dismissal from the team.

### Practice Attire ("Lion Gear") -- High School

JPII Athletics promotes pride in school and proper attire at all times. As such, student-athletes who are participating in practices, games, weight room activities, or any other related athletic events, will be required to wear JPII gear at all times. Teams will also be required to wear JPII gear when traveling to away contests to maintain a consistent appearance that is acceptable to the school. Any violation of this rule may result in a student-athlete not being able to participate in that day's events. Lion gear may be purchased at the JPII school store.

### Risks of Participation

Student-athletes and parents are advised of the risk of injury associated with athletic participation. By agreeing to participate in athletics, parents and student-athletes are acknowledging and assuming the risk and liability associated with athletic participation.

### Vacations - High School

During school vacations and holiday reprieves, team members will be expected and required to attend all practice sessions and contests that are scheduled for their specific teams. Failure to do so will be considered an unexcused absence and student-athletes will be suspended the total number of games equal to the total



number of practices and contests that were missed during the absence. This rule will apply to all levels of competition: varsity and junior varsity.

## **Appendix A**

### **St. John Paul II School Student-Family Handbook (Excerpt: Athletics)**

For the purpose of school policy, a student-athlete is defined as any member of an interscholastic sports team, a manager or a cheerleader. Further policies and expectations are outlined in the *Athletics Handbook*.

#### **Attendance Policy**

Student-athletes absent from school are not permitted to participate with the team in any capacity on the day of the absence. A student-athlete is considered absent from school if he/she has attended less than sixty percent of the school day. Students must arrive no later than 10:30 AM on a regular school day to be considered present for the day, or they may not be dismissed before 12:15.

Students with medical/dental appointments may participate in athletics on that day if they submit a doctor's note or other required documentation. High School students may also participate when utilizing excused college visit days if they submit proof of attendance at the college visit; 5-8 students may participate if participating in a Shadow Day at the High School. Grade eleven students are allowed up to two (2) days of excused absences for college visits and grade twelve students are permitted three (3) days.

#### **Academic Requirements for Athletes**

Since academics come first at St. John Paul II School, in order for a student to be eligible to play on any team, that student must earn satisfactory grades.

At the 5-8 level, no student may participate in a sport if the student is failing in any two subjects. Similarly, three D grades in any subjects will make a student ineligible. Eligibility is determined anew at the start of each academic year. Quarter grades are used to determine eligibility. Students become ineligible the day the report card is issued. Students who are academically ineligible may regain eligibility by attaining grades of 70% or higher in all subjects on the interim report card that is issued mid-quarter.

JPII High School student-athletes must attain a 2.0 or better grade point average in the preceding grading period to maintain eligibility. Student-athletes may regain eligibility by attaining a 2.0 or better grade point average on the interim report card that is issued mid-quarter.

As required by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), student-athletes must attain a passing grade in the equivalent of four major subjects during the marking period preceding the season in which the student wishes to participate. Student-athletes who do not meet these criteria will be ineligible for participation.

In all cases, the Head of School has final authority as to who may play or who will be removed from a team for either academic or social reasons.



### Christian Athlete

St. John Paul II School student-athletes are expected to act in a manner consistent with the Christian values of the school. Discourteous conduct either on or off the playing surface will not be tolerated. Misconduct in the shower or locker room, in transit to games and practices, and on the athletic field or floor may result in suspension or expulsion from the team. Team prayer and Mass on game days and other days is encouraged. Sport team leaders (e.g., captains) are required to attend all school Masses and Liturgies.

### Concussion Policy

Students who have received a concussion must be evaluated by the school Athletic Trainer and their own primary care provider. The school's Athletic Trainer will authorize return to athletic participation only after the student has returned to full academic participation. The Athletic Trainer has final authority over a student's participation after receiving a concussion.

Academic accommodations that may be needed based on a student's concussion will be determined by the Guidance Department and the school Health Clinic staff. Any such accommodations will require proper documentation from the student's primary health care provider.

Students not able to participate fully in the academic program may not participate in clubs, trips, special opportunities, performances, rehearsals, athletics, or other co-curricular activities until full academic participation resumes.

### Facilities

Students are allowed the use of athletic facilities only if a member of the faculty or coach is supervising the entire time the students are using the facilities. St. John Paul II School students, with the permission of the Athletic Director, may use the athletic fields.

### Equipment

Each student-athlete is personally responsible for all equipment issued to by the school. This equipment is to be handled with proper care. Damaged equipment should be reported immediately to the head coach. All equipment issued must be returned promptly at the end of the season. A student-athlete failing to do this will not be issued any awards or letters until the equipment is returned. A student-athlete from any St. John Paul II School athletic team who steals, destroys, or intentionally damages property or equipment at St. John Paul II School, home, or another school's facility may be immediately expelled from the team.

### Medical Requirements

All student-athletes must have an updated physical form and an Athletic Participation Questionnaire on file at all times, using FamilyID.

### Sportsmanship



At rallies, assemblies, and other school-sponsored events, students, parents and other spectators are to conduct themselves in a courteous manner and are to follow the instructions of those in charge. At sporting events, whether played at home or away, the good sportsmanship and mature behavior of athletes and fans are a means of conveying a respectful attitude towards students and fans from other schools as well as game officials. Such behavior is expected of all JPII students, parents, and fans. To act otherwise is to reflect unfavorably on the reputation of St. John Paul II School, its students, parents, and friends. Students, parents, or others who display unsportsmanlike or inappropriate behavior towards players, coaches, officials or others are subject to removal from the event and may be banned from attendance at future JPII events.

### Training Rules

For many reasons, athletes are held to a strict, year-round, no-use standard with respect to tobacco, alcohol and drugs. First, it is completely contrary to the concept of athletic training and competition for athletes to use such substances. It is also incompatible with the concept of team sports and the commitment we ask our athletes to make to each other.

In addition, student-athletes are accorded a certain amount of respect and prestige as a result of their participation in St. John Paul II School's athletic programs. They become role models to other students as well as to students in the grade school programs. With this status comes additional responsibility. Lastly, as school representatives in interscholastic competition, our student-athletes convey to the community the values and image of St. John Paul II School. This, too, calls them to greater responsibility.

As such, we have established the following Training Rules for student-athletes:

1. Any use of tobacco, alcohol, electronic cigarettes, or illegal drugs (possession, sale, under the influence of) is not permitted throughout the athlete's four years at St. John Paul II School. Student-athletes anywhere (on or off school premises) using these prohibited substances are in violation of this rule. Student-athletes are also cautioned that they can be guilty by association, i.e., being in the company of someone using these prohibited substances.
2. Penalties for the conduct described in paragraph 1 will be as follows:
  - a. First Offense:
    - i. In season - Two week suspension from all team activities. Loss of captain status.
    - ii. Out of season - Suspension from all team activities during the first two weeks of regular competition for the next sport the athlete participates in. Loss of captain status.
  - b. Second Offense:
    - i. In season - suspension from all team activities for the remainder of the season (minimum of six weeks). If the infraction occurs with less than six weeks remaining in the regular season, the student-athlete will complete the six weeks suspension commencing with the first week of regular competition in the next sport in which he/she participates. Student-athletes suspended for a second offense are also not allowed to participate in any off-season/pre-season activities



- of other sports until the completion of the regular season of the sport from which they were suspended.
- ii. Out of season - suspension from all team activities during the first six weeks of regular competition for the next sport in which the athlete participates.
- c. Third Offense - a one-year suspension from all interscholastic sports, commencing from the date of the infraction, unless the infraction occurs during the suspension period for the second offense. In that case, the suspension for the third offense will commence when the second offense suspension ends.
- d. Any infractions beyond the Third Offense will render the student-athlete ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports for the remainder of their career at St. John Paul II School.
- e. In addition to the penalties outlined above:
  - i. Individual coaches may enforce additional penalties as part of the team rules
  - ii. When deemed necessary by the school Administration and/or its Athletic Department, a professional assessment (including a blood test), and adherence to any recommended follow-up treatment may be imposed as a condition for return to sports participation.

Prior to an offense being reported, if a student-athlete or student-athlete's parents/guardians seek assistance from the coach, the Athletic Director, or a school administrator with a tobacco, alcohol or drug problem and/or incident and the athlete agrees to undergo a urinary drug sample test and participate in a tobacco education program or a drug/alcohol assessment, the athlete will be allowed to compete in athletic events. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program or drug/alcohol assessment and UDS test and to follow its recommendations will result in the denial of participation. The self-referral is still considered a violation for the purpose of accumulation of violations. Loss of captain status will be the result. All offenses described in paragraph 1 that occur on school property or at school-sponsored activities will also carry school disciplinary action as well as counseling.



**Appendix B**  
**Procedures and Protocols for Athletics-Related Head Injuries**

- Section 1: Persons Responsible for Implementation of School Policy and Procedures
- Section 2: Annual Training Requirement
- Section 3: Documentation of Physical Examination
- Section 4: Preparticipation Head Injury Reporting Forms, Submission and Review
- Section 5: Medical/Nursing Review of Preparticipation Forms
- Section 6: Medical/Nursing Review of Reports of Head Injury During the Season
- Section 7: Procedure for Reporting Head Injuries to School Nurse and/or Certified Athletic Trainer
- Section 8: Removing Athletes from Play and Medical Evaluation
- Section 9: Medical Clearance for Return to Play
- Section 10: Development and Implementation of Post-Concussion Graduated Reentry Plans
- Section 11: Providing Information, Forms and materials to Parents and Athletes
  - 11a) Annual Training Requirement
  - 11b) Notifying parents when a student-athlete has been removed from play for a suspected concussion
  - 11c) Obtaining medical clearance for return to play and academics after a diagnosed concussion
  - 11d) Parent Completion of the Preparticipation Form
  - 11e) Parent Completion of Report of a Head Injury Form
- Section 12: Inclusion of Sports-Related Head Injury Policy in the Student and Parent Handbook
- Section 13: Sharing Concussion-Related Health Information
- Section 14: Requirements that Coaches, Athletic Trainers, and Volunteers
  - 16a) Teach Strategies that Minimize SportsRelated Head Injury
  - 16b) Prohibit Dangerous Play
- Section 15: Penalties



## SECTION 1: PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulations specify that each school or school district must adopt policies concerning the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. The school must designate the person responsible for the development, implementation and revision of these policies. As required by the regulations, these policies must be developed by a team consisting of a school administrator, School Nurse, school or team physician, athletic director, Athletic Trainer, guidance counselor, and teacher (as appropriate).

### Person Responsible:

St. John Paul II School has designated the Athletic Trainer to oversee the implementation of policies and protocols governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries.

In addition, the Athletic Trainer will be responsible for:

- (1) Supporting and enforcing the protocols, documentation, required training and reporting
- (2) Assuring that all documentation is in place
- (3) Reviewing, updating and implementing policy and including updates in annual training and other handbooks.

## SECTION 2: ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT

MDPH has specified that the following persons must receive MDPH-approved annual training in sports-related concussion: coaches, Athletic Trainers, volunteers, school and team physicians, School Nurses, athletic directors, parents of student-athletes and student-athletes.

### Training Requirement:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires annual safety training on sports-related concussion, including second impact syndrome, for coaches, Athletic Trainers, volunteers, School Nurses, school and team physicians, athletic directors, parents or legal guardians of children who participates in co-curricular athletic activities and student-athletes who participates in an co-curricular athletic activities.

St. John Paul II School school personnel are required to complete online training (either the National Federation of High Schools or the CDC's Heads Up Concussion training) or attend a training event organized by the Athletic Trainer and approved by the MDPH. For student-athletes and their parents, this training is provided in the regular pre-season meetings where written materials are also available. Attendance must be taken at such meetings to serve as a record of verification for participants who are trained. If parents or student-athletes are unable to attend this training, they must complete one of the approved online trainings and submit a certificate of completion to the athletic director to meet this participation requirement.



### SECTION 3: DOCUMENTATION OF PHYSICAL EXAM

Student-athletes must have an annual physical examination to assure that they are sufficiently healthy for athletic activity. Ideally, the physical examination should be done by the student-athlete's primary care provider.

#### Physical Examination :

Every student-athlete must be separately and carefully examined by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant, prior to a student-athlete's participation in competitive athletics, on an annual basis. The completed and signed copy of the physical exam form should be uploaded to FamilyID. No student-athlete will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until all forms, including annual physical examinations are signed and submitted.

- Frequency of Exam: As a matter of school policy and MIAA rules, the school accepts physical examinations completed within 13 months to allow for insurance coverage that would be not be possible if examinations are within a 12 month period. This medical examination should be completed by a physician, nurse practitioner, etc. and should authorize the student-athlete who participates in multiple sports seasons during the following 13 months that the student-athlete is medically cleared to do so.
- Where Forms Kept: The current annual medical examination form should be submitted to the Health Clinic. It should also be kept in the student-athlete's medical record and in the athletic department office. The School Nurse and/or Athletic Trainer should ensure that all student-athlete-athletes that are participating in co-curricular school sports have been medically cleared annually.
- A student-athlete athlete cannot participate in an co-curricular sports activity if she/he has not had a physical examination within the last 13 months. Any student-athlete-athlete who does not have a current physical on file with the nurse, prior to the first day of tryouts/practice, is not eligible until a new/updated physical is turned in.

### SECTION 4: PRE-PARTICIPATION HEAD INJURY REPORTING FORMS, SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Both the law and regulations require student-athletes and their parents to provide an accurate history of head injury to the school prior to each athletic season. The school's pre-participation form contains the required elements.

#### Concussion History Form Submission and Review:

- The Massachusetts concussion law requires student-athletes and their parents to inform the athletic department coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of each sports season. This reporting is done via the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting form and should be completed by the student-athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student-athlete vi FamilyID. It must be submitted to the Athletic Trainer, prior to the start of each season a student-athlete plans to participate in an co-curricular athletic activity. This form provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. This form is designed to ensure that particular attention is paid to identifying athletes with a history of brain or spinal injuries.



- Until the pre-participation form is submitted by the parent/guardian and student-athlete and returned to the school prior to the start of every sports season, the student-athlete may not participate in the sports activity.
- History of Multiple Concussions on Pre-Participation Form: The decision to allow a player who reported a history of multiple concussions on her/his pre-participation form should be made only after consultation with the student-athlete's physician or primary care provider; the sports medicine or concussion specialist, if involved; the neuropsychologist, if involved, and the appropriate school athletic staff and the parent. Current evidence indicates that student-athletes who have suffered one or more concussions are more likely to suffer a subsequent one. Options may include switching positions, limiting contact in practices, or changing sports altogether to minimize the risk of reinjury. The focus of the school will always be on protecting the health and safety of the student-athlete and avoiding long-term consequences that can occur from repeated concussions.
- Collection/Distribution of Pre-Participation Forms: The school has the pre-participation forms available electronically via FamilyID.
- The parent/student-athlete should submit the pre-participation form via FamilyID to the school's athletic department, which will forward a copy to the Health Clinic.

## SECTION 5: MEDICAL/NURSING REVIEW OF PRE-PARTICIPATION FORMS

In order to assure that student-athletes who have experienced a concussion/head injury in the past are safe to play, the school must ensure timely review of all pre-participation forms that indicate a history of head injury by either the School Nurse or the school physician.

### Medical Review of Pre-Participation Form

At the start of each sports season, the Athletic Trainer will review all pre-participation forms and forward to the School Nurse those forms indicating a history of head injury. The School Nurse will be responsible for:

- reviewing or having the school physician review completed pre-participation forms.
- addressing any questions raised by the Athletic Director or Athletic Trainer.
- following up with Athletic Trainer, coaches, parents and student-athlete-athletes as needed prior to the student-athlete's participation in co-curricular athletic activities.

## SECTION 6: MEDICAL/NURSING REVIEW OF REPORTS OF HEAD INJURY DURING THE SEASON

In order to assure that student-athletes who experience concussion/head injury are safe to play, the school must ensure timely review of all "Report of Head Injury" forms by either the School Nurse or the school physician. This includes incidents which take place during co-curricular activities as well as outside of school.

### Medical/Nursing Review:

- The following procedures will be followed when an athlete receives a head injury:
  - Athlete is removed from the contest or practice.



- The Athletic Trainer conducts a Standardized Assessment of Concussion and completes the “Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form.”
- If Athletic Trainer is not available, coach completes the “Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form.”
- The Athletic Trainer/coach will give “Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form” to Main Office/Administration.
- The Main Office/Administration will notify the Health Clinic and/or school physician (if appropriate) who will review the Report of Head Injury form.
- The Main Office/Administration will contact the student-athlete’s guidance counselor.

## SECTION 7: PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING HEAD INJURIES TO SCHOOL NURSE AND/OR ATHLETIC TRAINER

Because medical evaluation and ongoing monitoring of a student-athlete’s recovery from concussion is so important for a student-athlete’s safety, The school has adopted the following procedures for assuring that head injuries or concussion sustained during play or practice are reported to the Health Clinic and Athletic Trainer.

### Reporting Head Injury

When a student-athlete obtains a head injury during an co-curricular athletic activity, the following steps must be followed:

- Athletic Trainer evaluates the student-athlete.
- Athletic Trainer/Coach completes Report of Head Injury Form.
- The Athletic Trainer informs Main Office/Administration and sends a copy of the Report of Head Injury Form to Main Office.
- The Main Office/Administration notifies School Nurse and guidance counselors of injury.
- Guidance counselors establish, with School Nurse, academic and school accommodations.
- Guidance counselors inform relevant teaching staff of such plans.
- Athletic Director assures that student-athlete adheres to the protocol.
- School Nurse and Athletic Trainer tracks student-athlete’s progression.
- School Nurse and Athletic Trainer notify all necessary staff of progression, recovery and return to school/ return-to-play.

## SECTION 8: REMOVING ATHLETES FROM PLAY AND MEDICAL EVALUATION

Because continuing athletic activity after sustaining a concussion can be dangerous, and can result in both short and long term consequences, removing an athlete from play who has sustained a head injury or suspected concussion is crucial. Diagnosing a concussion on the sidelines is not safe or acceptable practice, nor is returning an athlete to play after a blow to the head if symptoms appear to “resolve.” The law and the regulations require that players who have symptoms consistent with a suspected concussion must be removed from play, and may not return to play or practice that same day.



Although the regulations specifically assign responsibility to coaches and Athletic Trainers to remove student-athletes from play for head injuries or suspected concussions, the MDPH expects that there will be a shared understanding of the symptoms and risks of concussion among athletes and other adults who are present during practice or competition. In the absence of the Athletic Trainer, the coaching staff must ensure that the above protocol is followed. If there is any disagreement among responsible personnel regarding whether the student-athlete has sustained a head injury or has symptoms suggestive of a concussion, the student-athlete should be removed from play. Following a concussion, communication between families, school personnel, athletics staff and health care providers is crucial to facilitate a student-athlete's healthy return to school and physical activity following a concussion.

#### Identifying Head Injury or Suspected Head Injury and Removing from Play

- In the event that a student-athlete receives a head injury, or is suspected of having a head injury, the student-athlete will be removed from play and will not be returned to play or practice that day. The coach should report the head injury to the Athletic Trainer or School Nurse/physician as soon as possible, for medical assessment and management and for coordination of home instructions and follow-up care. The Athletic Trainer or School Nurse/physician will be responsible for contacting the athlete's parents and providing follow-up instructions. If the student-athlete is injured at an away event or if the Athletic Trainer is unavailable, the coaching staff is responsible for notifying the student-athlete's parents of the injury and, if warranted, call for emergency care. Coaches should seek assistance from the host site Athletic Trainer, coach or School Nurse if at an away contest.
- If the athlete is able to be sent home (rather than directly to MD):
  - the coach or Athletic Trainer will ensure that the athlete will be with a responsible adult, who is capable of monitoring the athlete and understanding the home care instructions, before allowing the athlete to go home;
  - the coach or Athletic Trainer will continue efforts to reach the parents;
  - if there is any question about the status of the student-athlete, or if the student-athlete is not able to be monitored appropriately, the athlete will be referred to the emergency department for evaluation. A coach or Athletic Trainer will accompany the athlete and remain with the athlete until the parents arrive and
  - student-athletes with suspected head injuries will not be permitted to drive home.

#### SECTION 9: MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL AND PLAY

If an athlete is removed from play for a suspected concussion, he or she must be medically cleared and evaluated before returning to play/practice. If the student-athlete was diagnosed with a concussion, the medical clearance can only be provided after he or she has completed a graduated return to play plan indicating they are ready to resume physical activity. To provide this clearance, the school utilizes a Sports Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization form that is in compliance with DPH requirements.

Student-athletes must be completely symptom free for twenty-four hours from the reporting of the injury before beginning a graduated return to play process.



## Return to School and Play :

All student-athletes must be cleared to return to play/practice by a licensed medical professional (physician, NP in consultation with a physician, CAT in consultation with a physician or neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student-athlete's recovery) after the graduated return to play has been completed. It is recommended that this medical professional have familiarity with concussion diagnosis and management in order to determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for the student-athlete to return to normal activities including physical activity and school (concentration and learning activities). Sports activities sports practices and games:

- The student-athlete should be completely symptom free at rest and with physical (sprints, noncontact aerobic activity) and cognitive exertion (school work).
- Return to play should occur gradually (see below).
- Students should be monitored for symptoms and cognitive function during each stage of exertion.
- Students should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are asymptomatic at the current level.

Medical clearance will be provided using proper documentation. Clearance forms must be provided to the School Nurse and Athletic Trainer and a copy kept in the student-athlete's medical record.

In a situation in which a student-athlete has been medically cleared but school staff have observed continuing symptoms, the school will make the final decision regarding a student-athlete's to return to play. If this situation arises, the school's staff should communicate to the physician or health care provider who provided the clearance regarding the symptoms school staff have observed to allow for re-evaluation by the health care provider. It is possible that the health care provider was not aware of the student-athlete's symptoms when the provider gave the clearance. If the athlete still has symptoms, the athlete should NOT return to play.

## SECTION 10: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POST CONCUSSION GRADUATED REENTRY PLANS

If a student-athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion, the regulations require that a graduated reentry plan, for both academics and sports, be developed and implemented. Recovery from a concussion requires rest, both physical and cognitive, in order for the brain to heal. This means that during the recovery period, it is as important for a concussed student-athlete to refrain from studying, working on a computer or playing video games, as it is for the student-athlete to refrain from participating in athletics. A graduated reentry plan, to either academics or sports, should not begin until a student-athlete is symptom free at rest. A student-athlete should be symptom free at each stage of the plan before graduating to the next phase.

Graduated reentry plans require a collaborative approach among health care providers, teachers, guidance counselors, the athletic staff and the athlete and her/his parent or guardian. Graduated reentry plans include gradual steps from physical and cognitive rest, gradual return to physical and academic activities, estimated time intervals for resumption of activities, frequent assessments, and a communication plan among school staff, parents, and health care providers. The injured student-athlete will recover more quickly with rest, not only from physical exertion and athletic activity, but also from the cognitive demands of academic work.

### Graduated Reentry Plan:



All student-athletes returning to school and athletics after a concussion must have a written plan for reentry. School staff, such as teachers, School Nurses, counselors, administrators, coaches and others should work together to develop and implement this plan in coordination with the student-athlete, their parent/guardian and the primary care provider.

Graduated return to academic plans are based on the stages of recovery framework that takes a student-athlete from rest, to gradual return to full participation in academic activities.

#### Stages of Recovery:

The stages of recovery are a framework designed through a collaborative effort by local health care professionals. The purpose of this framework is to create a common language that will help guide student-athletes, families, school personnel and health professionals through the recuperation process. Placement in stages is based on assessment of the student-athlete's medical condition by a licensed medical professional and accompanied by written orders.

#### Red Stage (Usually 2 – 4 days, but could last weeks)

1. Rest
2. Students typically do not attend school

#### Orange Stage

1. Rest
2. Attend school half to full days
3. Avoid school bus and heavy backpacks
4. Limit screen usage
5. Work with designated educational personnel regarding school accommodations
6. No tests in school
7. No sports, band, chorus, physical education or outdoor recess

#### Yellow Stage

1. Attend school full-time if possible
2. Students and families work with teachers regarding homework deadlines (complete as much as possible)
3. See School Nurse for pain management and/or rest if needed
4. Limit one quiz/test per day (untimed testing is recommended)
5. Work in 15 minute blocks
6. No sports
7. Licensed medical professional will make decisions regarding band, chorus, physical education and outdoor recess (elementary level) based on medical assessment

#### Green Stage

1. Attend school full time
2. Resume normal activities



3. Resume sports once school work is back on track, student-athlete is symptom-free, and has been cleared by a licensed medical professional

Graduated return to athletic plans will begin only after a student-athlete has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom free at rest.

#### Return to Play Schedule:

When a student-athlete is completely symptom free at rest and has the approval of a medical professional, she/he may begin a graduated return to play protocol. The return to play schedule for the student-athlete should proceed as follows and should be monitored by the Athletic Trainer.

Step 1: Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weightlifting.

Step 2: Aerobic exercise such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Noncontact training drills in full equipment. Weight training can begin.

Step 4: Full contact controlled training followed by practice or training.

Step 5: Full contact game play.

Frequent or periodic assessments by the school personnel including the nurse, Athletic Trainer, school physician or team physician as appropriate may be necessary until full return to classroom activities and co-curricular athletic activities are authorized by medical staff. A copy of the plan will be kept in the student-athlete's medical record.

## SECTION 11: PROVIDING INFORMATION, FORMS AND MATERIALS TO PARENTS AND STUDENT-ATHLETES

### 11a) ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT:

MDPH regulations require that parents or legal guardians and student-athletes who participate in co-curricular athletic activity, as well as a variety of school personnel, receive MDPH-approved concussion training annually. The school schedules an orientation meeting for any new or incoming athletes prior to each sports season. The head injury policy and procedures relative to head injuries and concussions is discussed at that time.

### 11b) PROCEDURE FOR THE SCHOOL TO NOTIFY PARENTS WHEN AN ATHLETE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM PLAY FOR A HEAD INJURY OR SUSPECTED CONCUSSION:

MDPH intends that all student-athletes and adults who are on the field during practice or competition will be educated with the same basic information about the signs, symptoms and risks of concussion. Communication between families, athletic staff and health care providers is crucial to facilitate a student-athlete's prompt removal from play and referral for medical care and full recovery following a concussion.



#### Procedure to Notify Parents about Student-Athlete Removal from Play:

The Athletic Trainer, coach, School Nurse and/or volunteers (EMS, sports physicians) should promptly inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion during the day of the injury via telephone and/or email and give them the fact sheet on concussions. Complete the "Report of Head Injury During Sports Season." Inform the parents that the student-athlete will have to be medically cleared by a medical professional before returning to play and the Post-SportsRelated Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form will need to be completed and returned to the school before the student-athlete can resume play.

#### 11c) PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS/STUDENTS TO OBTAIN MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR RETURN TO PLAY AND ACADEMICS AFTER A DIAGNOSED CONCUSSION:

The annual safety training for parents/guardians and athletes who participate in any co-curricular athletic activity, as well as school policies should inform them of the school's protocol on obtaining medical clearance for return to play.

#### Return to Play Protocol:

Parents and student-athletes are oriented about the protocol on obtaining medical clearance for return to play after a diagnosed concussion. No student-athlete will be allowed to return to play athletic activities until a medical clearance form is signed by authorized medical professional, submitted and reviewed by the School Nurse and Athletic Trainer, and complete return to school activities has been made.

#### 11d) PARENT COMPLETION OF THE PRE-PARTICIPATION FORM

The athletic director, coach, School Nurse, Athletic Trainer or other designated school official are responsible for informing parents and student-athletes that pre-participation form needs to be completed by the student-athlete and parent/guardian and returned to the athletic director, coach, School Nurse, Athletic Trainer or other designated school official prior to the start of each sports season a student-athlete plans to participate.

#### Parents' Responsibility for Pre-Participation:

At the seasonal sports meeting, parents and student-athletes are oriented about the requirement to submit the pre-participation form, signed by both student-athletes and parents, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. It is the parent's responsibility to tell all the student-athlete's coaches, School Nurse and Athletic Trainer if the student-athlete has ever had a concussion via this form. At the beginning of every sports season, no student-athlete will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until the pre-participation form is signed, submitted by parent and student-athlete and reviewed by designated staff.

#### 11e) PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLETION OF THE REPORT OF A HEAD INJURY FORM



At the seasonal sports meeting, parents and student-athletes are oriented about the requirement to submit all forms including the Report of Head Injury Form signed by parents if their child has a head injury related to athletic activities. At the beginning of every sports season, no student-athlete will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until all required forms including the report of head injury form has been signed, submitted by parents and reviewed by school nursing and athletic department staff.

## SECTION 12: INCLUSION OF SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY POLICY IN THE ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

The Department of Public Health intends that all student-athletes and adults who are on the field during practice or competition will be educated with the same basic information about the signs, symptoms and risks of concussion and required forms. Including this information in the student-athlete and parent handbooks will assist parents and student-athletes in becoming educated about the importance of the school's sports-related head injury policy.

### Handbook Language:

State Concussion Law Requirements: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services requires that all high schools subject to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules adhere to the following law:

Student-athletes and their parents, coaches, athletic directors, School Nurses, and physicians must learn about the consequences of head injuries and concussions through training programs and written materials. The law requires that athletes and their parents inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of the season. If a student-athlete becomes unconscious, or is suspected of having a concussion during a game or practice, the law now mandates taking the student-athlete out of play or practice, and requires written certification from a licensed medical professional for return to play.

## SECTION 13: SHARING CONCUSSION-RELATED HEALTH INFORMATION

Generally speaking, a student-athlete's health information is confidential. Informal collaboration occurs on a temporary, as needed basis for information exchange, as when the Health Clinic personnel or Athletic Trainer informs (while adhering to protocols for confidentiality) the guidance department and administration that a particular student-athlete may not participate in athletic activities because of a recent injury. There may be circumstances in which there is a need to share information in the student-athlete health record with authorized school personnel — either to enhance the educational progress of the student-athlete or protect his/her safety or well-being. For example, staff may need to be alerted to signs or symptoms of a medical problem on a need to know basis and offered a course of action. This type of disclosure will be made only to those authorized school personnel who work directly with the student-athlete in an instructive (academic or athletic), administrative, or diagnostic capacity. Finally, authorized school personnel are instructed not to redisclose the information.

If there is any question about the sensitivity of the information, the School Nurse/Athletic Trainer should consult the parent/guardian and student-athlete, if appropriate, prior to disclosure to authorized school



personnel. Ultimately, however, federal regulations permit information in the student-athlete health record to be seen by authorized school personnel on a need to know basis, and the basis for such sharing seems even more compelling when necessary to protect the well-being or safety of the student-athlete.

## SECTION 14 A & B: REQUIREMENTS THAT COACHES, ATHLETIC TRAINERS, AND VOLUNTEERS A) TEACH STRATEGIES THAT MINIMIZE SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY AND B) PROHIBIT DANGEROUS PLAY

Coaches, Athletic Directors and Athletic Trainer should:

- Insist that safety comes first; develop, teach, implement and enforce safety rules;
- Promote good officiating of the existing rules;
- Emphasize to student-athletes and parents that playing with a concussion is dangerous;
- Promote safe use of equipment all year; require that sports participants use the right protective equipment during all practices and games and that all equipment, particularly helmets, are properly fitted;
- Maintain and improve the surfaces of playing fields; routinely conduct hazard assessments of the practice areas; walk the field before each practice or game to check for divots, uneven surfaces, loose goal posts or other conditions that could affect play; Ensure that spaces and facilities for physical activity meet or exceed recommended safety standards for design, installation and maintenance.
- Check all equipment to ensure they are up to manufacturer standards of quality and care and do not exceed expiration date.
- Make sure student-athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, mouth protectors and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained and certified, not be expired and be worn consistently and correctly;
- Discourage others from pressuring injured student-athletes to play.

Prohibiting Athletes from Dangerous Technique:

Athletic Directors and coaches enforce rules prohibiting dangerous moves (e.g., “spearing” or “horse-collaring,” clothes-lining or helmet-to-helmet contact in football, or free-falling flips or swan dives from any type of toss, partner stunt or pyramid in cheerleading). In addition, coaches ensure that student-athletes learn proper checking/tackling techniques that are safe and minimize the risk of head injury. Athletic department staff encourage student-athletes to follow the rules of play and to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

## SECTION 15: PENALTIES

The school takes the safety of student-athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student-athletes. Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games. If student-athletes or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact



the Athletic Director or Head of School and also place their complaint in writing with a request for resolution.