STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK

Woodsville High School

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SAU #23-HAVERHILL COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026-2027

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Haverhill Cooperative School District Mission Statement for Athletics

The mission of the Haverhill Cooperative School District Athletics program is to provide all students with a quality athletic experience which emphasizes the following important lessons:

Developing new skills	**Working toward a goal**	**Participation**	**Cooperation**
Competition	**Winning and Losing**	**Sacrifice**	**Developing Self-Discipline**

Whether or not our teams win or lose in athletic events, it is the goal of this athletic program that through participation, our student-athletes will realize success and will understand the value of Sportsmanship.

Every parent of a student athlete in Haverhill Cooperative School District will read and support the district's Athletic Policies and Mission Statement if they wish their child to participate.

Haverhill Cooperative School District Athletic Procedures

The Haverhill Cooperative School District provides a developmentally appropriate and sequential athletic program for students K-12. Athletic programs at each level are designed to prepare athletes for successful participation at subsequent levels in various sports offered by the school district.

Woodsville High School is a member of the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA), which is the state governing body for high school athletics. Woodsville High School must follow their policies and guidelines in our high school athletic program.

Haverhill Cooperative Middle School and Woodsville Elementary School athletic programs support in practice the guidelines of the NHIAA. Coaches are to promote teamwork, cooperation and athletes' personal pride. It will be the responsibility of coaches at the middle school level to ensure that each athlete plays a compensatory amount of time. Neither the athletes' ability nor the team score will influence his/her responsibility to meet this guideline. It is the responsibility of the students to attend and participate in practice sessions if they wish to participate in team play.

The scheduling dates are set each year and some are changed from year to year. WHS must follow NHIAA dates in our scheduling procedures. Middle School schedules will be started at least one week after Varsity schedules whenever possible.

Recommended **maximum practice time is 2 hours**

No practices or games <u>should</u> be conducted on Sundays (except tournament games) and very few Saturdays except for such reasons as state tournament games, practice right before games, make-up practices because of rain or snow days, or because of gym availability problems, etc.

It is the policy of Haverhill Cooperative School District that athletic teams grades 5-12 will be composed based on the ability of athletes, as determined by coaches and the Athletic Director, and numbers of students participating in the sport.

Physicals: In order for a student to participate in Athletics, they shall have a physical examination by a licensed medical provider annually, and the record must be provided to the school to be kept on file in the nurse's office. Only religious exemptions in writing shall be accepted in place of an athletic exam. A licensed medical provider may provide a note with the date of the upcoming physical exam stating that the student has had no history that would limit participation in athletics and may participate until the exam is completed. Once the exam has been completed the medical provider will provide documentation that the student has been cleared for all physical activities.

Eligibility Requirements for Woodsville High School

Co-Curricular activities include but are not limited to: Clubs and Organizations, Athletics (Varsity and Junior Varsity), and spectators (at extracurricular activities).

Band/Chorus are scheduled courses for students earning credit. Band/Chorus events including concerts, trips etc. are considered academic requirements of the course.

It is expected that all students representing Woodsville High School will represent their school and community in a manner that exemplifies sportsmanship, fair play, and honor at all times. Participation in Athletics is a privilege, and student athletes should respect this privilege. Failure to follow the policies related to the Athletics Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the team.

Athletes must complete All Required Documents on Final Forms each year of participation as well as **sign the "Athletics Handbook" before each season.**

Academic Eligibility:

- Co-curricular participants are considered academically **ineligible** if:
    - They are not passing at least 3 classes, or
    - They are failing 2 or more courses.
        - River Bend Career Courses Count as (2) WHS Courses.

- Student athletes failing one course are required to attend On Track study support during Engineer Time until they achieve passing grades. They **can** participate as full members of the team/club as long as they are attending the study support time in good faith.
- If a co-curricular participant is failing 2 or more courses:
    - They remain part of the team/club so long as they are attending the study support time in good faith. However, they are **not eligible to participate in contests** or performances until the next grade check.
- For students participating in a DLL class, they must:
    - Be passing the course, and
    - Be within 5 percentage points of completion requirements based on the timing of the semester.

"On-Track" During Engineer Time:

- On-Track takes place during Engineer Time from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm.
- Students will report to the study support they are assigned to on time.
- Talking, cell phones, and other distracting or off-task behaviors are not allowed during study support.

Attendance Requirements for Co-Curricular Activities:

In order to participate in after school activities including games, practices etc. students must arrive at school **ON TIME and attend the full school day as scheduled**. In the event a student has a "restorable" absence on a day when they have a practice/game they must provide documentation to administration before they can participate in after school activities

If a team/club arrives back at WHS after 10pm on a school night, members of the team who rode the bus home, will be excused from block 1 the following morning and will be considered on time if they arrive by 9:30am.

Eligibility Requirements for Haverhill Cooperative Middle School

Co-Curricular activities include but are not limited to: Clubs and Organizations, Athletics, and spectators (at extracurricular activities).

Band/Chorus are scheduled courses for students earning credit. Band/Chorus events including concerts, trips etc. are considered academic requirements of the course.

It is expected that all students representing Haverhill Cooperative Middle School will represent their school and community in a manner that exemplifies sportsmanship, fair play, and honor at all times. Participation in Athletics is a privilege, and student athletes should respect this privilege. Failure to follow the policies related to the Athletics Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the team.

Athletes must complete ALL required documents on Final Forms each year of participation as well as **sign the "Athletics Handbook" before each season.**

Student-Athlete Responsibilities

Commitment to Team: Athletes are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to their team. This includes:

- Attending all practices, games, and team meetings.
- Communicating promptly with coaches if unable to attend due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances.
- Supporting teammates and contributing to a positive team culture.

Sportsmanship: Athletes must uphold high standards of sportsmanship. Sportsmanship takes place throughout the season and includes conduct before, during and after games. This also includes digital communications and social media.

- Showing respect to coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators.
- Abiding by the rules of the sport and playing fairly.
- Handling victory with humility and defeat with grace.
- Avoiding unsportsmanlike behavior such as taunting, arguing with officials, or inappropriate conduct.

Practice and Game Attendance: Consistent attendance at practices and games is crucial for team success. Requirements include:

- Arriving on time and prepared for all practices and games.
- Informing coaches in advance of any absences or tardiness.
- Understanding that unexcused absences may result in reduced playing time or other consequences as determined by the coach.

Equipment and Uniforms: Proper care and responsibility for equipment and uniforms are expected and students must sign the Uniform Agreement, which includes:

- Wearing the designated team uniform for all games and ensuring it is clean and in good condition.
- Using school-issued equipment responsibly and returning it in good condition at the end of the season.
- Replacing any lost or damaged equipment or uniforms at the athlete's expense.

Coaches' Responsibilities -

Coaches in the Haverhill Cooperative School District are integral to the success and development of our athletic programs. Their roles encompass a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- **Leadership and Guidance**: Coaches are expected to lead by example, demonstrating sportsmanship, integrity, and professionalism. They should provide clear direction and motivation to help athletes achieve their potential.
- **Skill Development**: Coaches must design and implement effective training programs that focus on improving athletes' skills, fitness, and overall performance. This includes developing game strategies and tactics tailored to the strengths of the team.
- **Team Building**: Building a cohesive and supportive team environment is crucial. Coaches should foster positive relationships among athletes, encourage teamwork, and address any issues or conflicts promptly.
- **Safety and Welfare**: Ensuring the safety and well-being of all athletes is a top priority. Coaches must adhere to safety protocols, conduct regular equipment checks, and be aware of any medical concerns or conditions affecting their athletes.

Communication with Athletes and Parents -

Effective communication is key to a successful coaching experience. Coaches should:

- **Maintain Open Lines of Communication**: Keep athletes and parents informed about team policies, schedules, and expectations. Address any concerns or questions in a timely and respectful manner.
- **Provide Constructive Feedback**: Offer regular and constructive feedback to athletes on their performance. Ensure that feedback is specific, actionable, and delivered in a supportive manner.
- **Encourage Two-Way Communication**: Foster an environment where athletes and parents feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns. Listen actively and respond thoughtfully to feedback from both athletes and parents.
- **Hold Meetings and Conferences**: Schedule regular meetings with athletes and parents to discuss progress, address issues, and plan for upcoming events. Ensure that these meetings are structured and focused on achieving positive outcomes.

Practice Schedules and Game Preparation -

Effective practice and game preparation are essential for team success. Coaches should:

- **Create and Share Schedules**: Develop practice and game schedules well in advance and communicate them to athletes and parents. Ensure that schedules are clear, consistent, and accessible.
- **Plan and Organize Practices**: Design practices that are well-structured and focused on skill development, team strategies, and conditioning. Ensure that each practice session has clear objectives and a logical progression.
- **Prepare for Games**: Develop game plans that take into account the strengths and weaknesses of both the team and opponents. Ensure that athletes are prepared mentally and physically for each game.
- **Adapt and Adjust**: Be flexible and willing to adjust practice and game plans based on changing circumstances, such as weather conditions or injuries. Communicate any changes promptly to athletes and parents.

Evaluation and Feedback -
Evaluating athletes and providing feedback are crucial components of coaching. Coaches should:

- **Assess Performance Regularly**: Conduct regular evaluations of athletes' performance during practices and games. Use objective criteria and observations to assess progress and areas for improvement.
- **Provide Timely Feedback**: Offer feedback to athletes in a timely manner, focusing on specific aspects of their performance. Ensure that feedback is balanced, acknowledging both strengths and areas for growth.
- **Set Goals and Expectations**: Work with athletes to set realistic and achievable goals for their development. Monitor progress towards these goals and adjust training plans as needed.
- **Encourage Self-Reflection**: Encourage athletes to reflect on their own performance and set personal goals. Support their self-assessment by providing guidance and resources to help them improve.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, coaches contribute significantly to the overall success and positive experience of Athletics within the Haverhill Cooperative School District.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities-

Families play a crucial role in the development and success of student-athletes. To support their children effectively, they should:

- **Encourage and Motivate**: Offer positive reinforcement and encouragement to help athletes stay motivated and focused on their goals.
- **Provide a Balanced Perspective**: Support the athlete's efforts without putting undue pressure on them to win or perform. Emphasize the importance of effort, teamwork, and personal growth.
- **Promote Well-Being**: Ensure that athletes maintain a healthy balance between sports, academics, and personal life. Support proper nutrition, rest, and mental health.
- **Respect Boundaries**: Understand and respect the boundaries set by coaches and our Athletics program. Allow the athlete to navigate their own sports experience with appropriate support.

Communication with Coaches -
Effective communication between parents/guardians and coaches is vital for a positive athletic experience. When communicating with coaches:

- **Follow the 24-Hour Rule**: **Wait at least 24 hours** after a game or practice before discussing any concerns with the coach. This allows time for all parties to cool down and approach the conversation with a clear perspective.
- **Be Respectful and Constructive**: Approach conversations with coaches in a respectful and constructive manner. Focus on discussing specific concerns and solutions rather than complaints.
- **Schedule Appointments**: Arrange meetings with coaches through proper channels rather than informal conversations before or after practices and games.
- **Support Coaching Decisions**: Understand that coaches make decisions based on the best interests of the team. While feedback is welcome, respect the final decisions made by coaches regarding playtime and team strategies.

Spectator Conduct -
Spectator behavior at athletic events reflects on the entire school community. To ensure a positive environment:

- **Be Kind**: Show respect to all participants, including athletes, coaches, officials, and fellow spectators. Avoid negative comments or disruptive behavior.
- **Be Safe**: Follow all safety guidelines and rules established by the school and event organizers. Ensure that children and other spectators are supervised at all times.
- **Be Responsible**: Take responsibility for your own actions and reactions during games. Address any concerns about spectator conduct through the appropriate channels rather than engaging in confrontations.

Substance Abuse Policy

Haverhill Cooperative School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all student-athletes. The use of alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances is strictly prohibited. This policy outlines the expectations, procedures, and consequences related to substance abuse.

Prohibited Substances:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco and Nicotine products, including vaping devices, pouches or any other device/product containing nicotine/tobacco.
- Illegal drugs and controlled substances
- Performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs)
- Prescription medications used without a valid prescription

Expectations:

- Abstain from the use, possession, or distribution of prohibited substances.
- Comply with all school and district policies regarding substance use.
- Report any knowledge of substance abuse to a Coach, Athletic Director, or school administrator.

Procedures:
If a student-athlete is suspected of substance abuse, the following procedures will be followed:

- **Initial Investigation**: The School Administration will gather information and speak with the student-athlete and any relevant witnesses. Parents will be notified about the investigation.
- **Administrative Actions/Consequences:** In school and athletics, the administration needs to be 51% certain that the event occurred. The level of proof is much different than the court of law. We are committed to getting every decision correct.
  ***Please be aware that photos/social media images with student-athletes will be considered evidence of misconduct; even if the photo is out of season or out of date.*
- **Determinations:** Once the investigation is complete, if the student is found to have violated the substance abuse policy, consequences will be issued.
- **Appeal:** Athletes have the right to appeal the decision to the next applicable administrator. However, any consequences (missing games etc.) will remain in place until the appeal has been settled.

Consequences - Violations of the substance abuse policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include:

Tiered Penalty System

Tier 1: First Violation for Substance Abuse

- Penalty: Suspension from athletic contests for at least 40% of the season. The suspension may be reduced to 20% of the season if the following conditions are met:
  - Evaluation: The student-athlete will be evaluated by a school-approved, certified substance abuse counselor within the first two weeks of the violation.
  - Treatment Plan: Both the student-athlete and parent must follow the prescribed treatment plan recommended by the counselor and provide proof of compliance.
  - Cooperation: Upon discovery of a violation, the student-athlete must be truthful, provide accurate information, and fully cooperate with coaches, the Athletic Director, and Administration.

- Participation During Suspension: Student-athletes serving suspensions will be allowed to participate in team activities. They should attend practices, team functions, and games in a supportive role to maintain fitness levels and stay current with team strategies and tactics.

Tier II: Second Violation for Substance Abuse

- Penalty: Suspension of up to 100% of the season.
- Conditions: The student-athlete and parent will participate in a school-approved substance abuse program.

Tier III: Third Violation for Substance Abuse

- Penalty: Suspension from all athletic contests for a total of one school year (180 days from the date of the third offense). This suspension will carry over into the following school year.

Rejoining the Team -

- Completion of Suspension and Treatment: Upon completion of the suspension and treatment program, the student-athlete must display sincere and genuine remorse for their actions.
- Team Address: The student-athlete will address their team, admit to their mistakes, and recommit to the team by re-signing the Athletic Code of Conduct in the presence of their team and coaches.

Support and Education -

Haverhill Cooperative School District is dedicated to supporting student-athletes in making healthy choices. Resources available include:

- Substance abuse education programs
- Counseling services
- Support groups
- Educational materials and workshops for parents and students

Reporting and Confidentiality -

All reports of substance abuse will be handled confidentially. The school will take appropriate measures to ensure the privacy and dignity of all student-athletes involved.

Policies and Procedures

Tryouts and Team Selection (Woodsville High School) -

- **Announcement of Tryouts**: Tryout dates and details will be announced in advance through official channels, including the school's website, social media, and notices in school. Athletes should ensure they check these sources regularly for updates.
- **Eligibility**: To participate in tryouts, athletes must meet all eligibility requirements, including having a current physical exam on file and adhering to academic standards.
- **Selection Criteria**: Teams will be selected based on a combination of factors, including skill level, athleticism, attitude, and team needs. Coaches will evaluate athletes through various drills, practice sessions, and scrimmages.
- **Notification**: Following tryouts, coaches will notify athletes of their selection status. All athletes will receive feedback on their performance, regardless of whether they made the team.

Travel and Transportation (Woodsville High School)* -

- **Travel Arrangements**: Woodsville High School will arrange transportation for all away games and events. In the event a bus is not available, we will use school vans to transport students. Athletes are required to use the provided transportation to and from athletic contests.
    - Student Athletes may ride home from away games with their parents a **maximum of two times per season.** Parents/Guardians must sign their child out with the head coach or designee. In the event that a Parent/Guardian can not attend a game, but the student athlete has a reason to not ride school transportation home, arrangements must be made by the **Parent/Guardian with the Athletic Director at least 48 hours prior to the game start time.**
- **Departure and Return**: Teams will depart from and return to the school at scheduled times. Athletes must be punctual for both departure and return to avoid delays or issues.
- **Supervision**: Coaches and designated chaperones will supervise athletes during travel to ensure safety and adherence to school policies.
- **Behavior Expectations**: Athletes are expected to exhibit respectful and appropriate behavior during travel. Any misconduct will be addressed in accordance with school policies.
- If a team/club arrives back at school after 10pm on a school night, members of the team who rode school transportation home, will be excused from block 1 the following morning and will be considered on time if they arrive b y 9:30am.

  At HCMS transportation will be provided when available and only for grades 7-8.

Injury and Medical Protocols -

- **Reporting Injuries**: Athletes must report any injuries or health concerns to their coach immediately. This includes both minor and significant injuries.

- **Medical Evaluation**: For serious injuries, athletes must seek medical evaluation from a qualified healthcare professional before returning to participation. Coaches will not allow athletes to resume activity until a medical clearance is provided.
- **Emergency Procedures**: In case of a medical emergency, coaches will follow established procedures, including calling emergency services if necessary. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- **Concussion Protocol**: Woodsville High School follows strict concussion protocols. Athletes suspected of having a concussion will be removed from play and must obtain medical clearance before returning to activity. Coaches will follow specific guidelines to manage concussion-related injuries.

Awards and Recognition

Criteria for Lettering: Each athlete who completes an entire season in a varsity sport will receive a varsity letter. After receiving a letter the athlete then receives pins in all sports to be displayed on the letter.

Recognition Events -

- An “All Sports Awards Banquet" will be held on May 27, 2025 to recognize all Woodsville High School athletes, put on by the Woodsville Area Booster Club. Coaches will speak about the team, the season and their highlights. Letters, Pins and Certificates and Individual Awards will be distributed at the banquet. Coaches will recognize 3 athletes from their respective teams: Greatest Team Contribution, Best Sportsmanship, Most Improved. All athletes are expected to be in attendance for the banquet.
- HCMS will hold an “All Sports Awards” Recognition Night in June (date TBD). Coaches will recognize 3 athletes from their respective teams: Greatest Team Contribution, Best Sportsmanship, Most Improved.

Conflict Resolution -

At Haverhill Cooperative School District, we strive to maintain a positive and supportive environment for all student-athletes, coaches, and parents. Conflicts or concerns may arise, and it is important to address them promptly and constructively. Here are the steps to effectively address concerns:

- **Waiting Period**:
  - **24-Hour Rule**: If a concern arises from a game or practice, please wait at least 24 hours after the event before contacting the coach. This waiting period allows everyone involved to cool down and approach the situation with a clearer perspective.
- **Direct Communication**:
  - **Athlete to Coach**: The student-athlete should first discuss the concern directly with their coach. Open and honest communication can often resolve misunderstandings and minor issues.
  - **Parent/Guardian to Coach**: If the issue remains unresolved, parents or guardians should arrange a meeting with the coach to discuss the concern. It is important to approach the conversation with a positive and collaborative attitude.
- **Involving the Athletic Director**:
  - If the concern is not resolved through direct communication with the coach, the next step is to involve the Athletic Director. The student-athlete or parent/guardian should request a meeting with the Athletic Director to present the concern and any relevant documentation.
- **Meeting with School Administration**:
  - If the issue is still unresolved after involving the Athletic Director, the student-athlete or parent/guardian may request a meeting with school administration. This could include the Principal or Assistant Principal. The administration will review the concern, speak with all parties involved, and work towards a resolution.
- **Formal Complaint**:
  - In cases where the conflict cannot be resolved through the above steps, a formal written complaint may be submitted to the school district's administration. The complaint should include all relevant documentation and a detailed description of the steps already taken to resolve the issue. The district administration will investigate the complaint and make a final determination.

Varsity Level Playing Time: Concerns related to playing time at the varsity level are not appropriate for discussion with coaches or administrators. Decisions regarding playing time are made based on a variety of factors, including performance, practice attendance, and team needs. These decisions are final and are not subject to review or negotiation.

At any level, if a student-athlete is concerned about their playing time, they should meet with their coach directly and ask what skills they should improve in order to increase their playing time.

Important Contacts -

Athletic Director:

Lori Taylor - ltaylor@sau23.org

Woodsville High School School Administration:

Principal: Hayden Coon - hcoon@sau23.org

Assistant Principal: Matthew Kelly Mkelly@sau23.org

Haverhill Cooperative Middle School Administration:

Principal: Bob Griffin - bgriffin@sau23.org

Assistant Principal: Shyanne Allbee - sallbee@sau23.org

SAU 23 Administration:

Superintendent: Dolores Fox - dfox@sau23.org

Student Athlete and Parent/Guardian Signature Page

Student Athlete's Commitment
I, the undersigned athlete, have read and understand the Student Athlete Handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action as specified.

Student Athlete's Name (Print): _____

Student Athlete's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Commitment
I, the undersigned parent/guardian, have read and understand the Student Athlete Handbook. I agree to support my child's adherence to the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook. I understand the consequences of violations and will work with the school to ensure my child complies with these guidelines.

Parent/Guardian's Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgment of Substance Abuse Policy

I, the undersigned athlete and parent/guardian, acknowledge that we have read and understand the Substance Abuse Policy outlined in the Student Athlete Handbook. We agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the policy.

Student Athlete's Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

By signing this page, we acknowledge our commitment to the Haverhill Cooperative School District’s Athletics Program and agree to abide by the rules and expectations outlined in the handbook.