

# SOUTHWICK REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

(Revised 5/16/18)

## PHILOSOPHY

Participation on an athletic team is a rewarding experience which requires students to commit their time, energy, and spirit. Students are expected to be familiar with all school policies relating to athletics if they are to fully benefit from these programs.

## GOALS

At Southwick Regional School, our goal in athletics is to enable students to experience the benefits of team membership, to improve physical fitness, and to develop appropriate attitudes toward competition, sportsmanship and self-discipline.

## PRE-SEASON RESPONSIBILITY

Any candidate for an athletic team must meet the following requirements before attending a tryout or practice session:

1. Provide the nurse with evidence of a satisfactory physical examination. **Physicals are valid for 13 months. Athletes will be deemed ineligible 13 months from the date of their last known physical.**
2. Register online (High School web page, ATHLETICS tab) and sign the required forms.
3. An athlete must be younger than 19 years of age.
4. Transfer students must inform the Athletic Director of their transfer and obtain a waiver from their previous school.
5. Complete all financial responsibilities for equipment issued during the previous season. A "season" for a particular sport ends with the final MIAA Tournament event.
6. Upon making the team, pay the mandated athletic fee to the coach. Checks made out to SRS. Fees for each sport may vary. Currently, Skiing is \$100, Ice Hockey is \$350, and all other sports are \$50. No uniforms or equipment will be issued until all fees are collected for the given team.
7. Be updated on the state mandated concussion information.

## TRY-OUTS

1. During try-outs, each coach will describe his or her expectations to the athletes.
2. Athletes must demonstrate their ability to meet these expectations.
3. If an athlete is not selected for a team, he or she may contact the coach personally for an explanation.
4. Once a student has been selected for a team, he/she may not quit to join another team or activity in the same season.
5. If he/she is not selected for a team, it is recommended that they explore participation in another sport or activity that did not have cuts.
6. Rosters and try-outs end after 5 days into the season. No additions to teams after this point unless approved by the Athletic Director.

7. The number of teams offered will be determined by the number of athletes trying out, the level of talent within these athletes, and the financial obligation needed to operate the teams.

## TEAM SELECTION

The coach and coaching staff for each sport has the sole responsibility for:

1. Selecting the players.
2. Deciding the appropriate level of play for each athlete. Coaches will evaluate all athletes in grades 7-12 and decide who plays at each level based upon their assessment of the athlete's skill, commitment and attitude regardless of grade. The assessment continues throughout the season and can result in an athlete moving among levels.
3. Third level teams will be created if the amount of participants warrant it, the budget can support it, and ability level of the players are at a level that can benefit from offering an additional team. Safety and facilities will also be considered when selected players and teams.
4. Determining the amount of playing time for each athlete. Playing time is not a subject of discussion between parents and coaches. Athletes should take on the responsibility to communicate with coaches their playing status.

## SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

1. Athletes are responsible for proper care and maintenance of all athletic equipment and uniforms issued to them.
2. Athletes will be charged replacement value for any equipment that is lost, stolen, or damaged.
3. All equipment must be returned at the scheduled time at the end of the season.
4. Athletes may wear team uniforms only at times of scheduled team events.
5. No uniforms or equipment will be distributed to an athlete who still has an outstanding bill or uniform from a previous season or has not paid the athletic fee.

## TEAM RULES

Coaches may have an additional set of team rules that are set forth and explained to the team at the beginning of the season. A coach may suspend or withhold playing time from a player due to breaking a team rule.

## EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Each athlete is a student first. An athlete should not neglect their academic responsibilities; this includes but is not limited to homework and class work.
- 2) CONDUCT – All athletes are expected to lead by example for other members of the student body and are expected to act in an appropriate manner in class and during any athletic events that will do credit to the team, the school and the community.
- 3) To participate in any athletics activity, a student must be in attendance in school for the entire day, on that day or the day before a non-school day. Any tardy or dismissal on the day of the activity

will require the permission of the building principal and athletic director before participation can take place. Students who are tardy or must leave school for a period of time, must return to school with a note from the place they needed to go to. Medical notes from Doctor's offices, courts, DMV, etc. must be turned in before participation can take place.

4) Athletic teams at the high school level is a minimum of five days a week commitment. Athletes must attend daily practices and games that may also include Saturdays. Any athlete that cannot attend a game or practice should notify the coach of the day(s), and reason(s) for not attending. Medical excuse (doctor's appointment), court date, bereavement, extended classroom, college visits are all excusable reasons for missing practice (proof may be required by the coach or Athletic Director).

Vacations, work, or just not showing up for practice are not excusable reasons for missing practice or games. If an athlete misses a practice or game for any reason that is not excused, that athlete will be deemed ineligible for the equal amount of time they missed in addition to those days missed.

EXAMPLE: An athlete goes on vacation for a week and misses three practices and two games (5 days), upon their return an athlete must participate in three practices and miss at least two additional games before they are reinserted into the team's line up.

Any athlete who misses school or practice due to an illness, it will be the coach's discretion on when the player is physically capable of playing in a game and how much time they will play. This decision will be based on the player's fitness level and fairness to players who have been at practice.

- 5) An athlete that receives a Saturday School, Internal or External suspension must serve the discipline on the date assigned and will be deemed ineligible for that day's events. Coaches will have the discretion to add additional penalties such as a loss of playing time, additional game suspensions, or removal from the team with approval from the athletic director. An athlete who receives an office detention or teacher detention could be subject to additional penalties from the coach.
- 6) BONA-FIDE TEAM POLICY- The following rule is set forth by the MIAA... An athlete may NOT skip any portion of a practice or game, at the high school level, to participate in any outside athletic event that is recognized by the MIAA as a sport. **(Saturday and Sunday are exempt from this rule. Southwick's participation requirement (Rule #4) would apply)**

While participating on teams not associated with the high school is allowed, it is not encouraged. **If a student is found to participate in an outside athletic event instead of attending the entire High School practice or game, the athlete will be suspended for 25% of the season on the first offense. The second offense will result in an additional suspension for 25% of the season, and ineligibility for tournament participation.**

7) All safety equipment that applies to each sport must be worn at all times. Example – Field Hockey: mouth guards, shin pads, and goggles must be worn at all games and practices. No jewelry should be worn at any time. Proper attire must be worn as well. All athletes must wear shirts during practice.

- 8) TRANSPORTATION- Team members must ride the bus to away games and are expected to ride the bus home. If a team member does not take the bus home, they must provide the coach or athletic director a note 24 hours in advance. Athletes will only be allowed to leave with a parent/guardian, NO SIBLINGS or FRIENDS! Parents may email the Athletic Director directly at [fmontagna@stgrsd.org](mailto:fmontagna@stgrsd.org)

Interscholastic athletics are governed by rules and regulations administered by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (M.I.A.A). Each participating school must adhere to these regulations and any additional locally established regulations and/or policies.

**Academic Achievement:** Grades 9-12 participants must have passed at least thirty (30) credits the preceding school year in order to participate on the team during the months of September and October. Grades 7 & 8 must have passed for the year and promoted to the next grade level. During the current year of participation the player, 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students must continue passing fifteen (15) credits of work determined by their TERM grades. Grades 7 & 8 cannot fail 2 CORE Classes based on TERM grades.

**Physical Examination:** Physical examinations are required annually before participation in competitive sports. A student in the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District must pass a physical examination and provide documentation to the school nurse. Physical examinations must be performed by a duly registered physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner. Final approval for participation is granted by the school nurse. **Physicals are valid for 13 months to the date and will become invalid after that date making the athletes ineligible.**

**Chemical Health Policy:** From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, VAP pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as "NA or near beer," inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one's mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor.

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation has occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling **50%** of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation.

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a second violation has occurred within the same year, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling **75%** of all interscholastic contests in that sport.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year, but serving the penalty could carry over for one year. Or, if the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year. (E.g. A student plays only soccer: he/she violates the rule in winter and/or the spring of same academic year: he/she would serve the penalty (ies) during the fall season of the next academic year.)

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a third or subsequent violation has occurred within the same year, the student shall lose eligibility for the next twelve (12) consecutive calendar months.

**Theft:** Any team or squad member found guilty of theft will be suspended for the remainder of that sport season.

**Jewelry:** Student athletes may not wear jewelry of any type (including body piercing) while participating in games or practice. A first violation of the rule will result in removal from participation. A second violation will result in a two-week suspension from participating. A third violation will mean dismissal from the team.

**Training Policy:** All training policies established by the coach and approved by the Director of Athletics must be adhered to during the season of participation. A season refers to the first day of practice until the end of the season.

**Sportsmanship and School Behavior:** Failure to abide by the “rules of sportsmanship”, training requirements and/or rules and regulations of the school, after due warning, could be just cause for temporary, seasonal, or terminal non-participation on any one or all athletic teams.

**Awards Qualifications:**

1. An athlete must participate in 50% of all (quarters, halves, innings, or matches) for the following activities:  
Soccer    Field Hockey    Basketball    Volleyball    Baseball  
Golf    Wrestling    Ice Hockey    Softball
2. A Cross Country or Ski member must finish within the first ten places or the first five team places four times during the season. Any combination of either will qualify.
3. To qualify for an Indoor Track or Outdoor Track letter, a team member must finish first, second, or third in at least five meets.
4. **Cheerleaders** must participate for one season to qualify for a letter.
5. Any athlete who has been a member of a varsity squad for three years will receive a letter.
6. Team managers receive a letter after two seasons.
7. With the exception of an injury, an athlete must complete the whole season in order to qualify for a letter or an award. An athlete who loses eligibility and does not complete the season does not qualify for a letter.

**NOTE:** A student may appeal to the principal the decision of the coach or advisor to suspend or terminate that student’s membership in the team or activity. If the matter is not resolved, the student may appeal to the superintendent. Any appeal will be reviewed based on paragraph 5 of district Policy 4.4.

Policy 4.4 states: An appeal of a decision to suspend or terminate participation may be based on the findings of fact and/or the process followed in determining facts. An appeal may also be based on the relevance of the alleged conduct to the rule or regulation cited in the decision to suspend or terminate participation. Appeals of the severity of consequences will not be entertained provided the consequences are among those listed in the original team or activity rules distributed to student participants.

Southwick Regional School  
Department of Athletics

**Concussion Law and Return to Play Protocol**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a law on sports-related head injuries in July, 2010. This law applies to all schools within the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Administration (MIAA) including Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District. The new law, Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, clearly states:

*“If a student suffers a concussion as diagnosed by a medical professional, or is suspected to have suffered a concussion while participating in an extracurricular athletic activity, the student shall not return to the practice or competition during which the student suffered, or is suspected to have suffered, a concussion and shall not participate in any extracurricular athletic activity until the student provides written authorization for such participation, from a licensed physician, licensed neuropsychologist, certified athletic trainer or other appropriately trained or licensed health care professional as determined by the department of public health, to the school’s athletic director.”*

The following procedures will be followed in the event an athlete receives a head injury and is suspected to have suffered a concussion:

- The athlete is removed from the practice or game.
- The athletic trainer, when available, will conduct an evaluation and assessment of the concussion. The athletic trainer will then notify the parents/guardians and recommend referral to a physician, if they feel a concussion has occurred. If the athletic trainer is not available (i.e. away games), the coach will notify parents/guardians and recommend athlete see their Primary Care Physician or another health care professional.
- The athletic trainer or coach will notify the director of athletics and the school nurse.
- School nurse will contact athlete’s teachers and guidance counselor.

It is extremely important that the athlete and parents/guardians pay close attention to the symptoms of a concussion since any head injury can be a serious life threatening condition. The following symptoms are commonly seen with concussions:

- Headache
- Blurry vision
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness or pressure in head
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Ringing in the ears
- Balance problems
- Feeling tired or groggy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Confusion
- Memory problems

Athletes who have not fully recovered from an initial concussion are at a significantly higher risk for recurrent and more serious consequences from a second concussion. An athlete who has suffered a concussion needs to be allowed time to recover and return to play decisions need to be carefully made to avoid a more serious injury. **Athletes will not return to sports or other high risk activities when symptoms of the concussion are still present and recovery is in progress.** If any of the above symptoms occur at any time during the recovery process, the athletic trainer, school nurse, or physician needs to be notified immediately.

*All concussions, regardless of where the concussion occurred, must obtain clearance through the high school's athletic trainer prior to participation in a high school sport.*

*Students who are on an academic 504 plan due to a concussion are expected to refrain from participation on any outside athletic team or high school team until medically cleared.*

### **Return to Play Protocol**

Any athlete exhibiting signs and symptoms of a concussion will follow the **Return to Play Protocol**. The athlete will return to play only when the following steps have been completed in the order listed below:

Return to Play Protocol:

1. Parent/Guardian and athlete read and sign the Concussion Policy and Return to Play Protocol.
2. Athletic trainer will evaluate any athlete suspected to have a concussion and refer athlete to Primary Care Physician or another health care professional, if necessary.
3. The athlete may be cleared to begin Post Concussion Exertion Testing once they are asymptomatic. This is up to the discretion of the athletic trainer and/or physician.
4. Athletic trainer verifies that the Post Concussion Exertion Tests have been completed and the athlete was asymptomatic.
5. Athlete may return to full practice and games once the Post Concussion Exertion Tests have been completed and written clearance is received from an appropriate health care professional: certified athletic trainer (ATC), physician, or physician assistant (PA).
6. Athletic trainer notifies coach and gives copies of written clearance to return to play to director of athletics and school nurse.



## **Post Concussion Exertion Testing**

The athlete will be given 5 post concussion exertion tests administered under the supervision of the certified athletic trainer. Only one test is given per day, and the next test will be administered only when the previous test is passed. In order to successfully pass a test, the athlete must complete the required activity symptom-free and must remain asymptomatic for the next 24 hours. If symptoms occur during a test, the activity will be stopped immediately and the test will not be administered for at least 24 hours and until the athlete is symptom-free. If symptoms occur within 24 hours after a test, the athlete will begin with that test once they are symptom-free. These tests will take a minimum of 5 days to complete.

Day 1: Moderate walking, light jogging or light stationary biking 15-20 minutes.

Day 2: Moderate jogging or moderate stationary biking 20 minutes.

Day 3: Non-contact sports drills including sprinting/running, high intensity stationary biking, agility drills 30-45 minutes.

Day 4: Full participation in practice without contact.

Day 5: Full participation in practice with no restrictions.

*Revised: May, 2013*

**Southwick Regional School  
Department of Athletics  
Concussion and Return to Play Protocol**

Athlete's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Injury \_\_\_\_\_ Sport \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:**

I have read the *Concussion Information*, and I understand the seriousness of a concussion, its symptoms, and the *Gradual Return to Play Protocol*. Questions? Call high school nurse @ 413-569-6171, athletic office @ 413-569-1703 or athletic trainer @ 203-313-6073.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*

**Test Completion Dates with Asymptomatic Results**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Test 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Test 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Test 3

\_\_\_\_\_  
Test 4

\_\_\_\_\_  
Test 5

I verify that \_\_\_\_\_ has completed the five physical  
Athlete's Name  
post-concussion tests and said athlete was asymptomatic for all tests.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athletic Trainer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Health Care Professional Clearance**

I have seen \_\_\_\_\_ and I  
Athlete's Name

Will allow him/her to return to full sports activity.

Will allow him/her to return to full sports activity with the following restrictions:

Will **NOT** allow him/her to return to full sports activity until.....

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Care Professional Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

**Athlete Signature**

I have read and understand the *Concussion Information* and its symptoms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete Signature