



**Wheeler High School
Wheeler Middle School
Athletic Handbook**

REVISED 8/1/21

The mission of Wheeler High School/Middle School, in partnership with families and community, is to provide students with the education that will best help them to live a life of accomplishment and satisfaction in a complex and changing world.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE



Information in this handbook is provided for the safety of student-athletes, and is developed with the best interest of the student in mind. Values such as good sportsmanship, integrity, character education, a winning attitude and the complete development of the individual in team and individual settings shall be promoted. Rules are established for the conduct of athletes and the administration of Wheeler High School/Middle School within the pages of this handbook. Student athletes, parents, and coaches are responsible for knowing the contents of this handbook and for following the guidelines set forth herein. Failure to comply with these rules and procedures may result in a suspension of participation in Wheeler athletics. Participation in sports is an extra-curricular activity, aimed at better developing the minds, bodies, and character of our student athletes. It is both a complement and supplement to our educational course of study and is a privilege, not a right, to be a part of our athletic program.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETE

Being a member of a Wheeler High School/Middle School athletic team is a privilege and 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 the years. As a member of an interscholastic squad, you have inherited a wonderful tradition, a tradition you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been to win with honor. We desire to win, but only with honor to our athletes, our school, and our community.

It will not be easy to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. When you wear maroon and white, we assume that you not only understand our traditions, but also are willing to assume the responsibilities that go along with them. However, your contributions should be personally satisfying to you.

☐ Responsibilities to Self: The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden yourself and develop strength and character. You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible good from your school experiences. Your studies and your participation in other extra-curricular activities, as well as in sports, prepare you for life as an adult.

☐ Responsibilities to Wheeler High School/Middle School: Another responsibility you assume as a team member is to your school. Wheeler High School cannot maintain its position of having outstanding programs unless you do your best in the activities in which you participate. You should participate in athletics to the best of your ability; you are contributing to the reputation of your school.

You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic squad. The student body and citizens of the community know you and they will judge our school by your conduct and attitudes, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute greatly to school spirit and community pride. You can make Wheeler High School/Middle School, and the entire North Stonington community, proud of you, and your community proud of your school by your faithful exemplification of these ideals.

☐ Responsibilities to Others: As a team member, you also bear a heavy responsibility to your home. You should always strive to make your family proud. You must measure up to all of the training rules. You should practice and play to the best of your ability every day.

The younger students at Wheeler High School/Middle School are watching you. They will copy you in many ways. Set good examples for these students.

CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP FOR WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the Wheeler High School/Middle School Athletic Department. The community, school administrators, and coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and sportsmanship are essential in maintaining a sound athletic program. The welfare of our student-athletes is our major consideration.

All Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (C.I.A.C.) rules regarding eligibility will be followed. Each individual coach has the right and privilege to make and enforce his/her own team rules and regulations, but he/she must abide by all general school policies. These privileges given to our coaching staff are intended to strengthen the general athletic policies as written.

One of the most crucial factors contributing to the reputation of any school is the manner in which students, spectators, players and coaches present themselves at athletic events. It is expected that everyone involved will adhere to the following:

- Show respect for the opponent at all times. Derogatory comments, cheers, signs, or directed gestures toward the opposing players, coaches, cheerleaders, spectators, or officials will not be tolerated.
- Maintain self-control at all times. Good sportsmanship requires one to understand his or her own biases or prejudice. The desire to win must never overcome sound, appropriate behavior.
- For good sportsmanship to become a reality, it is each individual's responsibility to demonstrate appropriate behavior and encourage his/her peers to do the same.

WHEELER SOCIAL/CIVIC EXPECTATION INCLUDE:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resiliency

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC POLICIES

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. Students connected with a team will not smoke/vape, drink alcoholic beverages, or use controlled substances. If a team member or manager is observed by a reliable source [for example school personnel or law enforcement] drinking, being in possession of, or using controlled substances he/she will be suspended for the entire season (please see Suspension section & Images section below). The student athlete also needs to be aware that Board of Education policies #5114 & #5114.2 9(a) prohibit the possession, use and transmission of any narcotic or hallucinogenic drug, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind and that failure to comply with this policy shall be cause for suspension and/or expulsion. Please also understand that students who are caught smoking/vaping nicotine, or in the possession of vape products, on a first offense will follow a protocol established by administration including an education component and a short term suspension from the athletic team. If a second violation of our vaping policy happens, the student athlete will automatically be removed from the team. If a student is found with a vape product that has THC, or marijuana in it, s/he will be treated as if in possession of a narcotic and will be removed from the team immediately.

2. Students will be suspended for the entire season (please see Suspension section & Images section below) if they are knowingly in the presence of other individuals who are in possession of, using, transmitting or being under the influence of any narcotic or hallucinogenic drug, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind as outlined in Board of Education Policy.

3. Be aware that school disciplinary policies may also apply to any infraction.

HAZING/BULLYING STATEMENT

1. Definition: Hazing is defined as "any activity that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers a person's physical or emotional health for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization, regardless of the person's willingness to participate."

2. Hazing in any form is not tolerated at Wheeler High School/Middle School. Consequences may include suspension or expulsion from the team, as well as other consequences in accordance with regular school policy.

3. Board Policy #5131.911 defines bullying as any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Overt acts which occur off-campus (and not at a school sponsored activity) may also constitute bullying if it is determined that they have a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

ATTENDANCE

1. School Attendance: A student must be in school for a total of four hours in order to be eligible for practice or participation in a game on any given full or half-day. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the school administration. If a student

attends fewer than four hours of school, he/she will miss the next practice of the sport. If a student plays in a game with fewer than four hours in school, he/she will sit out the next game. The coaching staff should check with the Athletic Director's office or the main office concerning a student's attendance, as soon as possible, after the close of school.

2. Physical Education Classes: If a student is excused for physical or medical reasons from physical education, the student cannot participate in sports for the same length of time. If a student does not participate in their physical education class based upon their own choice they cannot participate in any athletic events that day.

3. Team Attendance: Students must participate in ten (10) practice days prior to a game to be eligible for athletic contests. Scrimmages are considered practice, but games are not included. Academically ineligible students may not participate in any practices or games if they are deemed ineligible.

4. Students will attend all practices and games, as well as team meetings unless excused for appropriate reasons.

5. Players are not allowed to participate in athletic contests or practices during the season without a coach. In accordance with CIAC policy, so-called "Captain's Practices" are in no way sanctioned, encouraged, or condoned.

6. If school is closed for inclement weather or other emergency, there will be no practices or games.

SUSPENSION

Student-athletes are expected to treat other members of the school community with proper respect and to take pride in maintaining the quality of the facilities and equipment available to them.

1. School Suspension: A student on out-of-school suspension cannot attend practices, games, or ride the team bus. A student will have no official contact with the team during the suspension period. If a student-athlete is suspended from school prior to a school vacation and the suspension continues after the vacation, he/she will not be allowed to participate for the duration of the suspension that includes the vacation period. If a student is on in-school suspension, they will be excluded from playing in any athletic contest on that day.

2. Athletic Suspension: An "athletic suspension" shall be defined as removal from further participation in a particular athletic program for a period of time not to exceed the duration of the playing season as stated in Board Policy #5114.2 (a). An "Emergency" shall be defined as a situation under which the continued presence of the student in the playing arena or school imposes such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption to the activity involved that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student as possible.

Because participation in interscholastic athletic programs is a special privilege distinct from basic academics, a student may be subjected to an athletic suspension for violation of any of the following standards of conduct as well as for violations of standards cited under Board Policy #5114 and #5114. 2.

- a. All CIAC eligibility rules will be strictly adhered to and enforced during the season.

- b. Academic requirements – Students must have earned at least four credits (or passed at least four courses) in the year immediately preceding the one in which he/she is competing Eligibility for the 2nd, 3rd, and/ or 4th quarter(s) is based upon the previous quarter’s grades. Students must pass a minimum of four (4) units and students that fail more than one course will automatically be considered ineligible.
- c. Substance Abuse – Students connected with a team will not smoke/vape, drink alcoholic beverages, or use controlled substances. If a team member or manager is observed by a reliable source [for example school personnel or law enforcement] drinking, being in possession of, or using controlled substances he/she will be suspended for the entire season (please see Suspension section & Images section below). The student athlete also needs to be aware that Board of Education policies #5114 & #5114.2 9(a) prohibit the possession, use and transmission of any narcotic or hallucinogenic drug, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind and that failure to comply with this policy shall be cause for suspension and/or expulsion. Please also understand that students who are caught smoking/vaping nicotine, or in the possession of vape products, on a first offense will follow a protocol established by administration including an education component and a short term suspension from the athletic team. If a second violation of our vaping policy happens, the student athlete will automatically be removed from the team. If a student is found with a vape product that has THC, or marijuana in it, s/he will be treated as if in possession of a narcotic and will be removed from the team immediately.
- d. Students will be suspended for the entire season if they are knowingly in the presence of other individuals who are in possession of, using, transmitting or being under the influence of any narcotic or hallucinogenic drug, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind as outlined in Board of Education Policy.
- e. Student Behavior – all athletes shall conduct themselves as good school and community citizens. Unsatisfactory behavior may result in complete or partial suspension from the team. Student athletes involved in any criminal activity will immediately be suspended from that team for the entire season.
- f. Team Conduct – all team members must show respect to their opponents, officials, coaches and spectators. Abuse may result in complete or partial suspension from the team.
- g. Practice – no unexcused cuts from practice are permitted. Violation of this rule may lead to complete or partial suspension.
- h. Equipment – all issued school equipment must be properly cared for by the athlete. Athletes are responsible for all issued equipment, and are financially responsible for any missing equipment.
- i. Attendance, Day of Game – players must attend school a total of 4 hours on the day of the game unless special permission from the athletic director and/or School Administration has been issued. Violation of this rule will prohibit the player’s participation in the athletic contest that day.

3. Procedure for Athletic Suspension:

- a. The administration of each school shall have the authority to invoke an athletic suspension for a period up to the duration of the playing season for one or more of the reasons stated in Board Policy #5114 or #5114.2. The administration shall have the authority to immediately suspend any athlete when an “Emergency” exists as that term is defined above. Those students suspended in accordance with the Substance Abuse policy may be required to undertake a substance abuse prevention and intervention educational program.
- b. Except in the case of an “Emergency” as defined above, a student shall be given the opportunity to meet with the administration and to deny the stated charges prior to the effectuation of any period of athletic suspension. If, at such a meeting the student denies the stated charges, he/she may at that time present his/her version of the incidents(s) upon which the proposed athletic suspension is based. The administration shall then determine whether or not the athletic suspension is warranted. In determining the length of the athletic suspension, unless the suspension is for substance abuse, the administration may receive and consider evidence of past academic or disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, in- school suspension, athletic suspension or expulsion.
- c. In the case of suspension, the administration shall notify the Superintendent of Schools within twenty-four of the suspension as to the name of the student who has been suspended and the reason therefore.
- d. All rules and regulations regarding the athletic policies are under the jurisdiction of the Athletic Director and administration. If a student-athlete or parent makes a rules appeal, a meeting will be scheduled with the Principal and Athletic Director to discuss all issues.

4. Suspension by Coach:

A coach may discipline any athlete whom he/she considers disruptive or harmful to team welfare or morale, who is a poor school representative or who caused vandalism while under the coach's direct supervision. The coach will notify the Athletic Director immediately when these situations occur.

IMAGES

An identifiable image, photo, or video which implicates a student to have been in possession or in the presence of drinking or a controlled substance, or portrays actual use, may be considered as one piece of evidence to confirm a violation of the Substance Abuse section of the Athletic Handbook. It is known that the images can be altered, not accurately portray a complete picture of events, and further, that establishing a timeframe of when the image originated can be difficult to determine. Because of this reality, caution and discretion must be used when images are considered evidence. However, students must also understand how images can be used to implicate them in breaking the code of conduct and take every precaution not to place themselves in such an environment.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Students must ride to and from practices and athletic contests on the team bus. It is also the responsibility of each coach to ride the bus to and from all away games and practices. The safety of the passengers on a bus trip is of primary importance, and all student-athletes will adhere to the following rules while on a bus trip:

- a. Student athletes are responsible for following all rules of the bus driver. (Bus conduct rules apply)
- b. All passengers must use only the front door while loading and unloading.
- c. When the bus is in motion, all passengers must be seated.
- d. Hands, arms, etc. must remain in the bus at all times.
- e. Objects are not to be thrown from the bus.
- f. The team is responsible for the condition of the bus after a trip

The bus is to be as clean as it was at the beginning of the trip and not to be damaged in any way.

2. Parents/guardians may bring and/or pick up their child with prior written permission from an administrator/athletic director. In an emergency, the coach, after consultation with the parent/guardian and receiving written permission, may grant permission to the parent/guardian to take his/her child.
3. Other transportation issues will be handled on an individual basis.
4. Students are allowed to drive alone and may not drive anyone else to the following areas for practice or matches without the permission of the school administration.
 - a. Stonington Country Club (Golf)
 - b. St. Bernard's High School (B/G Lacrosse)
 - c. Griswold High School (Football)

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All practices will start promptly after school. For those practices that are scheduled later in the afternoon, or early evening, students must make appropriate plans to leave school and then return for practice. Students are not allowed to loiter or conjugate without supervision.

Students may:

- a. Go home and return for practice
- b. Arrange to stay after school with a teacher for extra help
- c. Walk to the Wheeler Library to do homework
- d. Speak to a coach if the above are not an option that work for you, the student-athlete

INJURIES

Injuries may occur in any athletic contest and should be expected. The student-athlete can help to minimize the extent of injuries and enhance recovery by adhering to the following:

1. Come to the first practice physically prepared. Preseason strength and

flexibility conditioning is extremely important in preventing injuries. Coaches will provide student athletes with programs that will best prepare them for the season.

2. Take care of yourself. The proper amount of rest and a good diet will help prevent injuries.
3. All injuries must be reported to the coach who will complete an accident report, which is turned into the main office.
4. A player's physical condition and health takes priority when there is a choice between physical injury and further participation in an athletic contest.
5. If the injury requires an examination by a physician, the student-athlete may not return to practice or competition without written permission from the physician. The coach must record the physician's permission, and the Athletic Director must record the verification of return.

EQUIPMENT

1. Uniforms are to be worn for athletic contests only. Students are not to wear pieces of their uniform to school unless given special permission by the coach.
2. Equipment and uniforms must be handed in to the coach at the end of each season so an accurate inventory can be turned in to the Athletic Director. A financial list will be submitted to the principal for the purpose of collecting missing equipment or the full price of replacement.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Parents/Guardians will be notified by the coach as soon as possible (always within 24 hours) of any incident involving their son or daughter. This includes injuries and disciplinary matters.

EARNING A VARSITY LETTER

In order to be eligible to earn a varsity letter, student-athletes must play in a minimum of one-half of the varsity contests. Students removed from a team for disciplinary reasons, will not earn their varsity level in that sport.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Physicals

No one may participate in practices or games until a physical has been completed and the proper form turned in to the nurse's office. The appropriate forms are available from the main office.

Permission Slips

Prior to the first practice, each candidate must register online using the link found on the school's website under Athletics.

- a. Acknowledgement that he/she understands that participation in the athletic program may create risk of injury normally associated with vigorous physical activity.
- b. Emergency medical information for all student athletes; this information will be carried by each coach to all practices and athletic contests.

Wheeler Online Team Sport Registration

1. Students and their parents/guardians must register for a team through Wheeler's online FamilyID registration.
2. Parents and students must read and sign that they understand all the rules and regulations written in the Wheeler High School/Middle School Athletic Handbook.
3. Parents and students must also read and sign that they have and understanding of the Concussion Information and Consent form as well as the Cardiac Arrest Student Information and Parent Consent Form.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

These requirements meet the eligibility requirements established by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference and pertain to grades 9-12:

1. The student must have been in membership in a secondary school for at least twelve weeks prior to the time of participation.
2. The student shall not have reached his/her twentieth (20th) birthday. A student-athlete will not be allowed to start a season or compete during a season in which his/her twentieth (20) birthday falls.
3. The student must not have been in grades 10, 11, and 12 for more than a total of six semesters (half years).
4. The student must have earned at least four credits in the year immediately preceding the one in which he/she is competing, and must be carrying five credits in the year in which he/she is competing.
5. Eligibility for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters is based upon the previous quarter's grades.
6. Students who fail more than one one-credit course on the quarterly report cards will automatically be considered ineligible until the next quarter.
7. The student must not be using his/her athletic skills for financial gain.
8. The eligibility of transfer students will be determined on a case-by-case basis following provisions of the C.I.A.C. transfer rule.

SPEAKING WITH THE MEDIA

Players are not to discuss team matters with newspaper reporters without the coach's permission.

TRY-OUTS

All students are welcome to try out for any athletic team, as long as the proper paperwork has been submitted, or volunteer to be a team manager, if needed.

ATHLETE CHECKLIST

Pre-Season

- Completed Sports Physical form submitted to the school nurse. Physicals must be updated annually.
- Complete Online Team Sport Registration.

Post-Season

- Cleaned uniform, or cash value, returned to Coach after final competition.
- Attend post-season banquet and enjoy the rewards of participation.