

# **NORTH WARREN CENTRAL SCHOOL**

## **Code of Conduct for Student-Athletes**

Participation on a NWCS athletic team is a **privilege** that should ignite great pride in both the student athlete and his/her family. It is also an acceptance of responsibility that requires an extra commitment from those who wear our school colors and represent their teammates, coaches, school and community. Standards of behavior are necessarily high and a willingness to meet these standards is a condition for being a member of one of our teams.

Our coaches are responsible for providing leadership, encouragement and direction to assist the student-athlete with meeting his/her personal commitment to their team. They are also responsible for providing the student-athlete the opportunity to compete in an athletic environment that fosters sportsmanship and fair play. Coaches will strive to enhance the academic pursuit of the student-athlete through athletic participation. The following guidelines serve as benchmarks for the conduct of coaches.

### **To the athlete:**

Being a member of a NWCS athletic team is a fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic squad at NWCS, you have inherited a wonderful tradition that you are challenged to uphold. Like anything of value, it comes with a price tag. That price tag is a commitment from you to follow the established rules. By participating in athletics to the greatest extent of your ability, you are contributing to the reputation of your school. We base our success on two separate venues, #1 the process, (what you can learn through athletics that can be used throughout life) and #2 the (product the win/loss records of our teams). We field teams to compete and our goal is to achieve and compete at our best possible level in every contest. It is our deepest goal, that there is always a balance between these two areas. However, please note that at the Varsity Level wins are a priority.

Our tradition has been to win with honor and to develop young people of character that our community has pride in on and off the field. We desire to win, but only with honor to our athletes, our schools and our community. Such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned.

Again, you as a student athlete must understand that this substance abuse program is not designed to be a punishment but a deterrent to becoming involved in the risky and dangerous behaviors that are associated with the use and abuse of the drugs, alcohol and tobacco. It is also to ensure that you have the best possibilities to succeed in your sport and to learn the valuable lessons that athletics can teach. Because your mental and physical well-being is essential to your success both as a student and as an athlete, we want you to reach your full potential. This can only be fully realized if you remain drug-free. We are asking for your help and cooperation in achieving a totally drug-free athletic program. We are committed to providing such an atmosphere for our student athletes. Therefore, we are asking you to become an active part of the solution, not to become part of the problem. Your active participation in remaining drug-free throughout your athletic career at NWCS is greatly appreciated. The benefit will be in the experience you will have.

It will not be easy to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. When you wear the colors of green and gold, we assume that you not only understand our traditions, but also are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them. However, the contributions you make should be a satisfying accomplishment to you, your family and our community. Whether right or wrong, society holds athletes in esteem and your behavior at all times is under scrutiny.

### **Modified Teams**

Modified team participation shall serve as a developmental process with the focus being on participation, learning athletic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth and healthy competition. Development of our athletic program will be a major determining factor in deciding participation by modified student athletes, rather than winning or losing.

## **Junior Varsity Teams**

The Junior Varsity level is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive varsity level performers. Increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement or fundamental skills, element and strategies of team play, in addition to social and emotional development. Junior Varsity programs work toward achieving a balance between continued team and player development. The outcome of the contest becomes a consideration at this level. Playing time is relative to meeting the expectations of the coach and the ability to perform at this level.

## **Varsity Teams**

Varsity Teams will compete at the highest level with the most competent skilled athletes. The goal is to compete for league championships and qualify for sectional play. Participants are selected based on their demonstrated commitment and knowledge of the activity, advanced skill set and ability to meet the demands and pressures inherent to performing at the varsity level. While the primary goal at the level continues to emphasize sportsmanship and character, winning contests takes a high priority and there is no guarantee that all team members will play in contests.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

There are many responsibilities that go along with participating in extracurricular athletics.

**Responsibilities to Yourself:** The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to derive the greatest benefit from your high school experiences and to respect your health both physically and mentally at all times.

**Responsibility to your Academic Studies:** Your academic studies, and your participation in other extracurricular and co-curricular activities as well as sports, prepare you for your life as an adult. Athletics, while very important to many young people, is only a small part of life. Realize also how few athletes make it to the collegiate level and beyond.

**Responsibilities to Your School:** Another responsibility you assume as a squad member is to your school. NWCS cannot maintain its position as having outstanding schools unless you do your best in the activity in which you engage.

**Responsibility to your Community:** The community and school tax monies make this athletic experience possible. For that reason, we must remember that we hold a clear and paramount responsibility to our community. **You assume a leadership role when you are on the athletic squad.** The student body and citizens of the community know you. You are very visible with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute significantly to school spirit and community pride. Our desire is that our student athletes are a class act on and off the field. We strive to be known as a program with character and excellence. Make NWCS proud of you and your community proud of your school by your consistent demonstration of these ideals.

**Responsibility to Others:** As a squad member, you also bear a heavy responsibility to your home. If you never give your parents anything to be ashamed of, you will have measured up to that ideal. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all of the training rules, that you have practiced to the best of your ability every day and that you have played the game "all out", you can keep your self-respect and your family can be justly proud of you, win or lose.

**Responsibility to Younger Athletes:** The younger students in NWCS Athletics are watching you. They know who you are and what you do. The older upper-class athletes are role models for the young athletes that will come after you. Make them proud. Be an example. They will copy you in many ways. Do not do anything to let them down. Set good examples for them.

## To the parent:

This material is presented to you because your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics and you have expressed your willingness to permit her/him to compete. We believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences that assist students in personal development. **It should be recognized that involvement in interscholastic athletics is a privilege.**

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and commitment. These are the reasons we place conditions on involvement, as the health and safety and welfare of athletes must be our first priority. Good training habits and lifestyle are necessary for us to ensure this experience. **Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct means exclusion from the squad.** This concept of self-discipline and commitment is tempered by our responsibility to recognize the rights of the individual within the objectives of the team and the interscholastic program. There is no place in high school athletics for students who will not discipline their minds and bodies for rigorous competition. This decision is not ours alone but that of the Supreme Court of the United States, as there have been challenges to athletic codes on five occasions and the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of such codes on each occasion under the premise that athletes' safety and health must be insured. Challenges to the athletic code shall be considered, but no consideration shall be given to any party or stakeholder who will not agree to such provisions.

It is the role of the department of athletics to establish and maintain rules that govern the spirit of training and competition for the school district. These are the clear and consistent boundaries that insure the success of our young people. These rules need a broad basis of community support, which is achieved only through communication to the parent, the coaches, the student athletes and fans. It is our hope to accomplish this objective through this athletic publication for students and parents.

## Transportation

Students must ride to and from out of district practice and games on district provided transportation. Coaches will have discretion and will alert parents if sign-outs to ride home from games with a parent will be allowed. If a coach allows parent sign-out from a game, please be aware you cannot sign out another athlete without prior approval and letters from both families and either the Athletic Director's or an Administrator's approval.

## Issuing of School Clothing and Equipment

The substantial cost of uniforms and equipment make it necessary to hold our athletes accountable for all items issued to them. Failure to return items in a timely manner upon the conclusion of the season will result in the athlete having the pay for the articles. Athletes not paying for the missing articles will forfeit their eligibility for an award, certificate, pin or letter and may not participate in the next sports season until the situation is rectified.

## To the Coaches

### Coaches will:

1. Build a personal and team philosophy based upon the values expressed in the Interscholastic Athletic Program Philosophy statement.
2. Strive to enlarge their technical knowledge and develop wisdom and competency in all areas of the profession.
3. Enhance and protect the physical and mental well-being of their student athletes.
4. Teach student-athletes to respect self, teammates, opponents and officials.
5. Strive to instill in players a desire to know and live by the spirit of the rules of the school, team, and sports.
6. Help create an atmosphere of friendly competition wherein sportsmanship and honor transcend victory or defeat.
7. Cooperate with administrators, faculty and other coaches in maintaining and improving the educational quality of our school.
8. Encourage the highest standards of academic achievement among our student-athletes.
9. Support the highest standards of conduct with regard to character and integrity.
10. Support the chemical health standards and behavioral standards set forth in this code.

11. Conduct a meeting with parents and players at the beginning of the season to discuss the athletic code, coaching philosophy, and procedures to follow, should a conflict arise during the season.

## **A. Application of the Code**

The Code of Conduct will apply to each student athlete for the **academic school year (July 1 to June 30) (including summer)** and will be in effect at all times, in all locations, including non-school activities. Violation of the Code will result in penalties, which are consistent with those identified within the code as determined by the coach and/or Athletic Director. Each coach also has the prerogative to establish and implement additional guidelines specific to his/her particular team.

All violations of the Code will be cumulative beginning with a student's initial participation on a modified, junior varsity, or varsity team.

## **B. Conditions for Team Membership**

Student-athletes are expected to commit themselves to team membership, attendance at school, and at practices/contests for the duration of the season. When this commitment is not fulfilled, the athlete's membership and position on the team shall be reviewed by the coach with the athlete and a recommendation of action will be made by the coach to the Athletic Director for review.

1. Student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and contests unless excused by the coach. It is the athlete's responsibility to notify the coach, in advance, of any circumstances that would prohibit attendance at practice(s) or contest(s) other than absence from school. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning to dismissal from the team dependent upon the nature and/or frequency of the offense.
2. A student who is absent from school will not be eligible for participation in any athletic event or practice session on the day he or she is absent. The Athletic Director/Administration may permit participation when, in his/her judgment, the absence is unavoidable and supporting documentation signed by a parent or guardian is provided.
3. Students who are members of an interscholastic athletic team are expected to be in school on time on a daily basis. Students who have a doctor's appointment with a note from the doctor are excused, even if it is the entire day. Students who report to school late **must** present a legal excuse and **must** report to the nurse's office for attendance in order to be eligible to participate (ex. doctor's appointment with proper documentation). Students will be ineligible for practice or contest participation that day if they do not provide a legal excuse and report to the school nurse for attendance prior to going to class.
4. The coach will establish team rules for practice/game attendance and participation. All team members will be given a written copy of the team rules and the coach will review the rules with the team members. All team members are expected to comply with and abide by the rules established for their team.
5. A student's absence(s) from practice(s) and or contest(s) due to mandatory participation in family activities will not jeopardize the student's team membership status. However, it is important to note that upon his or her return to the team the position previously held by the student may be held by another team member. It is the returning student's responsibility to regain his or her position through individual effort and team play as determined by the coach. The Athletic Director may permit participation when, in his/her judgment, the absence is unavoidable and supporting documentation signed by a parent or guardian is provided.
6. As a member of an interscholastic team, it is expected that your top athletic priority is to your team during the entire season of play. Participation on non-school related athletic teams in the same season of interscholastic participation is permissible as long as such participation does not conflict with fulfilling your responsibilities to the interscholastic team or violate team rules.
7. The use, sale and/or possession of any controlled substance(s), alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia other than those prescribed by a physician is strictly prohibited.
8. As a member of an athletic team, students should be mindful that they represent their team, school, family and community. Team members are expected to have an obligation to conduct themselves as good citizens both in and out of school and the community. Students are expected to refrain from exhibiting any behavior(s),

which violates the principles of good citizenship. In other words, NEVER do anything that might bring embarrassment or an unfavorable view to yourself, your teammates, coaches, family, school, or community.

9. An athlete who participates in activities resulting in his/her arrest or formal charges being filed (**violation, misdemeanor or felony**) in a court of law may face additional penalties under this Code. If the school district has adequate and competent evidence that the student participated in the offense for which he or she is charged, a penalty may be imposed pursuant to this Code prior to completion of the criminal proceeding. **If the school district does not have such evidence and the student is convicted of a crime (violation, misdemeanor or felony), the penalty pursuant to this code will be imposed upon conviction.** In the latter case, the athlete may continue to participate in his/her sport until resolution of the matter by the judicial system.
10. Quitting a Sports Team Policy: Students who decide to quit a sports team may do so without penalty up until the first scheduled league game. Students who quit the team after league play begins must meet with their coach, Athletic Director and have a note or a phone call from their parent to agree. The student will be penalized for quitting during the following season of the sport they play. They will be ineligible to play 25% of the games in that season; however, the student will be expected at all practices and team events.

### **11. Dual Sport Participation**

Students wishing to participate in two sports during the same season will need to follow the guidelines established by the Athletic Department involving dual sports participation.

#### **Rules of Dual Sports Participation**

1. A student who wishes to participate in two sports during the same season must designate a "primary" sport no later than five practices into the season. Once the primary has been designed, it cannot be changed.
2. A primary sport is defined as the sport that takes precedence over another sport in the event there is a conflict. The student must adhere to the primary sport in the event of any and all conflicts of schedule. If one sport has a contest and the other practice, the contest will take precedence.
3. The student must practice in both sports, but the amount of practice time will be determined by the head coaches of the sports involved.
4. In the event that a student is disciplined for any infraction in a specific sport, the consequence will also be applied to the second sport in the season of dual participation.
5. The student and parents or legal guardians must sign a contract of dual sport participation before the first practice sessions he or she attends.

### **12. Communication**

As athletics is an integral element of a student's overall educational experience, appropriate communication among athletes, coaches, parents and administration is vital. Athletes should work to resolve any questions or concerns that he/she may be directly with the coach. If the questions and concerns continue then the following order should be followed:

Athletic Director  
Principal  
Superintendent  
Board of Education

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during or after a contest. These can be emotional times for all parties involved. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote a positive resolution and set up all parties for failure.

## C. Misconduct and Penalties

**North Warren Athletics' 3-Strike Policy is cumulative for students in Grades 7-12. If an athlete receives a "Strike 3" the student athlete shall be removed from participation in all interscholastic athletics for the remainder of his/her athletic career.**

Any athlete who participates in activities resulting in his/her arrest or formal charges being filed in a court of law must report the incident to the Athletic Director and/or School Administration. This must be done within 72 hours of the incident that led to the charges. Failure to self-report any arrest/violation will be considered a level one offense and a "strike" will be added to the player's athletic record.

Any athlete who participates or is involved in an offense listed below or has violated the code of conduct that is deemed egregious by Administration will receive 1 strike when disciplined. However, your number of penalties, (games missed) will depend on the offense or offenses you were included on this this occasion. (i.e. #1 – caught at a party and drinking – 1 strike penalty is under a level 1 offense #2 caught at a party and drinking at a party you hosted still 1 strike will be implemented, but your penalty will be under a level 2 offense.)

For the July 1, 2020 start of the athletic year only, any incoming 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades who received 3 strikes and were told could not play again, would be able to remove a strike and be eligible for a Fall Sport you must do the following:

- Apply, in writing, to lose the strike to Administration and Athletic Director
- Write an apology to the North Warren Administrative Team
- Work with Administration and the Athletic Director to choose and ask a staff member to be your support/mentor during this process.
- Watch and do quiz on code at NWCS, with a passing rate of 85%
- Participate in assigned community service for up to 10 hours, as assigned by the district.
- Additional remediation at the discretion of Administration

This is a one-time only opportunity for our students who have 3 strikes as of June 30, 2020.

Beginning September 2020, any student who receives a strike will be required to reread the Athletic Code of Conduct, pass the associated quiz, and is required to do 10 hours of community service as prescribed by the district during their suspension.

Any student who receives a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike may choose to do the following remediation plan to remove your strike and bring you back to having 2 strikes but please note that you will not be eligible to play in the current season.

- Apply, in writing, to lose the strike to Administration and Athletic Director
- Write an apology to the North Warren Administrative Team
- Work with Administration and the Athletic Director to choose and ask a staff member to be your support/mentor during this process.
- Watch and do quiz on code at NWCS, with a passing rate of 85%
- Participate in assigned community service for up to 10 hours, as assigned by the district.
- Additional remediation at the discretion of Administration
- Contest suspensions will be determined under Level 2 consequences.

Please note: Removing a strike will **ONLY** be allowed once in an athletes career.

**Level 1 Offenses** - The student athlete is suspended for "x" number of contests (see **CHART OF PENALTIES**).

Examples of Level 1 Offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Possession and/or Use of Alcohol and/or Tobacco or Vaping products.
- Possession and/or Use of any Electronic smoking device
- Failure to self-report an arrest/violation
- NWCS Student Code of Conduct Violations: Any violation of the NWCS Student Code of Conduct that results in out-of-school suspension.
- Poor Sportsmanship: Student Athletes, whether participants or spectators, will observe courteous behavior during all sporting events. Booming, whistling, name-calling, obscene gestures, fighting or arguing with the referee etc.

- Stealing: Stealing of any kind, including athletic clothing belonging to NWCS or our opponent.
- Verbal and/or Physical Abuse: directed at teachers, coaches, students, opponents, officials, etc.
- Attending of Drinking/Drug Parties: Student Athletes are prohibited from attending a party that involves alcohol, drugs or illegal substances. If a student athlete attends a party where alcohol or drugs are present then the student athlete must leave immediately (Leave means leave immediately).

**Level 2 Offenses** - The student athlete is suspended for at least “x” number of contests up to a year (see **CHART OF PENALTIES** on next page)

Examples of Level 2 Offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Possession and/or use of Drugs: The possession and/or use of illegal drugs and/or paraphernalia or the possession and/or use of drugs or medications without a prescription is strictly prohibited.
- Hosting of Drinking/Drug Parties: Student Athletes are prohibited from hosting a party that involves alcohol, drugs or illegal substances.
- Hazing/Initiation Ceremony – NWCS interscholastic coaches will not permit, nor will NWCS student athletes stage any type of “initiation ceremony,” or hazing for athletes at any time and on any level. This prohibition includes any athlete giving other athletes haircuts, shaving other athletes, locker/shower pranks etc.
- Vandalism and/or Property Destruction

**Violent Behavior of any manner shall be grounds for immediate dismissal.**

**Cyber Image Policy** – Any identifiable image, photo or video which implicates a student athlete to have been in possession or presence of drugs or portrays actual use, or out of character behavior or crime, shall be confirmation of a violation of the code. Since there is no way to establish the timeframe for when or the location of where the image was taken, it shall be the responsibility of the student athlete that he/she does not put themselves in these situations. It must be noted that there may be persons who would attempt to implicate an athlete by taking such images to place them in a situation where they might be in violation of this code standard. This is our rationale for demanding that our athletes not place themselves in such environments.

**It should be noted, notwithstanding the chart of penalties, that the facts of an incident may warrant immediate removal from the team and/or athletic if the Athletic Director and the Administration believe that the offense committed by the athlete warrants such action.**

**The Athletic Director and the Administration hold discretionary rights when assigning a strike and penalties to a student athlete.**

**CHART OF PENALTIES:** (Students serving athletic suspension are still part of the team and must attend and participate in all scrimmages/practices and only attend games. Student will watch games from the bench in uniform.)

<b>Number of Regular Season Scheduled Contests</b>	<b>Level 1 Offences Contest Penalty</b>	<b>Level 2 Offences Contest Penalty</b>
<b>7-11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>At LEAST 4, up to a year</b>
<b>12-15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>At LEAST 6, up to a year</b>
<b>16-19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>At LEAST 8, up to a year</b>
<b>20-24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>At LEAST 10, up to a year</b>

#### **D. Due Process**

Prior to the imposition of any penalty under the Code, the coach and/or Athletic Director will notify the athlete of the nature of the infraction and the athlete will be given an opportunity to explain his or her side of the issue.

## E. Appeal Procedure

The student and/or parent/guardian have the right to appeal only the penalty of number of games to be missed, not the strike to the Athletic Review Committee. Appeals must be made in writing within three days of assignment of a penalty for a violation of the code.

1. The Athletic Review Committee will meet within 48 hours upon receipt of a written notice to appeal an athletic penalty unless the committee members are unavailable. In such circumstance, the Committee will meet as soon as these individuals may be assembled.
2. The student and his/her parents will be notified within 48 hours of receipt that the written appeal has been received.
3. Upon review of the appeal, the committee will render a decision. The Athletic Director will notify parents of the decision in writing within 24 hours.

All student team members and parent(s) will be required to sign and return the acknowledgement portion of the code to their respective coach. The signed acknowledgement will be kept on file by the Athletic Director and is in effect for any sport in which a student participates.

**No student team member will be allowed to participate in any team activities until the signed acknowledgement is returned to the coach.**

## F. Distribution of Policy

The coach will review this policy with all potential team candidates prior to the first official tryout session. During the tryout period, all participants are subject to all school and athletic policies and conditions under this code.

## G. Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes

If a student is failing two or more courses (less than a 65% average) that student is ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities that include practice, sitting on the bench, riding the bus to practice or games. NO sitting until off the ineligible list.

### **Once on the list, can a student get off the list?**

Yes. If a student is on the ineligible list for two or more subjects the only way he/she can become eligible, before the next list is published, is if he/she gets off the list for ALL subjects he/she is failing. For example, a student is on the ineligible list for math and science; in order to become eligible that student must get off the list for BOTH math and science.

### **Can a student be placed back on the list?**

Yes. Using the same example, if the student again begins failing math, science, or both then he/ she can be placed back on the ineligible list.

### **If a student is not on the list when the list was generated, can that student be added to the list?**

No. The next time a student can be placed on the ineligible list is when the next one is generated.

Approved: June 17, 2019

Amended and Approved: June 17, 2020