

MSAD 8 VINALHAVEN SCHOOL

SPORTS HANDBOOK: October 2017

Introduction

September 2017

This document is a revision to the Vinalhaven School Sports Handbook last published in September 2013. It updates and compiles all of the policies and procedures related to the sports program. A large percentage of our students participate in athletics, and the policies and procedures here will serve as a guide to sports activities.

Attending school is a right; participating in sports is a privilege. Therefore, student-athletes, in some cases, must meet higher standards in order to participate in athletics. Please contact our Athletic Director, Sandy Nelson if you have questions or clarifications about information in this handbook.

SPORTS DONE RIGHT

Maine Center for Sports and Coaching, University of Maine

Adopted by the VS Board in 2009

Philosophy and Core Principles

- Athletic participation must be healthful, positive and safe for everyone involved, conducted in an environment that teaches values and ethics, strengthens the community, promotes competition without conflict and enriches the lives of the athletes.
- Learning and personal growth for the foundation for interscholastic and intramural sports.
- Parents and community are actively involved in creating and supporting an environment that fosters positive athletic experiences for student-athletes.
- The coach is the key to making the student-athlete experience appropriate, positive and educational.
- Each student who meets the eligibility standards has the opportunity to participate and learn through sports.
- Participation in sports builds self-confidence while teaching good health and fitness habits to last a lifetime.
- High-quality athletic programs are built upon a foundation of strong leadership, clear policy, adequate resources and effective organization.

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:

- Time and location of practices and contests.
- The coach's philosophy.
- The expectations the coach has for all the players on the squad as well as for your student.
- Requirements for the team, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
- Injury procedures.
- Behavior expectations.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of your child, emotionally and physically.
- Skill improvement and development.
- Your student's behavior.

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Express concerns directly to the coach.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Commitment to the program.
 - Insisting your child to be at practice on time.
 - Assuring proper nutrition, hydration and rest for your child.
 - Serving as a role model for good sportsmanship.

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

- Speak the coach first.
- Consider what you expect to accomplish as a result of the meeting.
- Discuss the facts as you understand them.
- Please do not express concerns before, during, or following a contest or practice. These are emotional times for both the parent and the coach and makes clear and objective analysis of the situation difficult.

What the parent can do if the meeting with the coach does 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.
- Coach and athletic director decisions may be appealed to the principal.

Pre Season Meetings

The Athletic Director and coaches will meet with varsity athletes and their parents at the start of each sports season. The meeting will be announced in the Wind and on the school Facebook page. All student athletes, coaches, and parents will attend the meeting. The meeting will include:

- An overview of the Sports Handbook including game travel policies.
- A review of required forms and paperwork.
- Eligibility requirements.
- Student, fan and coach behavior and sportsmanship expectations.
- Coaching philosophy and expectations.

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.

Criteria to Earn a Varsity Letter

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 Eligibility

In order to coach at the high school level, the coach must meet the criteria set out by the Maine Principals' Association Eligibility Policy.

All coaches must have a DOE background check and fingerprinting.

Sports Seasons

All varsity sports seasons will follow the MPA calendar.

There will be a "hands-off" period of two weeks for all students following the end of the regular season of each sport. During those two 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 where 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 principal. A student 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 Principal or the Athletic Director before the team leaves 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 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.

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 school board appointed 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. If possible, 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: NON TOURNAMENT

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 (School Board Policy JJJ)

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. 8th graders who make a varsity team need to adhere to varsity rules.

Tobacco violations

- First violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for one week (7 calendar days). The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Guidance Counselor / School Leader prior to returning to the activity.
- Repeat violations: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks (14 calendar days). The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Guidance Counselor / School Leader prior to returning to the activity.

Drug and alcohol violations

- First violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks (14 calendar days) or duration of any extended out-of-school suspension. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Guidance Counselor / School Leader prior to returning to the activity.
- Second violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for 30 calendar days. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Guidance Counselor / School Leader prior to returning to the activity.
- Repeat violations: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for 60 calendar days. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Guidance Counselor / School Leader prior to returning to the activity.

If a violation occurs near the end of the school year, the suspension shall carry over to the next school year.

Violations accumulate over a student's 8th – 12th grade academic career. For example, if a student has a drinking violation in 9th grade, s/he will be suspended for co and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks. If the same student has another violation in 11th grade, that violation will be considered the **second** violation and the student will be suspended from co-and/or extra-curricular activities for 30 calendar days.

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 will 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.

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

As of September 2017, our eligibility standards are being revised as we transition to proficiency progress reporting

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

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.

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.

Unless excused, tardiness will not be tolerated.

Please check with co-curricular instructor and/or the Athletic Handbook for further information regarding attendance and tardiness policy.

EIGHTH GRADE PARTICIPATION ON HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS TEAMS

Board reviewed on July 19, 2017

It is the practice of the Vinalhaven School that high school interscholastic sports teams be comprised of students in grades 9-12.

It is recognized, however, that there may be special circumstances when it is appropriate for a grade 8 student to be a member of a high school team (as permitted by MPA rules and regulations) if recommended by the athletic director and approved by the principal.

Such participation may be permitted given the following conditions.

1. The student is invited to join a high school team by the athletic director after consultation with the parents, the principal, teachers, and the appropriate coaches. The recommendation will be based upon:
 - Student safety.
 - Developmental appropriateness: physical, social, emotional, academic.
 - The needs of the high school program.
2. If the recommendation is made and approved by the principal, the parents of the 8th grader will have final say in the matter.
3. The decision making process will be led by the athletic director who will meet with the student and the parents.
4. Coaches may not speak directly with the student about high school participation unless invited to do so by the athletic director, with the athletic director present. There shall be no pressure brought to bear on the student or the family by any school personnel.
5. If the decision is made by the family to join the high school team, the student may not participate on the middle school team.
6. A decision to play on a high school team shall be for that current sport season only. The decision shall not extend to the following sports seasons.
7. All student athletes are responsible to make up all missed classroom work.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

2017-2018 Middle School Eligibility Policy

Eligibility to participate in Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular activities sponsored by the Vinalhaven School is monitored weekly for Middle School students. Students demonstrating the need for support behaviorally or academically as documented in their weekly Habits of Work Rubric will make an Action Plan with the help and support of their teachers to demonstrate learning and/or improvement.

To be eligible, students must earn a score of proficient, or a 3 on four out of the five categories on their weekly Habits of Work Rubric. If a student earns a score below a 3 in more than one category, they will be required to make an Action Plan with their teachers that outlines the steps they will take to seek additional support and improve in the areas of concern on their rubric. Students at this stage may continue to participate in Extra-

Curricular and Co-Curricular activities with probationary status.

Student Action Plan progress will be monitored over a period of three weeks. If the student has followed their Action Plan and made adequate progress, as reflected in a Habits of Work Rubric score of proficient, or a 3, student eligibility will be fully reinstated. If at any time during these three weeks the action plan is not met or progress is not made, eligibility may be revoked by team discretion.

3rd - 5th Grade Co-Curricular Academic and Behavior Guidelines

The Sports Done Right committee proposes the following academic and behavioral guidelines for 5th graders participating in extra/ co-curricular activities.

Academic Guidelines:

- Student-athletes will complete daily and weekly homework assignments.
- Student-athletes will use class time wisely and complete class work in school.

Behavioral Guidelines:

- Student will follow classroom and school rules. Students who receive Behavioral referral and fill out a behavior plan will not be allowed to attend practice on that day.

If students are experiencing difficulties in any of these areas, an SAT meeting with parents, teachers, and coaches will be held to discuss the students' participation in extra-curricular athletics.