

# **NORTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Norton High School  
&  
Norton Middle School**

## **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**



**BOARD APPROVED – MAY 21, 2012  
Revised – May 2012**

# ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Norton City Schools offers a comprehensive variety of athletic activities for prospective student-athletes. The following is a list of interscholastic sports presently available at Norton City Schools:

## BOYS

### *Fall*

Crosse Country\*  
Football\*  
Golf  
Soccer

### *Winter*

Basketball\*  
Wrestling\*

### *Spring*

Baseball  
Tennis  
Track\*

## GIRLS

### *Fall*

Cross Country\*  
Cheerleading\*  
Golf  
Soccer  
Tennis  
Volleyball\*

### *Winter*

Basketball\*  
Cheerleading\*

### *Spring*

Softball  
Track\*

\*Denotes Middle School Program

## PHILOSOPHY

The Norton Board of Education, school administration, and coaches believe that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total educational program. High standards of behavior, scholarship, and citizenship are important to a sound athletic program. Students volunteering to participate must assume the responsibilities of this privilege and are required to meet expectations beyond those set for non-athletes.

The Norton Board of Education and administration of the Norton City Schools believe that:

- Physical and emotional growth of student-athletes is the most important goal of participation.
- Academic achievement is a prerequisite to participation.
- Substance abuse can be a significant health problem for adolescents and may also affect the development of skills, which are necessary for participation.
- Interscholastic athletics can make the educational experience richer and more rewarding and therefore, all students are encouraged to participate.
- Adherence to certain behavior and academic standards enhances an athlete's quality of life.

## ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT COMMITMENT

The Norton Athletic Department and coaches will proactively attempt to enhance the physical and emotional growth of each Norton High School and Middle School athlete.

The department will:

- Provide high school and middle school athletes the current Athletic Code of Conduct. Parents and athletes must sign the Athletic Code of Conduct contract before the athlete can participate in any athletic activity.
- Provide opportunities for high school and middle school athletes to be positive role models for all other Norton students.
- Provide a physical day for potential athletes that will allow them to participate in athletics the next school year.

Norton High School and Middle School coaches will:

- Distribute written expectations specific to their sport, during or prior to the first week of the season.
- Discuss the current Athletic Code of Conduct with their team during or prior to the first week of the season.
- Enforce the Athletic Code of Conduct and the expectations specific to their sport.
- Consistently emphasize the importance of high standards set for all athletes.

**Prior to participation in any sport, every student-athlete must:**

- Have an updated (within one year) Physical Form and Athletic Code of Conduct on file in the Athletic Office.
- Have passed at least five credits and maintained a grade point average of at least 1.5 in the grading period preceding the athletic season.
- Be covered by insurance or indicate that the parent/guardian chooses not to be covered and they will assume all costs relating to any injury received while participating in interscholastic athletics.

## SCOPE OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The provisions outlined in this policy shall be in effect twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for one (1) calendar year. This includes sports which commence before the beginning of the school year or extend beyond the end of the school year. Violations are cumulative throughout the athlete's two years of middle school participation and four years of high school based on the recommendation of the middle school principal and athletic director.

## DENIAL OF PARTICIPATION AND DUE PROCESS

1. The athlete must have been given previous notice of the expectations of the Athletic Code of Conduct and rules and regulations specific to the sport.
2. When an athlete is in suspected violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct, a hearing will be held to investigate the alleged misconduct. Please note, results of related investigations by school administration may be used to determine if there has also been a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
3. When a violation is known to have occurred, and not a suspected violation, the hearing process is waived.
4. The hearing and investigation will be coordinated by the Athletic Hearing Committee, consisting of the athletic director, a certified teacher/coach from another sport (selected by the athlete) and a non-coaching teacher (selected by the athletic director). If the Athletic Hearing Committee feels action is warranted, the athletic director will give the athlete and parent/guardian written notice of the suspected violation, and the time and place for a hearing which will be held within three (3) school days of the date of the notification.
5. At the hearing, the athlete will have the opportunity to discuss the circumstances concerning the incident. Due process will be followed according to Norton City Schools' policy and Ohio law.
6. The Athletic Hearing Committee will determine if there has been a violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct and the athletic director will give the athlete and parent/guardian written notification of the hearing committee's decision, penalty assessment (if applicable) and improvement plan (if applicable).
7. The Athlete or parent has the right to appeal the Athletic Hearing Committee's decision and/or penalty assessment to the building principal. Any appeal must be requested in writing within five (5) calendar days of the decision notification. The appeal should state the exact reason the decision is being appealed. The recommended penalty assessment will begin immediately upon written notification to the athlete and parent/guardian and will continue throughout the appeal process, unless specified by the building principal.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Athlete</b>	Any student participating in a sport as a contestant, manager, or cheerleader.
<b>Drug/Alcohol Assessment</b>	A program approved by the school administration because of its history of tangible results. Completion of the drug/alcohol assessment includes follow-through with the recommendations of the assessor. All costs are the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family.
<b>OHSAA</b>	Ohio High School Athletic Association, whose purpose is to regulate, supervise, and administer interscholastic competition among its member schools.
<b>Penalty Carry Over</b>	Consequences carried over into another sport season or school year.
<b>Improvement Plan</b>	Any set of expectations designed to assist an athlete. All costs are the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family.
<b>Self-Referral</b>	Seeking help before a violation is detected.
<b>Sports Season</b>	The season begins with the first day of practice as sanctioned by the OHSAA and terminates when that athlete is no longer eligible for OHSAA tournament competition.

## EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

An athlete represents not only himself/herself but also the Norton City Schools and Norton community. Since participation is a privilege, it is important that students and parents/guardians be aware of the rules and expectations. A violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct may result in the denial of the privilege to participate in a sport. The following expectations are designed to improve the quality of interscholastic competition for each athlete and his/her team. Because of the adverse effects of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol and the Norton City Schools commitment toward prevention/intervention, if an athlete is found in violation of the regulation concerning such, the Athletic Hearing Committee recommendations for penalty assessment should follow the guidelines as listed. An athlete always has the right to due process.

In an effort to assist an athlete who is denied participation, the athlete will also be required to complete an Improvement Plan designed specifically for the athlete and the situation. The Improvement Plan will be designed by the coach and any others who can provide appropriate assistance such as parents, counselors, the athletic director, the district CARE coordinator, law enforcement officials, dependency specialists, etc. Before returning to participation, the athlete must complete the plan and demonstrate tangible evidence of being able to resume participation without repeating the offense or violating other expectations of the Athletic Code of Conduct.

Repeated or severe violations of the Athletic Code of Conduct may necessitate that the athlete immediately be denied participation for an indefinite period of time. If the athlete desires to return to participation, the athlete must make a written request to the athletic director. After completion of an Improvement Plan, he/she may petition the Athletic Hearing Committee for reinstatement.

During the denial of participation period, the athlete is expected to practice and sit on the team bench dressed in appropriate street clothes during contests unless otherwise specified by the Improvement Plan. All training rules and requirements of the sport will continue to be followed.

Since the Improvement Plan and denial of participation are meant to benefit the athlete and increase his/her chances of future success, the athlete must complete the plan and comply with the nonparticipation requirement even if either carries over to another season or school year.

The athletic director will maintain records of violations, penalty assessments, results of Improvement Plans, and other pertinent information for the athlete's two years of middle school and four years of high school participation.

## **MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES AND COACHING**

1. During a given sports season, it is the right of the head coach of an 'in-season' sport to strongly discourage the participation of his/her athletes in an organized, school affiliated 'off-season' sports activity. (For example, during the winter, a swimming coach may advise against his/her swimmers from participating in an indoor field hockey league which plays on Sundays).
2. During an athlete's 'in-season' an 'off-season' coach may not pressure a multi-sport athlete to participate in an 'off-season' sports activity. In no way, be it openly stated or implied, may an 'off-season' coach threaten an athlete, who is actively 'in-season' ,with reduced playing time or non-membership in a sport if that athlete chooses to participate solely in his/her 'in-season' sport. (For example, during the winter swimming season, the field hockey coach may not openly state or imply that those field hockey players, who are also swimmers and choose to participate solely in swimming during the winter, will face reduced playing time or non-membership in field hockey the following fall if they don't participate in a winter indoor field hockey league).
3. A student-athlete who quits one sport may not participate in another sport until the current regular season of the sport the athlete quit comes to an end.

### **RATIONALE**

There are several reasons why the Athletic Council feels the need to put the two items above into writing:

1. It makes good sense to encourage student-athletes to use their rare 'off-days' during a season to rest (both physically and mentally) and also to spend time with their families and academic work.
2. There may be a concern on the part of an 'in-season' coach that an athlete's performance in that sport could be adversely affected by simultaneous participation in an 'off-season' sport activity. This could negatively affect the individual performance of the athlete and the overall team's potential for success.
3. A policy such as this may ease the 'pressure' that an athlete might feel (whether real or imagined) to participate in 'off-season' activity during an 'in-season'.
4. A policy such as this may help to encourage students to participate in more than one sport, if they desire, and reduce any anxiety an athlete may feel about the need to specialize in only one sport.

### **TOBACCO**

Athletes shall not use, possess, sell, intend to sell, distribute, or intend to distribute tobacco in any form.

#### **First Tobacco Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation for 50% of the contests (season or tournament), based on the number of regular season scheduled events. If the athlete agrees to participate in a tobacco education program, the penalty will be reduced to 25% of the contests. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program will result in the full 50% denial of participation.
- Self-Referral – if an athlete seeks assistance from the coach, the athletic director, or school administrator for dealing with a tobacco problem and the athlete agrees to participate in a tobacco education program, there will be no denial of participation from contests. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program will result in the full 33% denial of participation. The self-referral is still considered a first violation.

#### **Second Tobacco Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation from athletics for one calendar year from the date of the violation.
- After six months of no athletic participation, the athlete may petition the Athletic Hearing Committee to suspend the denial of participation. The athlete will present evidence of a successful effort to cope with his/her tobacco problem. The Athletic Hearing Committee will make a recommendation to the building principal. The building principal will make the final decision.

#### **Third Tobacco Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation permanently.

## **DRUGS OR ALCOHOL – SALE OR DISTRIBUTION**

Athletes shall not sell or intend to sell or distribute or intend to distribute any controlled or counterfeit substance, including but not limited to narcotics, hallucinogenics, alcohol, steroids, paraphernalia, or marijuana.

### **First Drugs or Alcohol – Sale or Distribution Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation for one calendar year from the date of the violation.
- After six months of no athletic participation, the athlete may petition the Athletic Hearing Committee to suspend the denial of participation. The athlete will present evidence of a successful effort to correct his/her problem. The Athletic Hearing Committee will make a recommendation to the building principal. The building principal will make the final decision.

### **Second Drugs or Alcohol – Sale or Distribution Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation indefinitely.
- After one calendar year from the date of the second violation, the athlete may petition the Athletic Hearing Committee to suspend the denial of participation. The athlete will present evidence of a successful effort to correct his/her problem. The Athletic Hearing Committee will make a recommendation to the building principal. The building principal will make the final decision.

### **Third Drugs or Alcohol – Sale or Distribution Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation permanently.

## **DRUGS OR ALCOHOL – POSSESSION AND/OR USE**

Athletes shall not possess and/or use any controlled or counterfeit substance, including but not limited to narcotics, hallucinogenics, alcohol, steroids, paraphernalia, or marijuana.

### **First Drugs or Alcohol – Possession and/or Use Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation for 50% of the contests (season or tournament), based on the number of regular season scheduled events. If the athlete agrees to go through a drug/alcohol assessment, the penalty will be reduced to 25% of the contests. Refusal or failure to complete the assessment will result in the full 50% denial of participation.
- Self-Referral – if an athlete seeks assistance from the coach, the athletic director, or school administrator for dealing with a drug/alcohol problem and the athlete agrees to complete a drug/alcohol assessment and follow the recommendations, there will be no denial of participation from contests. Refusal or failure to complete the assessment will result in the full 50% denial of participation. The self-referral is still considered a first violation.

### **Second Drugs or Alcohol – Sale or Distribution Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation will be denied participation for one calendar year from the date of the violation.
- Self-Referral – an athlete who seeks assistance from the coach, the athletic director, or school administrator for dealing with a drug/alcohol problem and agrees to complete a drug/alcohol assessment may petition the Athletic Hearing Committee to suspend the denial of participation after six (6) months from the date of the second violation. Refusal or failure to complete the assessment will result in the full one calendar year denial of participation.

### **Third Drugs or Alcohol – Sale or Distribution Violation:**

- An athlete found in violation for the third time will be denied participation permanently.

## **REASONABLE CONDUCT**

The Norton Athletic Department recognizes that the safety and welfare of individual athletes and teams are a priority. Therefore, athletes will not engage in any acts of criminal activity or violations of civil law, such as, but not limited to vandalism, assault and battery, theft, weapon offenses, or other disruptive conduct.

Athletes are also expected to behave appropriately during school and extracurricular activities. Detrimental actions include, but are not limited to insubordination, repeated absenteeism, fighting, sexual misconduct, negative/apathetic attitude, unsportsmanlike conduct, lying, and inappropriate language or gestures.

Recognizing the varying degrees of severity, the type of misconduct, and an athlete's previous record of conduct, each situation will be considered individually. The coach, athletic director and/or Athletic Hearing Committee will determine appropriate consequences, which may include denial of participation or dismissal from the team. In all cases, the athlete will have the right to due process and a written record of the incident will be filed with the athletic director. The parents will be notified of a denial of participation within 48 hours.

The Board of Education believes that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and prohibits all such activities at any time in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property if the conduct is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on school property. No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in any hazing.

Hazing shall be defined as performing any act of coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, team, or organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Administrators, faculty members, and other employees of the Board shall be alerted to possible situations, circumstances, or events which might include hazing. If hazing or planned hazing is discovered, the students involved shall be informed by the discoverer of the prohibitions contained in this policy and shall be ordered to end all hazing activities or planned activities immediately. All hazing incidents shall be reported immediately to the Superintendent. Students who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be held personally liable for civil and criminal penalties in accordance with the law.

## **OTHER ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS**

These expectations carry their own set of consequences and when not specifically listed, the coach will set and enforce consequences appropriate to the sport and conduct. Athletes will be notified in writing of the specific expectations for each sport during or prior to the first week of the season.

1. Academic eligibility is a prerequisite to participation for any team activity. Therefore academically ineligible students are not permitted to try out for teams or continue to participate after becoming ineligible during a season. A student must be academically eligible at the beginning of the season to participate at any time during that season. Exceptions must be approved by the head coach, athletic director, and building principal.
2. The athlete must complete and return the Athletic Code of Conduct contract, physical examination, parental consent and emergency medical procedure forms before participating, attending, or observing any team activity.
3. The athlete must return school equipment in the condition it was received, within three (3) school days of the last contest. Athletes must reimburse the Norton Board of Education the replacement cost of lost or damaged equipment prior to receiving any athletic awards. An athlete must fulfill obligations from the previous season before he/she will be permitted to begin participating in any other athletic activities.
4. The athlete must be present at least periods 4, 5, 6, and 7 on the day of the contest to be eligible to participate in any team activity. Medical appointments, funerals, or other emergencies may be excused, if approved by the coach and athletic director. If an athlete is absent all day Friday or the day before a school vacation, he/she may participate in a weekend or a vacation-day contest with parental permission.
5. Coaches may set and enforce a curfew appropriate to the activity. Expectations should be consistent with the 11:00pm curfew established by Summit County and the City of Norton.
6. The athlete is expected to attend all team activities unless excused by the coach prior to the absence. Unexcused absences will result in the disciplinary action described in the written list of team expectations. Even excused absences may result in loss of playing time. The coach will keep written record of excused and unexcused absences and inform the parent and athletic director when the athlete's actions result in denial of participation.

7. The athlete must comply with the rules of the league, Ohio High School Athletic Association, and the Norton Board of Education approved Student Code of Conduct.
8. Any student who is convicted of a felony is ineligible to participate in the Norton City Schools interscholastic athletic program.
9. Student-athletes are to ride to and from all extracurricular activities in buses provided by the Norton Board of Education. The head coach and athletic director or principal must approve exceptions. This must be in writing.
10. The athletic awards banquet is part of the sports season. A student-athlete must participate in the banquet responsibilities and be present to receive an award. The athletic director must approve exceptions to this rule.

### **ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY**

The athlete must meet all standards set by the Ohio High School Athletic Association By-Laws regarding academics, age, amateur status, enrollment, and attendance, recruiting, residence, and transfers. Once a student-athlete has established his/her athletic eligibility under the Ohio High School Athletic Association regulations, the Norton Board of Education will not grant an athletic release to a student during the school year. Copies of any or all of these By-Laws are available upon request from the athletic director and on the OHSAA website.

A student enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from the eighth grade must have passed 75% of those subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.

A student enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grade 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in the school the immediately preceding grading period and received passing grades during that grading period in 75% of those subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.

School records or verification from sending school must establish the eligibility of a transfer student. The responsibility for establishing eligibility rests with the receiving school.

Summer school grades earned may not be used to substitute for failing grades from the last grading period of the regular school year.

Tutoring or examinations to complete the preceding grading period requirements is permissible provided the inability to complete the required work on time is due to illness or accident verified by a physician and the procedure applies to all students in school.

Dual Sport Participation: Due to academic demands, time limitations, and limited team rosters, the Norton Board of Education and the Athletic Department do not recommend dual sport participation during an athletic season. However, it is recognized that a student-athlete may desire dual sport participation. For example, a high school cheerleader may want to participate as a member of the girls' soccer team. In any case, the athlete and the athlete's parents must agree to abide by the head coaches' rules and decisions pertaining to their individual sport. Also the head coaches of each sport must agree on the logistics of the participation prior to the beginning of official practice.

Interscholastic athletic competition is governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). Athletes must meet all standards set by the OHSAA regarding academics, age, amateur status, enrollment and attendance, recruiting, residence, and transfers. In addition to the eligibility requirements established by the OHSAA, to be eligible for athletics a student-athlete at Norton:

1. Must receive passing grades in a minimum of five (5), one-credit courses or the equivalent which count toward graduation during the preceding nine-week grading period.
2. Between a 1.0 and 1.499 GPA will be in a probationary program in which:
  - a) Student must attend study tables three (3) days per week
  - b) Show continued improvement in their nine (9) week GPA until they reach at least a 1.5
3. Between 1.5 and a 1.9 GPA must attend study tables two (2) days per week.
4. Failure to attend the required study tables will result in:
  - a) 1<sup>st</sup> offense – ineligible for one (1) contest
  - b) 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – ineligible for remainder of nine (9) weeks

The eligibility or ineligibility of a student-athlete continues until the start of the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) school day of the next grading period, and/or the start of the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) school day after interim reports are submitted to the guidance office.



## INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Norton Board of Education, Norton High School, Norton Middle School, and Norton Athletic Department will not assume any responsibility for injuries received while participating in interscholastic athletics.

Please check the appropriate box(es) and sign below:

- Our medical insurance provides adequate coverage, and accordingly, we will be responsible for any medical expenses incurred as a result of an athletic injury.
- We do not wish to have insurance, and we will assume all costs of an athletic injury.
- We will purchase insurance through the School Insurance Program, which will provide coverage as a result of an athletic injury for every sport except junior varsity and varsity football. (Note: a special policy is available to cover football).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Athletic Office or Central Administration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student-Athlete's Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Grade**

### ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT CONTRACT

**Release:** As a student-athlete choosing to participate in a Norton High School/Middle School athletic program, I have read and understand the Athletic Code of Conduct. Furthermore, I grant permission to any police department to release information to officials of the Norton City School District concerning possible violations of the Athletic Code of Conduct. I also realize that each coach will distribute written expectations specific to the sport. These expectations are also guidelines for participation. By this signature, I agree that I will subject to the regulations set forth in the Athletic Code of Conduct.

**Athletic Code of Conduct Contract:** I have read and understand the Norton City Schools Athletic Code of Conduct. I also realize that each coach will distribute written expectations specific to the sport that are also guidelines for participation. By this signature, I also agree that I will be subject to its regulations.

The Athletic Code of Conduct and expectations of the coach are in effect twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for one calendar year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student-Athlete's Signature**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City & Zip**

Please list your legal residence. You must also notify the school if you have a change of address.  
Failure to do so could result in ineligibility for the athlete and/or his/her team.

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED & RETURNED TO THE COACH/ATHLETIC OFFICE  
BEFORE AN ATHLETE MAY PARTICIPATE IN ANY TEAM ACTIVITY**