

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY

THE KNIGHTS
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ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Adopted November 2012

Richfield Public School Academy
3807 North Center Road
Flint, MI 48506

Phone: (810) 736-1281 • Fax: (810) 736-2326

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Richfield Public School Academy is to create a high standard of academic excellence where all students can grow and become lifelong learners.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Richfield Public School Academy Board of Directors believes:

- We believe every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We believe all people have the right to learn and work in a safe and orderly environment.
- We believe all students can learn.
- We believe the learning process is a responsibility shared by parents, community, students, and the school.
- We believe the ability to communicate is vital to success.
- We believe learning is a lifelong process.
- We believe every person is unique and has the right to have their individual needs addressed.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Richfield Public School Academy Board of Directors and Administrative Staff have set forth the following Student Rights and Responsibilities within the *Student Handbook Code of Conduct*.

1. The rules and procedures of the school are designed to allow for each student to obtain a safe, orderly, and appropriate education.
2. Students can expect their rights to freedom of expression and association and to fair treatment as long as they respect those rights of their fellow students and staff.
3. Students will be expected to follow teacher's directions and obey all school rules.
4. Students in the school system have the responsibility to act in such a way as not to interfere with the rights of others to the same educational opportunity.
5. By accepting the right to participate in school programs on or off school property, students shall accept the responsibility to conduct themselves according to the rules and regulations and provisions governing the operation of these programs.
6. The ideal of any educational experience is for the students to become self-disciplined.

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY SCHOOL SPORTS

Fall

Winter

Late-Winter

Spring

Basketball – Boys
Cheerleading – Girls

Basketball – Girls

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PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

The guiding principle of the Richfield Public School Academy Athletics Program shall be the promotion of the general welfare of all students.

The Richfield Public School Academy Athletics Program is designed to offer our students positive life experiences within the context of competitive interscholastic and intramural athletic activities. Interscholastic and intramural athletics are provided with the belief that the following goals may be accomplished through membership on an athletic team:

- Teamwork and cooperation
- Good health and physical fitness
- Good sportsmanship and fair contest
- School spirit and loyalty
- Self-respect and respect for others
- Social skills development
- Emotional maturity development
- Hard work and discipline

The success of the program is not based solely on the win-loss record of the teams. A goal of the program is to have each participant reach his or her maximum potential. At all times, the athletic program must be conducted in such a way as to justify it as an educational activity.

Participation in interscholastic and intramural athletic is a privilege which must be earned by the student by continuously adhering to the standards of conduct described in the Student Code of Conduct, the Athletic Handbook, and the Team Expectations, both in and out of school.

Our goal in academics, in athletics, and in all extracurricular activities, is excellence. A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice to participate in a program, which requires self-discipline. Failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct, the Athletic Code, or the Team Expectations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including denial of future participation in athletics.

MESSAGE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Your student has indicated a desire to participate in the school interscholastic and intramural athletic program. Parents/Guardians of student athletes also commit themselves to certain responsibilities and obligations, which are outlined in this Athletic Handbook. Your signature on the Athletic Contract, along with the signature of your student athlete, indicates that you understand and accept those responsibilities and obligations and agree to cooperate with school personnel in enforcing the Athletic Code.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of athletes participating in any sport are required to attend the Parent Information Meeting scheduled by the coach at the beginning of each season.

Copies of team expectations will be distributed and discussed. Parents/Guardians who are unable to attend the Parent Information Meeting will need to contact the coach. An athlete will not be allowed to play until his/her parent/guardian has contacted the coach, unless an administrator waives the requirement due to unusual circumstances.

As fans and spectators at athletic events, parents/guardians of athletes play a special role in supporting their athlete, the coach, and the team. ***Parents/Guardians of athletes are expected and encouraged to model good sportsmanship at all times during athletic events.*** Failure to adhere to acceptable standards of adult behavior at interscholastic and intramural athletic contests may result in removal from the event and/or future events.

It is the policy of Richfield Public School Academy that parents/guardians refrain from discussing complaints with the Head Coach or Administrator until 24 hours after the practice or contest. This will allow both parties time to think and phrase their comments appropriately.

Encourage your child to excel. While your child is involved in athletics at Richfield Public School Academy, they will experience some of the most rewarding and inspiring moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

INSURANCE/INFORMED CONSENT

By its nature, participation in interscholastic and intramural athletics includes risk of injury which may range in severity. **Richfield Public School Academy does not carry insurance to cover student athletic injuries and is not responsible for payment of medical services required by an athlete because of injury sustained or illness contracted while participating in any interscholastic and intramural sport.** It is recommended that all athletes have medical insurance.

MESSAGE TO THE ATHLETE

Being a member of a Richfield Public School Academy interscholastic or intramural team is the fulfillment of a goal for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities. Athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes hard work by many people over many years.

When you wear our school colors as an athlete, you are expected to understand the traditions and understand the responsibilities they represent. In every situation, participation in our athletic program is regarded as a privilege that is earned through hard work in the classroom and in practice and through adherence to the high standards of conduct outlined in this athletic code.

The conduct of an athlete is closely observed by other students, staff, parents/guardians, and the community. His/her behavior should be above reproach in all areas. All athletes are expected to follow the **Student Code of Conduct** issued to all students at the beginning of each academic year or upon enrollment during the school year.

Athletes also agree to live by the Athletic Code during the entire calendar year (365 days). Athletes make a commitment to follow these rules at all times, including when they are out of season and when they are off school property. The athlete agrees to abide by the following code of conduct, which prohibits illegal or inappropriate actions including:

- Use or possession of tobacco in any form;
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol in any form;
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of a controlled substance (illegal or prescription) other than as prescribed by a physician;
- Actions, in or out of school, which would bring disfavor upon the school, including hazing; and
- Actions, in or out of school, which would be deemed felonies under the criminal code.

Soliciting, encouraging, aiding, or engaging in **hazing** is prohibited. “Hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, or athletic team whose members are, or include other students. Student athletes involved in or engaging in hazing will be subject to disciplinary action according to Group II Penalties.

In addition to the Student Code of Conduct and Athletic Code, athletes will be expected to adhere to the team expectations established by each coach. Failure to abide by the Student Code of Conduct, the Athletic Code, or the Team Expectations will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from the team, suspension from the school, suspension from athletics, expulsion from school, and/or denial of future participation in athletics.

SPORTSMANSHIP

We support the initiative that school athletics promote the values of respect, integrity, cooperation, self-discipline, sportsmanship and citizenship. It is important to learn to control one's emotions and conduct, not only in defeat, but in victory as well. It is our goal to have Richfield Public School Academy recognized for our sense of fair play, sportsmanship, outstanding effort and character. We expect our students and parents to accept the officials' decisions and conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times. Violent, threatening, negative or abusive language and/or behavior have no place in our school-sponsored activities. Athletes, coaches, students, and parents/guardians are expected to demonstrate and promote the positive values and characteristics of good sportsmanship in all aspects of interscholastic and intramural athletics. Any athlete or parent/guardian exhibiting inappropriate spectator behavior at school sponsored athletic activities may result in one or more of the following:

1. Directed to leave the facility for the remainder of the contest.
2. Prohibited from attending subsequent games.
3. Prohibited from attending remainder of season and/or future seasons.
4. Suspension from school.

SPORTS ETIQUETTE **"The Team Bench"**

The team bench is an athletic classroom. Athletes on the bench are expected to focus and concentrate on the game, listen to the coach and support their teammates. The bench area can provide an important and unique opportunity to learn and teach. Athletes may be asked to go in at any time. It is their responsibility to know what is going on: offensive game plan and defensive assignments, any adjustments already made, opponents' defensive tendencies, key offensive and defensive strategies, techniques and skills the coach is trying to identify and teach.

We ask that parents/guardians and spectators afford the coach and athletes the same respect and courtesy that they would do teachers and students in the academic classroom. Most all of our playing fields provide ample spectator viewing areas located on the opposite sides or ends of our fields. Please maintain an appropriate buffer or distance as to allow an athletic classroom atmosphere around our team benches.

COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing communication and an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to student-athletes. To be successful, communication is vital and requires involvement, dedication, sacrifice and commitment from parents, student-athletes and coaches.

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH

1. Coach's and program's philosophy.
2. Individual and team expectations.
3. Location and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
5. Skills the player can work on to help the team.
6. Procedure followed should your child be injured during practice.
7. Any discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

COMMUNICATION COACHES SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach. Email is utilized to forward information, not for voicing concerns.
2. Notification of schedule conflicts at least 7 days in advance if possible.
3. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.
4. Support for the program and the attributes of dedication, commitment, and responsibility that are essential ingredients for success and excellence.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve and develop.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for the team and all the athletes involved. There are certain areas and issues that can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those below, should be left to the discretion of the coach.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes.

24-HOUR WAITING POLICY

It is the policy of Richfield Public School Academy that parents/guardians refrain from discussing complaints with the Head Coach or Administrator until 24 hours after the practice or contest. This will allow both parties time to think and phrase their comments appropriately.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Most complaints are a result of misunderstandings and can be resolved with a conversation between the individuals involved. The policy of Richfield Public School Academy is to refrain from discussing complaints with the Head Coach until 24 hours after the incident occurred.

An athlete is advised to meet with his/her coach as the initial step in resolving any misunderstanding. If the athlete is unwilling to meet with the coach, the parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the coach and the athlete.

- If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved after the meeting with the coach, the athlete and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s) should discuss the situation with an administrator and the coach informally in an attempt to resolve the situation.
- If the athlete and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to make a formal complaint to an administrator about the coach, it should be put in writing, with a copy provided to the coach.
- An administrator will investigate the complaint and discuss the concern with the coach and the head coach. The investigation may include observation of practice sessions by an administrator, if necessary. An administrator will document the results of the investigation and subsequent action(s) to be taken to resolve the complaint in writing.
- If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved at this level, the athlete and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal to the Board of Education, providing a letter of appeal to an administrator, the coach, and the Board of Education one (1) week prior to the scheduled board meeting.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

Team expectations will be distributed to athletes at the first tryout or practice (if there are no tryouts scheduled). Parents/Guardians will receive a copy of the team expectations during the ***required Parent Information Meeting at the beginning of each season***. Penalties for violating team expectations may not be more severe than the penalties approved in the Athletic Code.

VIOLATION OF TEAM EXPECTATIONS

Each coach shall be afforded a reasonable amount of discretion, subject to final approval by an administrator, in interpreting and applying his/her team expectations and in determining whether an expectation has been broken and setting the appropriate penalty or discipline for the athlete who has broken a team expectation. The explanation of the infraction and the ruling will be communicated to the parent(s) or guardian and the student within five school days after the decision is made.

Discipline imposed by a coach and approved by the Athletic Director, which results in suspension for more than half the season or removal from the team, may be appealed in accordance with procedures set forth under "Procedures and Appeals." Pending an appeal, the penalty or disciplinary action imposed by the coach and approved by the administrator shall remain in effect.

VIOLATIONS OF THE ATHLETIC CODE

Allegations about Athletic Code violations must be presented to an administrator who will determine the validity of the allegations and administer any disciplinary actions. The athlete, athlete's parents/guardians, coach, and an administrator will be advised of the disposition of the

case within five working days. Violations other than academic or eligibility deficiencies shall fall into the following categories:

Group I Violation:

- Actions, in or out of school, which would bring disfavor upon the school

Group I Penalties:

- First violation will result in exclusion from contest up to 10 percent or one contest of the scheduled contests in that sport. If the suspension is not completed in one sport, it will be carried over to the next sport in which the athlete participates;
- Second violation will result in dismissal from athletics for 25 percent of scheduled contests;
- Third violation will result in elimination from participation in athletics for one calendar year; and
- Fourth violation will result in elimination from participation in athletics at Richfield Public School Academy.

Group II Violations:

- Use, possession of tobacco in any form or being under the influence of alcohol;
- Actions, in or out of school, which would bring disfavor upon the school including hazing; and
- Actions, in or out of school, which would be deemed misdemeanors under the criminal code.

Group II Penalties:

- First violation will result in exclusion from contest for up to 25 percent or a maximum of three contests of the scheduled contests in that sport. If the suspension is not completed in one sport, it will be carried over to the next sport in which the athlete participates.
- Second violation will result in elimination from athletics for one calendar year;
- Third violation will result in elimination from participation in athletics for Richfield Public School Academy; and
- In addition, with any of the penalties listed above, the athlete will lose the privilege of attending other athletic or co-curricular activities for up to one month. The Head Coach, in consultation with an administrator, may withdraw or remove any team honors or awards and impose penalties, which do not exceed the Athletic Code.

Group III Violations:

- Sale or distribution of a controlled substance, alcoholic beverages or tobacco in any form;
- Use, possession or being under the influence of a controlled substance (other than as prescribed by a physician);
- Actions, in or out of school, which would bring disfavor upon the school; and
- Actions, in or out of school, which would be deemed felonies under the criminal code.

Group III Penalties:

- First violation will result in dismissal from the athletic program for a minimum of one calendar year from the date of the offense;
- Second violation will result in elimination from participation in athletics for Richfield Public School Academy; and

- In addition, with either of the penalties listed above, the athlete will lose the privilege of attending other athletic or co-curricular activities for up to one month. The Head Coach, in consultation with an administrator, may withdraw or remove any team honors or awards and impose penalties which do not exceed the Athletic Code.

General Provisions:

- An athlete shall not play in a contest or practice with the team while serving a school suspension;
- Failure to complete the season in good standing will result in forfeiture of any claim to athletic awards for that season;
- In order for the penalty to be served, the athlete must complete the season or seasons in good standing as identified by the coach; and
- Upon completion of any penalties prescribed in this code, other conditions may be required as a condition of reinstatement. These may include counseling, restitution and/or the imposition of a probationary period.

PROCEDURES AND APPEALS

The following procedural steps will apply in all cases where a student athlete is alleged to have violated regulations and team rules as set forth in the “Violations of the Athletic Code” section of the Athletic Handbook. Infractions will result in minimum consequences as stipulated in the “Group I Penalties,” “Group II Penalties” and “Group III Penalties” section. Additional or more severe penalties may be imposed for a first or second offense at the discretion of an administrator, depending on the circumstances surrounding the offense.

1. An alleged Group I, Group II, or Group III, violation by an athlete should first be brought to the attention of an administrator. If an administrator believes the claim has merit, he/she will confront the athlete, in consultation with the parents/guardians, about the alleged violation and ask for a response. After hearing the athlete’s response to the alleged violation(s), an administrator will render a decision as to whether or not the student athlete has, in fact, violated the Athletic Code. If a violation has occurred, the consequence will be no less than those set forth under “Group I Penalties”, “Group II Penalties” or “Group III Penalties,” whichever is applicable. The athlete, parent(s)/guardian(s), and head Coach will be informed of the violation and the decision to remove the athlete from participation in contest. The decision first will be communicated verbally and then followed up in writing.
2. After receiving notification of an administrator’s decision to remove an athlete from participation, the athlete and/or parent(s)/guardian(s), may request a hearing to dispute either the nature of the charges against the athlete or the consequences imposed by an administrator. The hearing will occur in a timely manner. The hearing will involve the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), an administrator, a faculty member, and the Head Coach of the sport in which the athlete participates. The Coach will be present for the hearing, but will be excused during discussion of potential consequences for the athlete.
3. An administrator may temporarily suspend an athlete from participation in athletics prior to a hearing, if an athletic event is scheduled to occur before a hearing could reasonably be held.
4. The purpose of the hearing will be to further determine if a violation has occurred, and, if so, the appropriate penalty. The decision concerning the violation and penalty will be communicated to the athlete, parent(s)/guardian(s), and Head Coach in a timely manner and followed up in writing.

5. If the athlete or parent(s)/guardian(s) are not satisfied with the above decision, they may appeal to the Board of Education. A hearing shall be conducted and a decision on the matter will be rendered, in writing, to the athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) in a timely manner.

FORMAT OF HEARINGS

Hearings shall be conducted informally and formal hearing procedures and rules of evidence need not be followed. The objective of such hearings is to reach a reasonable, fair and just result. An athlete and his parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given the opportunity to hear the charges and evidence against the athlete and to present witnesses and evidence in denial of the allegation(s) or in mitigation or extenuation of the violation.

EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES

In the Classroom: Athletes are expected to be hard working students who put academics first.

Academic Eligibility Guidelines: Students must be passing in all subjects to be eligible to play interscholastic sports. Richfield Public School Academy recognizes that passing is a grade of “C” or higher. If a student is failing any subject on a weekly report (Thursday or Friday), he/she will not be permitted to participate in contests for the following week (Sunday through Saturday). The student will remain on the academic ineligible list until he/she is passing in all classes on the weekly report the *following week*. ***However, if the student, during the week of ineligibility, establishes a plan (scheduling extra help and make-up sessions, etc.) to work with the teacher of the class he/she is failing, and in the opinion of that teacher, faithfully executes this plan then he/she may be declared eligible on the following week’s report even if the numerical grade does not yet reflect a passing grade.*** The student will be expected to attend all practices (after seeking academic help), and may be present for home contests, but will not attend away contests. Classroom teachers will be responsible for contacting the coaches with the names of student-athletes who are ineligible. Coaches will then notify the student athlete. A follow-up confirmation contact will be made to the parents by the coach. ***If the academic problem persists, the student will continue to miss games/contests until the grade(s) improve.***

During Contest: Athletes will not be allowed to use profanity or employ illegal tactics. Athletes will be gracious in defeat, modest in victory and will be expected to always congratulate the opponent on a well-played game.

Using School Equipment and Uniforms: Each athlete is financially responsible for all equipment **and uniforms** issued to him/her. All equipment **and uniforms** must be cleaned and returned to the coach at the coach’s request. Any equipment **and uniforms** not returned and/or paid for will result in the athlete not being allowed to practice or participate in the next season of contest until said equipment **and uniforms** are returned or paid for.

Trying Out for a Sport: Students wishing to participate on an interscholastic and intramural athletic team Richfield Public School Academy must be currently enrolled at the school. Students must also meet the academic requirements of Richfield Public School Academy. Students must have a completed physical examination form and Athletic Code Contract signed by the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). The student must have the Interscholastic and Intramural Athletic Program Participation Fee form and fee in the office prior to the first day of practice after tryouts **or** prior to the first day of practice if there are no tryouts scheduled for the team.

Dropping Out of a Sport: Quitting a team is a serious matter. No athlete should quit a team without first discussing his/her intention to do so with his/her coach. An athlete will not be permitted to participate in another sport until the season of the sport he/she drops has been completed or unless he/she has the authorization of an administrator and all coaches involved.

ATHLETE ATTENDANCE

Coaches must be notified, either by the athlete or a parent/guardian, whenever an athlete will miss practice. Missing practices or games without good reason is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action. Athletes must be in school for the entire day in order to be eligible to compete in a scheduled practice or athletic event. In extreme situations, arrangements must be made with an administrator to acquire an excused absence. Scheduled appointments are an acceptable reason to be pre-excused.

Before pursuing a team sport, athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) should carefully evaluate schedule conflicts which may arise due to other school activities, jobs or family vacations. If a family vacation is scheduled during a designated Richfield Public School Academy break, such as Thanksgiving vacation, the holiday break in December, the midwinter break in February, or spring break, the athlete will be excused from scheduled practices and/or contests by the coach, if the athlete communicated this information to the coach in a timely manner prior to the scheduled family vacation.

Individual coaches will clearly define their practice and competitive schedules for the season, as well as their expectations for team members, during the preseason parent/guardian meeting, so that students and parent(s)/guardian(s) can understand the responsibilities they accept in joining the team. There will be no practices, formal or informal, on Sunday.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians must provide punctual transportation for their child to all practices and athletic contests.

All athletes must arrive no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled start of a practice session and be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled end of a practice session.

All athletes must arrive at athletic contests no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled start time.

Failure to comply with the above expectations in any instance more than once, without prior approval from the Head Coach, will result in the suspension of my child's right to participate for the remainder of the athletic season.

VOLUNTEERING EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Any parent/guardian with a child participating in an athletic sport is required to voluntarily work at least one interscholastic or intramural athletic contest per season.

The voluntary assignments can include:

- working at the gate;
- working at the concessions table;
- working at the scoring table as bookkeeper or scoreboard operator;
- assisting with equipment; and
- assisting in athletics boosters fundraising.

To volunteer, please contact the head coach of the sport in which your child participates each season.

