



Eastern Middle/High School
Athletic Handbook

2023-2024

1170 Tile Mill Road
Beaver, OH 45613
(740) 226-1544 / (866) 801-9512
<http://www.ep.k12.oh.us/>

FOREWORD

This handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that students and parents may have regarding athletics and to provide specific information about certain board policies and procedures. This handbook contains important information that you should know. Please take time to become familiar with the following information and keep the handbook available for frequent reference by you and your parents. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, you are encouraged to talk to your coaches, athletic director, or the building administrator. This handbook replaces all prior handbooks and other written material on the same subjects. This handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of the board's policies and the school's rules as of July 11, 2022. If any of the policies referenced herein are revised after July 11, 2022, the language in the most current policy prevails. Copies of current Board policies are available from the building principal and on the district's website.

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

The Eastern Local School District will work in partnership with students and their families, the community and local business/industry in order to effectively prepare all students through a variety of experiences to be successful, productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

PHILOSOPHY

A program of interscholastic athletics is a relevant part of the total program of instruction at Eastern Local School District. The athletic program is an essential part of the district mission and should be developed to provide both physical maturity and mental and social-emotional growth and wellness of each student-athlete. Achieving this aspect of our mission requires continuity and cooperation among administration, coaches, parents, student-athletes, and the community.

The purpose of the athletic program is to provide extracurricular experiences in addition to the academic curriculum that will create important learning opportunities for student-athletes. However, it must be remembered that participation in the interscholastic athletic program, while an important learning opportunity, is a privilege that must be earned and maintained. Allowances will be made for differences in ages, interest, and maturity level in relation to the total school program, as well as each student's needs.

OBJECTIVES

The interscholastic athletic program at Eastern Local School District is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To promote the pursuit of excellence and maximizing potential.
2. To teach the value of academic excellence.
3. To teach and instill integrity and sportsmanship of the highest kind.
4. To promote the importance of self-discipline, dedication, and perseverance.
5. To promote the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and selflessness.

6. To enhance and develop the athletic knowledge and skills of the student-athlete.
7. To create lasting friendships and bonds among student-athletes.

ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONAL AUTHORITY

The following diagram represents the line of organizational authority within Eastern Local School District. Student-athletes, as well as parents, should address initial issues, concerns, or problems with the coach of the sport in which they are participating. If the issue is unresolved, the student-athlete and/or parent should proceed to follow the line of organizational authority.

1. Coach
2. Athletic Director
3. Principal
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Education

ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS

Student-athletes have the opportunity to compete in the following sports:

HIGH SCHOOL

Fall

Cheerleading (football)
 Cross Country (boys)
 Cross Country (girls)
 Golf (boys)
 Golf (girls)
 Football
 Volleyball

Winter

Cheerleading (basketball)
 Basketball (boys)
 Basketball (girls)

Spring

Archery
 Baseball
 Softball
 Track (boys)
 Track (girls)

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fall

Cheerleading (football)
 Cross Country (boys)(grades 6-8)
 Cross Country (girls)(grades 6-8)
 Golf
 Football
 Volleyball

Winter

Cheerleading (basketball)
 Basketball (boys)
 Basketball (girls)

Spring

Archery (grades 6-8)
 Track (boys)
 Track (girls)

Middle school sports are only available for 7th and 8th grade student-athletes unless noted otherwise. Other athletic opportunities may be offered by community organizations or youth leagues. For more information, please contact the athletic director or building principal.

**EASTERN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

The most important goal of the interscholastic athletic program is to provide every participant the opportunity to grow mentally, morally, physically, and emotionally. To assure that the program can provide these opportunities, a degree of self-discipline is required of each participant. Self-discipline involves compliance with rules and regulations concerning personal behavior. Rules promote order and safety, and assist participants in reaching maximum performance potential.

Furthermore, because of their high visibility, student-athletes have a strong influence on both the student body and community. Because of this visibility and influence, the student-athlete serves as a representative of their team, school, and community in both their attitude and conduct.

With this understanding, the following policies and procedures have been established as a minimum standard for the Eastern Middle/High School athletic department. In addition to these policies and procedures, the student-athlete is also subject to the rules and regulations of the Eastern Local Board of Education, the Southern Ohio Conference, the Ohio High School Athletic Association, and any other regulatory organization under which a school-sponsored student-athlete or team is competing.

The athletic code of conduct applies to all student-athletes in grades 6-12. It must be adhered to by the student-athlete during the full duration of his/her season, including both pre and post season activities. Matters not specifically covered in the athletic code of conduct or individual team rules shall be handled in accordance with the middle/high school student code of conduct found in the Eastern Middle/High School Student Handbook.

I. DEFINITIONS:

1. Student-athlete: Any student participating in a school-sponsored athletic sport or competition as a contestant, statistician, manager, trainer or cheerleader.
2. Sport Season: The season begins with the first official day of practice established by the OHSAA and terminates at the completion of the individual awards program.
3. Possession: The custody and control of property.
4. Self-Referral: Seeking help before a violation is detected.
5. Drug/Alcohol Rehabilitation Program:
A recognized treatment program with a history of tangible results (all costs for assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, or counseling shall be the responsibility of the student-athlete and his/her family).
6. OHSAA: Ohio High School Athletic Association

II. CODE OF CONDUCT

Due process of appeals is not afforded regarding disciplinary action for athletics.

A. ELIGIBILITY

Student-athletes will comply with all eligibility requirements of Eastern Local School District and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, including but not limited to those requirements pertaining to age, scholarship, residence and attendance. See **OHSAA/DISTRICT ELIGIBILITY**.

B. ATTENDANCE

Student-athletes must be in attendance at school for a minimum of a ½ day on the day of an athletic practice or contest in order to participate. Student-athletes must arrive at school by 11:30 a.m. and must not leave school before 11:31 a.m. on days of practice or contests to be eligible to participate unless excused by the building principal.

C. SUSPENSION/EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL

Student-athletes expelled or suspended from school are not eligible to participate in practices or contests during the period of expulsion or suspension.

D. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Student-athletes shall not engage in criminal activity or violation of civil law. Consequences involvement in breeches of criminal or civil law may result in disciplinary action ranging from a reprimand to the denial of participation for a calendar year, depending on the nature of the offense.

E. DUAL PARTICIPATION

Student-athletes may participate in two sports during the same season. However, student-athletes must complete the dual-participation form (Appendix A) to declare their primary sport. The dual-participation form must be completed prior to the first contest of either sport in which the student-athlete is participating. When a scheduling conflict occurs, the following chart shall be used to determine the event in which the student-athlete will participate. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to communicate scheduling conflicts with coaches.

Primary Event	Secondary Event	Participating Event
Contest	Contest	Primary
Contest	Practice	Primary
Practice	Contest	Secondary
Tournament	Contest	Primary
Contest	Tournament	Secondary
Tournament	Tournament	Primary

Additionally, many student-athletes are often involved in other sports programs such as

AAU, YMCA, Club, etc. During a sport season of which the athlete is a participant, the school-sponsored sport takes priority over all other non-school affiliated sports. This includes all practices, meetings, and games of the school-sponsored sport.

F. SCHOOL PROPERTY

The Eastern Local Board of Education, Athletic Boosters, Athletic Department, and many others have invested a tremendous amount of time and financial support to providing our student-athletes with the necessary equipment and facilities for each sport. It is the responsibility of all student-athletes to ensure that the proper care and treatment of all equipment and facilities are maintained.

Equipment issued to students, as part of a sport must be returned in the original condition allowing for normal wear. Inappropriate treatment or damage of equipment or facilities may result in denial of participation and/or consequences as prescribed by the Eastern Middle/High School Student Handbook. Additionally, failure to return school-issued equipment will result in denial of participation and/or consequences as prescribed by the Eastern Middle/High School Student Handbook.

Athletes who knowingly deface or alter equipment, or whose careless or irresponsible actions result in loss or damage of equipment, shall be required to make restitution for said equipment. The cost of replacement and the age of the equipment is not a factor. Any athlete refusing to make restitution shall be denied participation on any interscholastic team, recognition in all extracurricular activities, and receipt of diploma until all equipment is returned or restitution is made for damaged equipment or facilities. Failure to return school equipment issued to any athlete may result in legal action being taken and/or denial of participation on any interscholastic team.

Settlement to the Board of Education or Activity Account responsible will be 100% of the replacement cost of the article.

G. QUITTING/DENIAL OF PARTICIPATION

Any student-athlete choosing to quit a sport or is denied participation for a violation of rules after the first official practice of that sport will not be allowed to participate in open gym, conditioning, practice, contests or other activities of any other sport until the end of that sport season. A student-athlete participating in two sports in the same season and quits the primary sport will not be permitted to continue in either sport and will be held to the aforementioned restrictions. If the student-athlete quits the secondary sport, he/she will be permitted to continue to participate in the primary sport.

An exception applies to a student-athlete participating in a particular sport for the first time at the high school level. If the student-athlete quits after the first official contest of the sport the above restrictions will be applied. Additionally, if a student-athlete is "cut" from a team before the regular season begins and not because of a violation of team rules, he/she will be eligible to participate in another sport.

H. BEHAVIOR

All athletes are expected to behave in a manner which reflects positively on the school, athletic department, and team. Behavior which reflects negatively would include, but not limited to such offenses as:

1. Repeated absences from school or class.
2. Acts of vandalism or abuse of persons or property.
3. Repeated infractions of school rules of chronic incorrigible behavior.
4. Abusive language, gestures or profanity.
5. Behavior, attitude or unsportsmanlike conduct at or during athletic contests, practice sessions, school or school sponsored events.
6. Violations of the Eastern Middle/High School Student Handbook.

The penalties for such violations will be determined by the coach and/or athletic director and/or principal.

I. TOBACCO/VAPE

Athletes shall not use and/or possess tobacco in any form at any time.

1. **FIRST OFFENSE:** Any student-athlete found in violation shall be denied participation for 33% of that season or the next sports season. If the athlete agrees to participate in a tobacco education program approved by the athletic director or principal, the penalty shall be reduced to 10% of that or the next sports season. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program shall result in full application of the 33% penalty. The athlete may practice and must be in attendance, in street clothes, during the prescribed denial of participation period. All training rules and regulations must be followed by the student-athlete.

1-A. **SELF-REFERRAL POLICY:** Prior to a violation, if a student-athlete seeks assistance with dealing with a tobacco problem by self-referral to their coach and/or athletic director and/or principal, there shall be NO denial of participation. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program will result in full application of the 33% penalty. Self-referrals which result in no denial of participation are still considered first violations.

2. **SECOND OFFENSE:** A student-athlete found in violation for a second time (sports season or subsequent sports season that school year) shall be denied participation for 50% of that or the next season. If the student-athlete agrees to participate in a tobacco education program approved by the athletic director and/or principal, the penalty shall be reduced to 33% of that or the next sports season. Refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program will result in the full 50% penalty.

If a student-athlete seeks assistance for dealing with a tobacco problem by self-referral to his/her coach and/or athletic director and/or principal after having a first violation, the violation is considered a second offense. If he/she agrees to participate in a tobacco education program approved by the athletic director refusal or failure to complete the tobacco education program will result in the full 50% penalty.

3. **THIRD OFFENSE:** A student-athlete found in violation for the third time shall be denied participation in the interscholastic athletic program for one calendar year from the date of the violation.

After six months from the date of the third violation has passed, the student-athlete may petition the principal to once again participate in the interscholastic athletic program. The student-athlete shall have the opportunity to present any evidence (such as participation in a tobacco education program, no smoking/no tobacco support group, quit smoking clinics,

etc.) he/she has that may indicate a continued successful effort to cope with his/her tobacco problem. The application for reentry into the interscholastic athletic program shall be reviewed by the principal, who shall take into consideration the student's age, maturity and history of appropriate behavior since the last violation. Approval or disapproval shall be made by the principal. The principal shall inform the student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the decision.

J. DRUG/ALCOHOL

Athletes shall not be under the influence of, buy, use, sell, or possess drugs- narcotics, hallucinogens, intoxicants, counterfeit drugs, controlled substances, alcohol or other intoxicants, or misuse prescribed or over-the-counter medications. (Exception to this provision is supervised, prescribed medication(s).)

1. **FIRST OFFENSE:** If a student-athlete is found to be in violation the athlete will be denied participation in the interscholastic athletic program for one calendar year from the date of violation.

If the student-athlete agrees to participation in a drug/alcohol counseling/rehabilitation program approved by the athletic director and principal, and to follow the program recommendations, the penalty may be reduced to 33% of that or the next sport season.

Participation in practices may be allowed at the discretion of the principal but the student-athlete may not travel with the team or be on the bench/sideline during contests. All training rules and regulations must be followed by the athlete. Refusal or failure to take the assessment or to follow the assessment recommendations will result in the full year's penalty.

1-A. **SELF- REFERRAL POLICY:** Prior to a violation, if a student-athlete seeks assistance with dealing with a tobacco problem by self-referral to their coach and/or athletic director and/or principal, the student-athlete will be denied participation in the interscholastic athletic program for a full calendar year unless the student-athlete agrees to participate in a drug counseling/rehabilitation program approved by the athletic director and principal. If the student-athlete agrees to participate in a drug counseling/rehabilitation program approved by the athletic director and principal, the student-athlete may petition the principal to have the penalty may be reduced to 33% of that or the next sport season. The student-athlete shall have the opportunity to present any evidence (such as participation in a drug counseling/rehabilitation program, support group, etc.) he/she has that may indicate a continued successful effort to cope with his/her drug problem. The application for reentry into the interscholastic athletic program shall be reviewed by the principal, who shall take into consideration the student's age, maturity and history of appropriate behavior since the last violation. Approval or disapproval shall be made by the principal. The principal shall inform the student-athlete and parent(s)/ guardian(s) in writing of the decision. Refusal or failure to complete the drug counseling/rehabilitation program will result in full application of the one calendar year penalty. Self-referrals which result in no denial of participation are still considered first violations.

2. **SECOND OFFENSE:** A student-athlete found in violation for the second time shall be indefinitely denied participation in the interscholastic athletic program. Following an initial 12 month period after the second violation with no participation in the interscholastic program, the student-athlete may petition the principal to once again participate in the

interscholastic athletic program. The student-athlete shall have the opportunity to present the principal any evidence that a drug/alcohol counseling/rehabilitation program approved by the athletic director and principal, has been successfully completed or that the student-athlete is in a continued successful rehabilitation and/or counseling program. The application for re-entry to the interscholastic athletic program shall be reviewed by the principal, who shall take into consideration the student's age, maturity and history of appropriate behavior since the last violation. Approval or disapproval shall be made by the principal. The athletic director or principal shall inform the athlete and parent(s) / guardian(s) in writing of the decision.

If a student-athlete seeks assistance for dealing with a drug or alcohol problem by self-referral to their coach, athletic director and/or principal after having a first violation on their record, it is considered a second violation. If the student-athlete agrees to participate in a drug/alcohol counseling/assessment program approved by the athletic director and principal and agrees to follow program recommendations, the penalty may be reduced by the principal to a period of not less than six months from the date of violation. Refusal or failure to follow through with the program recommendations will result in the full calendar year suspension. Self-referrals which result in reduced denial of participation are still considered second violations.

3. **THIRD OFFENSE:** An athlete found in violation for the third time shall be permanently denied participation in the interscholastic athletic program.

Athletes shall not sell or distribute drugs-narcotics, hallucinogenic, intoxicants, counterfeit drugs, controlled substance, alcohol or other intoxicants, or over-the-counter or prescribed medications.

1. A student-athlete found to be in violation will be immediately denied participation in interscholastic program for a minimum of one calendar year from the date of violation.

2. The principal will notify the local law enforcement authorities. All evidence and pertinent information shall be submitted to the proper authorities.

3. The principal shall contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student-athlete in violation.

4. The principal may recommend to the superintendent that the student-athlete be suspended or expelled according to the Eastern Middle/High School Handbook.

5. After an initial 10 month period with no participation in the interscholastic athletic program, the student-athlete may petition to once again participate in the interscholastic athletic program. The student-athlete must furnish evidence to the principal of successful completion or continued successful participation in a drug/alcohol rehabilitation and/or counseling program approved by the athletic director and principal. Application for re-entry into the interscholastic athletic program shall be reviewed by the principal, athletic director, and superintendent, who shall take into consideration the student's age, maturity and history or appropriate behavior since the last violation. Approval or disapproval shall be made by the principal, athletic director, superintendent. The athletic director or principal shall inform the student-athlete and parent(s) / guardian(s) in writing or the

decision.

K. ANABOLIC STEROIDS

Improper use of anabolic steroids may cause serious or fatal health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, growth deformities, infertility, personality changes, severe acne, and baldness. Possession, sale, or use of anabolic steroids without a valid prescription is a crime punishable by a fine and imprisonment. Refer to OHSAA Eligibility Guides, p. 4 (Appendix C and Appendix D).

K. TEAM RULES

Coaches may have additional rules of conduct for their individual sport. Once the Athletic Handbook is distributed and the agreement document is signed by the student-athlete and parent, some rules established by the coach of each individual sport may in some areas be more specific than the handbook. Student-athletes will be bound by team rules in signing the Athletic Handbook Agreement (Appendix B). Student-athletes and/or parent(s) / guardian(s) should take concerns to the coach first, then follow the school athletic chain of command on unresolved complaints or issues.

L. HAZING

No student shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, engage, permit, condone, or tolerate hazing. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student who is found to have violated this policy. All forms of hazing will be addressed in accordance with the bullying and anti-harassment policies in the Eastern Middle/High Student Handbook.

III. OHSAA/DISTRICT ELIGIBILITY

It is the purpose of the interscholastic athletic program and instructional personnel to instill values of excellence, competition, sportsmanship, and cooperative endeavor. Standards of scholastic eligibility are governed by rules of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Eastern Local Board of Education.

A. OHSAA HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12) ELIGIBILITY RULES

See Appendix C

B. OHSAA MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7-8) ELIGIBILITY RULES

See Appendix D

All sixth grade students participating in a school-sponsored athletic program listed in this handbook will be subject to the same OHSAA eligibility requirements.

C. EASTERN LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY RULES

All student-athletes in the interscholastic athletic program must:

1. Adhere to all rules and regulations for eligibility set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

2. Maintain and meet the following expectations prior to participation:
 - Maintain a satisfactory academic record
 - Attend school regularly
 - Demonstrate good citizenship and responsibility
 - Return all school and athletic equipment

4. Be in good physical condition as determined by a licensed physician, have a valid participation physical examination on record, be free of injury, and have fully recovered from illness before participating in any interscholastic athletic event.

IV. SPORTSMANSHIP

Because of their visibility and influence in the school and community, student-athletes must conduct themselves with the utmost integrity and sportsmanship. The following behaviors are expected of all Eastern Middle/High School student-athletes:

1. Show respect and courtesy for all officials, opposing coaches, players, and fans, and school officials.
2. Compete with honesty and integrity at all times. Refrain from all forms of cheating.
2. Respect all decisions and calls made by officials. Never argue or indicate a dislike for a decision.
3. Shake hands with opponents after games regardless of the outcome.
4. Refrain from the use of profane or derogatory language at all times.
5. Maintain class and integrity in both victory and defeat.
6. Cooperate with the coach and fellow players in promoting good sportsmanship.
7. Embrace the responsibility and privilege of representing the school and community.

Violation of good sportsmanship may result in the denial of participation in future contests.

V. ATHLETIC AWARDS

Athletic awards given to student-athletes are given at the discretion of the coach. Varsity letters will be awarded to all student-athletes who compete in the minimum amount of varsity competition in a single season, listed below:

- Archery - 50% of all varsity meets
- Baseball - 50% of all varsity innings
- Basketball - 50% of all varsity quarters
- Cheerleading - 50% of all varsity quarters
- Cross Country - 50% of all varsity meets
- Football - 50% of all varsity quarters
- Golf - 50% of all varsity matches
- Softball - 50% of all varsity
- Track - 50% of all varsity meets
- Volleyball - 50% of all varsity sets

VI. SENIOR NIGHTS

Senior night ceremonies are a school-organized ceremony and will be conducted in an orderly manner that honors our senior student-athletes without unreasonably impeding the start of the athletic contest. Please see Appendices E, F, and G for more senior night procedures and student information forms

VII. SPECTATORS

Eastern Local School District has a zero tolerance policy for unruly behavior at athletic events. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who threatens violence against an official, coach, student-athlete, or fellow spectator, will be removed from the event. The offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.

Eastern Local School District has a zero tolerance policy for the use of alcohol and/or drugs at athletic events. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who uses drugs or alcohol at an athletic event, will be removed from the event. The offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.

Eastern Local School District has a zero tolerance policy for the verbal abuse of coaches, student-athletes, and officials at athletic events. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who verbally abuses a coach, student-athlete, or official, and is removed from the event, will not be permitted to attend the next home game. If another violation occurs, then the offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.

APPENDIX B

**EASTERN MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
INTERSCHOLASTIC PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

I, _____ (print student-athlete name), have chosen to participate in _____ (sport) at Eastern Middle/High School.

I commit myself to continuously work toward the goal of top physical fitness. To do anything which would harm my body would not be in my best interest or the best interest of my team and school.

I agree to remain free from tobacco, alcohol, steroids and other performance-enhancing or recreational drugs during my sports season and throughout the entire school year. I fully understand this pledge extends to seven days per week.

If I have a problem or I need help fulfilling this contract, I understand the coaches, administrators and/or counselors will be available to help me.

I have read and understand the Eastern Middle/High School Athletic Handbook policies/code of conduct and the consequences for violations of the handbook.

I pledge to follow all the rules and policies and to help all my teammates abide by the same athletic rules and policies.

Student-athlete Signature

Date

As the parent/guardian of the above student-athlete, I understand and support this contract and pledge that my student-athlete has signed and I agree to abide by the rules and policies contained therein. Optimum health and education are the goals of our athletic program, and I support the school in its efforts to attain these goals.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Coach Signature

Date