

# **MSAD 8 VINALHAVEN SCHOOL**

## **SPORTS HANDBOOK**

### **Introduction**

September, 2015

This document is a revision to the Vinalhaven School Sports Handbook. It is an attempt to update all of the policies and procedures related to the sports program here in one place. We imagine that it will evolve every year as issues come up. A large percentage of our students participate in extra-curricular activities, and the policies and procedures here will serve as a guide to the non-classroom activities here at school. Complementing this document are sport specific guidelines for most of our sports: varsity basketball, baseball, soccer, open water rowing and 3-4 basketball.

Attending school is a right; participating in sports is a privilege. Thus, student-athletes, in many cases, need to meet higher standards in order to participate in athletics than other students do in simply attending school. It is the intent of this handbook to spell out this information and to clarify some areas of the sports program, which have been discussed, but not written down. Please contact our Athletic Director, Sandy Nelson, if you have questions or concerns about anything in this handbook.

## **Athletic Goal and Objectives**

**Our Goal** – The student athlete shall become a more effective citizen in a democratic society.

**Our Specific Objectives** – The student athlete shall learn teamwork. To work with others in a democratic society a person must develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. The athlete must place the team and its objectives higher than personal desires.

- **To Be Successful** – Our society is very competitive. We do not always win, but we succeed when we continually strive to do so. You can learn to accept defeat only by striving to win with earnest dedication. Develop a desire to excel.

- **Sportsmanship** – To accept success and defeat like a true sportsman, knowing we have done our best. We must learn to treat others as we would have others treat us. We need to develop desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation, and dependability.

- **To Improve** - Continual improvement is essential to good citizenship. As an athlete, you must constantly try to reach that goal. Try to better yourself in the skills involved and in those characteristics set forth as being desirable.

- **Enjoy Athletics** – It is necessary for us to acknowledge all of the personal awards we derive from athletics and to give sufficiently of ourselves in order to preserve and improve the program.

- **To Develop Desirable Personal Health Habits** - To be an active, contributing citizen. It is important to obtain a high degree of physical fitness through exercise and good health habits and to develop a desire to maintain this level of physical fitness after formal competition has been completed.

## **Parent/Staff Communication**

Involvement requires commitment for students, parents, coaches, and advisors. To be successful, communication must happen.

### **Communication you should expect from your child's coach:**

- When and where are practices and contests.
- What is the coach's philosophy.
- What are the expectations the coach has for all the players on the squad as well as for your student.
- What is required to be a part of the team, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
- When your child is injured during participation.
- Any discipline action of your child that results in removal from participation.

### **What are appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:**

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
- Skill improvement and development.
- Concerns about your student's behavior.

### **What things are not appropriate to discuss with coaches:**

- Playing time.
- Team strategy.
- Play calling.
- Other student/athletes.

**Communication coaches expect from parents:**

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Support towards the commitment of the program.
  - Be sure your child is at practice on time.
  - The night before a contest or performance, maybe going to the all night concert is not such a good idea.

**If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, use the following procedure:**

- Call the coach first.
- Think about what you expect to accomplish as a result of the meeting.
- Stick to discussing the facts, as you understand them.
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or following a contest or practice. These are emotional times for both the parent and the coach and this period does not promote objective analysis of the situation.

**What the parent can do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution:**

- Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
- At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

We are continually attempting to improve communication with the student and parents. For our programs to be truly successful it is necessary that everyone involved understand the direction the program is headed. That understanding begins with today.

## **Advertising and Hiring**

Each co-curricular, stipend position is a one-year position. Each year, prior to each sports season, the superintendent will advertise open positions in the Wind for the upcoming school year. Coaches who have coached successfully in the previous year will normally be given the opportunity to return to their position and their positions need not be advertised. If there are other applicants for the position, the superintendent or Athletic Director may decide to open the position up for interviews. If the coach wishes to return to his/her position, he/she needs to indicate that to the Athletic Director. New applicants will need to submit a letter of interest. Because of the obvious relationship between teaching and coaching, it will be Vinalhaven School's preference to secure coaches from its teaching staff first.

The Athletic Director will be responsible for filling all vacant positions and is responsible for following up on all letters of interest. The Athletic Director is also responsible for interviewing candidates. At the Varsity level, the Athletic Director will form a representative committee to interview candidates.

These extra-curricular positions include:

### **Fall**

Boys varsity soccer  
Girls varsity soccer  
Boys varsity soccer assistant  
Girls varsity soccer assistant  
Coed middle school soccer  
Cross country (possible)  
Varsity rowing  
Varsity rowing assistant  
Middle School rowing (possible)  
Math Team advisor  
National Honor Society advisor  
Yearbook advisor

### **Winter**

Boys varsity basketball  
Girls varsity basketball  
Boys varsity basketball assistant  
Girls varsity basketball assistant  
Boys JV basketball (possible)  
Girls JV basketball (possible)  
Boys 7-8 basketball  
Girls 7-8 basketball  
Boys 7-8 basketball assistant  
Girls 7-8 basketball assistant  
Boys 5-6 basketball

Girls 5-6 basketball  
Boys 5-6 basketball assistant  
Girls 5-6 basketball assistant  
Boys 3-4 basketball  
Girls 3-4 basketball  
Boys 3-4 basketball assistant  
Girls 3-4 basketball assistant  
Varsity Cheering (possible)  
Middle School Cheering (possible)

### **Spring**

Boys Baseball  
Girls Softball  
Boys Baseball assistant  
Girls Softball assistant

**The offering of extra curricular activities is dependent upon the availability of instructors and School Board approval.**

Fall co-curricular nominations will be made at the May School Board meeting.

Winter co-curricular nominations will be made at the September School Board meeting.

Spring co-curricular nominations will be made at the February School Board meeting.

## **Pre Season Meetings**

The Athletic Director will meet with varsity athletes and their parents at the start of each sports season. The meeting will be announced in the Wind and will be held in the gym. All student athletes, coaches, and parents will attend the meeting. The Athletic Director will review the general athletic and transportation policies in place at Vinalhaven School. There are five pieces which need to be in place in order for a student athlete to participate in a varsity sport:

- Parent consent form signed and returned. (Co-curricular/Extracurricular Contract)
- A physical exam needs to be completed every two years and should be on file at the Medical Center for all students in grades 9-12. If a student has never played a varsity sport before, he/she should get a physical before the start of his/her first sport season. If a student plays a variety of sports, he/she needs to get a yearly physical and will have until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the competition part of the season to be in compliance.
- The student needs to turn in a completed emergency form that will be on file in the school office.

- Academic eligibility standards need to be met in order to participate in a sport.
- Attendance at the pre-season meeting is required.

After the school policies are explained and questions from parents and students are answered, the Athletic Director will turn the meeting over to the coaches who will meet with their teams and go over any sport-specific rules and procedures. Coaches will pass out schedules and/or training guidelines.

The pre-season meetings will occur in August, November, and March.

## **Uniforms**

Uniforms will be issued for each sport. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to keep track of the uniform during the entire sports season, to wash it after every game, and to return it to the coach at the end of the season. Uniforms should be returned within a week of the end of the sports season. The post season team meeting or the athletic banquets are good opportunities to turn in uniforms.

Uniforms are quite costly to buy, and even more costly to replace. If the uniform is lost, the student-athlete will be charged the replacement cost, which is often higher than the original cost.

**The coach is responsible for collecting uniforms at the end of the season and turning them in, clean, to the Athletic Director. Coaches will not be paid their stipend until the Athletic Director tells the Business Manager that all of the uniforms are accounted for in that particular sport. This rule goes for the sub-varsity level as well as for the varsity level.**

## **Volunteer Coaches**

In February, May, and September, the Superintendent will nominate, and the School Board will hire coaches. Head coaches will be hired as well as assistant coaches. Board-hired coaches will be responsible for all aspects of their teams including travel, practices, supervision during away games, and actual coaching.

Occasionally, a team will request the assistance of a volunteer coach during practices to help out with management, strategy, or in teaching a skill. Volunteer coaches, such as parents or older students, can participate with the team only once or twice during the season per MSPA rules. The coach needs to clear this request for volunteer assistance with the Athletic Director. Also, during a game, volunteer coaches will not be allowed to sit on the bench with the players. That role is reserved for board-hired coaches only.

## **Letter Criteria**

In order to earn a varsity letter in a sport, the student-athlete must play in at least half of the scheduled games, or must play for at least half of the total scheduled time of the games in the season, or must be a senior who has completed the season with the team in good standing.

## **Coaching Certification**

In order to coach at the high school level, the coach must be certified by the MPA and must complete the coaching course through the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching at the University of Maine before the coach's second season. There is no cost for this course as we are a Sports Done Right school and the \$40.00 fee is waived. Additionally, before the coaches second season, the coach must complete a local CPR course which can be scheduled with the Athletic Director, as part of the MPA certification. Also, a coach must be a high school graduate and at least 20 years old.

In addition, all coaches hired as high school coaches in activities governed by the MPA must meet all coaches eligibility requirements established by the MPA and must agree to follow the MPA Code of Ethics, local Board policies, and local athletic department administrative regulations.

No applicant will be hired as a coach or as an assistant coach without MDOE approval, which includes fingerprinting and criminal background check requirements.

Middle School and Elementary School coaches are encouraged to seek these certifications as well.

## **Evaluation of Coaches**

The most important factor in an educationally sound athletic program is a well-qualified coach. The coach is an important link between sports and the instructional program.

Coaching is a special kind of teaching. A coach not only teaches, refines, and reinforces skills, but is a role model for student-athletes. Beyond knowledge of rules and fundamentals, a good coach will have organizational, communication, motivational, and teaching skills. Additionally, a well-qualified coach:

- Understands that, first and foremost, he/she is a teacher.
- Is sensitive to the needs of maturing adolescents and assists in their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development.

- Recognizes that students are diverse in their characteristics and backgrounds including age, gender, size, and culture, and adjusts his/her approach accordingly.
- Has a realistic sense of the level at which student-athletes should be expected to perform.
- Promotes sportsmanship, self-discipline, and respect, both on and off the playing field.
- Communicates in a positive manner rather than through intimidation.
- Encourages competitive spirit, but not a win at all costs attitude.
- Provides a fair opportunity for student to participate in competition.
- Recognizes the difference between developmental sports programs and more intensive varsity level sports.
- Encourages student-athletics to explore various athletic activities, rather than to specialize in a single sport at an early age.
- Recognizes the need for balance in the lives of student-athletes, including academic, family, and social needs.
- Communicates and coordinates with classroom teachers regarding scheduling changes and scheduling conflicts which might affect academics or absences from school.
- Is a role model for his/her team members and in the community.

After each season, Sports Done Right surveys will be mailed out by the Sports Done Right Committee to student athletes and to parents for varsity sports. The results of these anonymous surveys will then be shared with each coach by the Athletic Director and the Superintendent. This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the program, to discuss any issues, and to make a determination whether the coach has support to return to his/her current position in the following year. Evaluation factors will be:

- Knowledge of the sport.
- Coaching skills and techniques.
- Organizational skills.
- Practice plans.
- Attitude.

- Communication skills.
- Behavior.
- Ethics.

Over the course of each season, the Athletic Director will evaluate coaches, formally and informally by watching practices and games

Non-varsity coaches will also be given feedback by the Athletic Director over the course of the season and at the end of the season.

Coaches will need to sign a form indicating that they have read, and understood, this Sports Handbook.

## **Sports Seasons**

All varsity sports seasons will follow the MPA calendar.

There will be a “hands-off” period of 2 weeks for all students following the end of the regular season of each sport. During those 2 weeks, no scheduled activities, or open gyms, will take place at the school.

## **STUDENT TRAVEL for Varsity Athletes**

Because of our unique island setting, Vinalhaven student-athletes are often traveling overnight to away games. This adds an additional layer of organization, responsibility, and accountability for both student-athletes and coaches. Here are the guidelines and procedures for travel:

- Student-athletes must travel with their team to the away game. Traveling with the team means going on the bus to the game with the coaches and staying at the hotel, school or residence that the entire team will be staying. If an athlete chooses to go to the game with their parents or others the night before a game they will not be permitted to play in the game. Exceptions to these travel requirements may be made in extraordinary cases with prior approval of the coach and the athletic director and/or school leader. They may be picked up after the game by a parent or legal guardian provided that the parent asks permission from the coach and provided a written note confirming this arrangement. A student-athlete may be picked up by an adult who is not the parent/guardian if there is a written note from the parent/guardian requesting this and if it has been previously approved by either the School Leader or the Athletic Director before the team left Vinalhaven.

- Team curfews will be in place when student-athletes are traveling. Times will be set by the coach, who has final say. Any student-athlete who breaks curfew shall be suspended from the team for one week.

- When traveling overnight and missing school, student-athletes must keep their teachers informed and will need to make up any work missed. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to remain caught up in all of his/her classes.

- When traveling, common sense rules apply in regard to respect, patience, kindness, empathy, sportsmanship, dignity, accountability, politeness, integrity, and positive attitude.

- During away basketball games, the boys' team will stay in the gym to watch the girls play and visa-versa, to support each other.

- When traveling on the ferry, there will be no sitting in vehicles.

- A protocol checklist will be developed for away games with routine steps that coaches will need to undertake before leaving the island with their team, and can be found at the end of this document.

- Only personal music devices (i-Pods) are allowed while traveling; no boom boxes.

- Cell phones must be turned off during basketball when in the other team's gym.

- Coaches must keep track of his/her team at all times when traveling and when going into stores and restaurants. No student-athlete should ever be alone. It is preferable for all coaches to travel with the team to all games and back. When this is not possible, one board-hired coach (head or assistant) will be sufficient for coverage. A parent cannot substitute for a coach's chaperone responsibility. If, for whatever reason, a coach is not available to travel with the team, the Principal or the Athletic Director will appoint another school employee on a temporary basis.

- Student-athletes returning from an away trip on a school day will go directly to school upon reaching Vinalhaven if school is in session.

- **TOURNAMENT PLAY:** The school will pay for one tournament dinner not to exceed \$15.00 per student if the team is required to spend the night at the tournament site. Additional dinners, if necessitated by the length of the tournament will be at family, not school, expense. Lodging will be secured by the business office for the players, coach, and assistant coach. Normally, the office will book a hotel/motel that serves free breakfast. If a game is at 11:30 am or later, the teams from Vinalhaven will, weather permitting, travel on the day of the game. Any other circumstances regarding travel will be left to the discretion of the school administration.

- **Food and Lodging for non-tournament games:** The school believes in reciprocity between the schools that travel for sports games. Vinalhaven will provide food and lodging to a visiting school only if the visiting school provides similar accommodations and food to our players and coaches. When Vinalhaven does host a game, the business office will approve up to \$250.00 for food expenses for the visiting team.

## **Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities code of Conduct for Middle and High School Students**

Since participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is a privilege, it is important that students, parents/guardians and other interested persons are aware of the following rules and regulations. As representatives of the schools, students are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. These rules are adopted by the School Board in order to support the social, emotional and physical well-being of students and promote healthy, enriching and safe co- and extra-curricular opportunities for all students.

- Students in good standing may participate in the co- and extra-curricular activities of their school. A student is considered in good standing if he/she is not the subject of any disciplinary action for violation of any policy or school rule and is currently academically eligible based on MPA and school guidelines.

- All participants are expected to come to school ready to learn on all scheduled school days. For the purpose of this policy, any student who misses any portion of the school day unexcused (including a third occurrence of unexcused tardiness in a semester) may NOT participate in co- and extra-curricular activities. Also, all students (even with excused absences) are required to attend at least 3 hours of a school day to participate in after school events. Any exceptions to this requirement must be *pre-approved* by a building administrator.

- Students suspended from school shall not practice, participate, attend, or compete in extra- or co-curricular activities (including tryouts and auditions) during the days of suspension.

- Students are required to abide by all Board policies, school rules and any additional rules, and/or training guidelines imposed by coaches or advisors. Any additional rules and/or training guidelines must be consistent with Board policies and be approved by the Athletic Director or Activities Director.

- Student use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs is illegal and negatively affects student health, safety and performance. Students participating in co- and extra-curricular activities carry a responsibility to themselves, their fellow students, coaches/advisors, parents and school to set the highest possible example of conduct, sportsmanship and training, which includes avoiding any involvement with tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

Therefore, students participating in co- and extra-curricular activities may not engage in the prohibited behaviors and activities described in Policy JICH (Student Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use) for that season only.

- Students are expected to conduct themselves so as not to discredit themselves, their team or organization, their coach or advisor, and their school. If a student is charged with a crime, he or she may be suspended from participation in co- or extra-curricular activities until the case is adjudicated.

A student who is convicted of a crime may be suspended from participation in activities for a period of time to be determined based upon the facts of the particular case.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Improper conduct, as determined by the Athletic Director/coach, Activity Director/advisor and/or administration shall result in disciplinary action up to and including removal/suspension from the team or activity (in addition to any discipline imposed under applicable Board policies or school rules). The Athletic/Activity Directors and coaches/advisors are expected to enforce all policies and school rules at all times and to use their best judgment in applying penalties for violations. The advisor or coach shall consult with the Athletic Director or Activities Director prior to suspending a student from an activity or team.

Disciplinary action in this section pertains to infractions by a student participant that occur during their sports season (basketball, baseball, soccer, rowing) or co-curricula season (theater, music, etc). An infraction involving use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol will be verifiable through law enforcement or judicial reports, by self-admission of the student, or by Vinalhaven staff direct observation or verified third-party report.

For infractions involving drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco, disciplinary action will be taken as specified below. Repeat or extreme violations will warrant administrative review and additional sanctions. Violations are cumulative during a student's middle school career, but do not carry over to the high school unless the MS student is in a Varsity Sport or HS sponsored activity. Violations during a student's high school career are cumulative but apply within one season, not for all grades 9-12. 8<sup>th</sup> graders who make a varsity team need to adhere to varsity rules.

## **Tobacco violations**

- (See Policy)

## **Drug and alcohol violations**

- (See Policy)

## **Self-Reporting of Violation By the Student**

A student who violates Policy JICI has the opportunity to report his/her violation to the Athletic Director or Activity Director by noon of the following school day. In such a case, the disciplinary action specified in the preceding section may be cut in half. This provision cannot be used to avoid discipline under this policy for a violation that has already been reported to the school or to avoid discipline for violations of Policy JICH, Student Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use.

## **Activity/Team Leadership Positions**

A student elected to a leadership position for an activity/team forfeits that position. This meeting shall be facilitated by the Guidance Counselor / Principal and attended by the Activity Director/Athletic Director and the coach/advisor. A final decision will be made by the coach/Athletic Director or advisor/Activity Director, taking into consideration the recommendation of the students. A second violation any time during the student's middle school or high school career will result in the loss of any leadership designation held.

## **Appeal of Suspension from Activity / Team**

- A student who wishes to appeal a suspension from a team/activity must first discuss the matter with his/her advisor or coach.

- Following that discussion, if the student and his/her parent/guardian wishes to appeal the suspension, it must be done in writing to the Athletic Director/Activity Director within three school days of notice of the suspension decision. The Athletic Director / Activity Director will conduct an investigation as he/she deems advisable and render a decision, in writing, to the student.

- If the student and his/her parent/guardian are dissatisfied with this decision, the decision may be appealed in writing to the Principal within three school days. The Principal will conduct whatever investigation he/she deems advisable and render a decision, in writing, to his/her parents within a reasonable time. The Principal's decision is final.

- The student shall remain under suspension during the appeal process.

## **Eligibility**

### **Grades**

1. A student must be passing all courses with a grade of 70 at the start of a season to be eligible to participate in sports and extra-curricular activities. If the student is failing a subject at the start of the season, they have 10 school days to get to a point of passing. During this time, they may still participate. If, after the ten day period, they are still not passing that subject, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.
2. At the mid-point of a grading period, all students participating in sports and extra-curricular activities will have their grades reviewed. They must be passing all subjects with a grade of 70 to be eligible for continued participation. If they are failing a subject at this time, they have a 10-day period to establish passing grades. Should they be failing any subject after the 10 days, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.

### **Attendance and Tardiness:**

- A. Any student absent from school cannot participate in a practice, game, or co-curricular event on that respective day/night. If a medical note is given or prior arrangements have been made with the office, athletic director, or co-curricular instructor, the student may be able to participate.
- B. If a student is at school, s/he shall attend practice that day unless prior arrangements have been made or if it is an excused absence.
- C. Unless excused, tardiness will not be tolerated.
- D. Please check with co-curricular instructor and/or the Athletic Handbook for further information regarding attendance and tardiness policy.

## **Middle School Academic and Behavioral Guidelines**

### **2015-2016 Middle School Eligibility Policy**

1. A student must be passing all courses with a grade of 70 at the start of a season to be eligible to participate in sports and extra-curricular activities. If the student is failing a subject at the start of the season, they have 10 school days to get to a point of passing. During this time, they may still participate. If, after the ten-day period, they are still not passing that subject, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.
2. At the mid-point of a grading period, all students participating in sports and extra-curricular activities will have their grades reviewed. They must be passing all subjects with a grade of 70 to be eligible for continued participation. If they are failing a subject at this time, they have a 10-day period to establish passing grades. Should they be failing any subject after the 10 days, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.

## **5th Grade Co-Curricular Academic and Behavior Guidelines**

1. A student must be passing all courses at the start of a season to be eligible to participate in sports and extra-curricular activities. If the student is failing a subject at the start of the season, they have 10 school days to get to a point of passing. During this time, they may still participate. If, after the ten-day period, they are still not passing that subject, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.
2. At the mid-point of a grading period, all students participating in sports and extra-curricular activities will have their grades reviewed. They must be passing all subjects to be eligible for continued participation. If they are failing a subject at this time, they have a 10-day period to establish passing grades. Should they be failing any subject after the 10 days, they are ineligible for the balance of the season.

**I have read and understand the rules, regulations, and philosophies in the Vinalhaven Sports Handbook, and I agree to do my best to operate under these guidelines.**

**Coach:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sport:** \_\_\_\_\_

## COACHS' CHECKLIST FOR AWAY GAMES

1. Talk to your team before going away about expectations and information. Athletes must check with their teachers on all work that will be missed.
2. Double check boat time.
3. You must ride team bus to the ferry or take your own car, parking in the upper parking lot. Students cannot ride with other students. Have correct head count for ferry personnel.
4. Have a coach in each cabin. Coaches should also supervise any students who are up top.
5. When the ferry docks, make sure that the cabins are clean and that trash is put in the bins.
6. Be ready to load the bus when getting off the ferry.
7. Seating on the bus: one team in front, the other in back; boys and girls do not sit together.
8. If the team stops on the trip, travel in groups, know the time to meet back on the bus, and never get into another vehicle.
9. If staying in private homes, players know coaches' cell phone numbers, and coaches know players cell phone numbers.
10. After the game, make sure that locker rooms, fields, and bench areas are picked up.
11. If the team is staying in a gym or a motel, the coach should go over courtesy and expectations, lights out time, no leaving rooms, quiet for others, wake up times, etc.
12. If any student, for any reason, is not staying with the team, the coach should be aware of this before leaving Vinalhaven. All students must return to Vinalhaven unless they have a parental note or unless there is a parent/guardian present to take the child.
13. The bus must be cleaned of all belongings and trash.
14. On the Vinalhaven ferry return, let ferry personnel know if the number on the ticket and head count doesn't match (if a child stays over, etc.).