

BELDING AREA SCHOOLS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Revised August, 2008

FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to inform our student-athletes and their parents of the Belding Area School's athletic rules and policies. It must be understood that the rules set forth in this document are intended to enhance the quality of the experiences available through educational athletics by providing a program based on proper discipline and positive values.

Being a Belding Area High School or Middle School Student-Athlete carries with it a tremendous amount of responsibility. It must be understood that students who choose not to follow the rules set forth by the Belding Area Schools, the Belding Area Schools Athletic Department and the Michigan High School Athletic Association may be denied the privilege of participation in athletics. Strive to represent your school and community with pride and dignity. Your conduct at school, practice and games affects the image people have of Belding Area Schools and the Community of Belding. A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and dedication. This necessitates a strong emphasis on good training habits. Training regulations outlined in this handbook are established with the athletes' well-being and fitness in mind. We are striving for excellence and want our athletes to work to be their best. You have accepted the challenge of athletic participation. Now you must set goals and make a personal commitment to achieve those goals.

Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics shall be an integral part of the total junior/senior high school program. The purpose of athletics is to foster optimum growth - physical, mental, social and moral - of the participants. Emphasis shall be upon teaching "through athletics" in addition to teaching the skills "of athletics". We believe that our athletes are students first, and that their experiences in athletics are a vital part of the total education available at Belding Area Schools. Thus, the term "educational athletics" is used in reference to that portion of education that takes place in the athletic arena. The Athletic Program shall exist for the value which it has for students and not for the benefit of the sponsoring institution.

Affiliations

Belding Area High School is a member of the BLUE Division of the OK Conference. The OK Blue consists of the following schools: Belding, Cedar Springs, Comstock Park, Coopersville, Forest Hills Northern, Grand Rapids Central and West Catholic High Schools.

Athletic Activities

The following sports are offered and sponsored by the Belding Area High School Athletic Department:

	BOYS	GIRLS
FALL	Football Cross Country Soccer	Volleyball Cross Country Golf Cheerleading
WINTER	Basketball Bowling Wrestling	Basketball Bowling Competitive Cheer
SPRING	Baseball Track Golf	Softball Track Soccer

Potential Dangers in Athletic Participation

Parents and athletes should fully understand and appreciate the risk of serious injury associated with participation in sports programs provided by Belding Area High School. Athletic activities can be hazardous, and taking part in such activities is calculated risk-taking on the part of the athlete and parents. While reducing injuries to a minimum is a goal of our coaching staff and administration, the possible dangers must not be overlooked.

Athletic Injuries and Insurance

Athletics is a voluntary program in which students participate at their own risk. Insurance provided by the school is a secondary coverage policy, and may cover medical costs not covered under your own family insurance. Any time you are injured while participating in athletics, be sure that an Accident Report is filled out promptly. If your medical insurance company refuses to cover any charges because proper steps are not followed, the school insurance company also will not pay. Belding Area Schools does not assume financial responsibility for medical, hospital, or ambulance expenses incurred because of athletic injuries. Questions regarding student insurance should be directed to the Athletic Director.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is the set of major rules commonly referred to as "Training Rules." They are primarily for the health and safety of our student-athletes. These rules, listed below, have specific penalties, and are referred to the Athletic Director for enforcement.

1. Athletes shall not possess or consume alcoholic beverages.
2. Athletes shall not possess or use tobacco in any form, including chewing tobacco.
3. Athletes shall not possess, use, or consume any illegal or controlled substance/drugs. This rule also prohibits improper or unauthorized use of a legal drug, or possession of "drug paraphernalia."
4. Athletes shall not remain at a location where drugs or alcohol are being used or consumed illegally.
5. Conduct unbecoming an athlete, depending on severity, may be a violation of the Athletic Code.

Jurisdiction

The Athletic Code of Conduct will be enforced for all athletes during the entire school year or during any time the athlete is participating on a school sponsored team, whether the violation occurs on or off school grounds. Issues reported by law enforcement agencies, or witnessed first hand by a member of the Belding Area Schools Coaching Staff will be acted upon, regardless of when they occur. An athlete is defined as any junior/senior high school student who has begun participation on any team. That student is considered an athlete (for the purpose of enforcing the Athletic Code) for the remainder of his/her high school career, or until he/she has gone one calendar year without participation on an athletic team. When an athlete who is not presently participating commits a violation, the penalty shall be enforced during his/her next season of participation. The athlete must complete the season in which the penalty is served, or it will continue into the next season in which the athlete chooses to participate.

Penalty Procedures

The Athletic Director shall investigate all alleged violations of the training rules, and then meet with the offending athlete as soon as possible.

The Athletic Director shall then make the following determination:

1. Is the student-athlete guilty of the alleged violation?
2. Is the offense an Athletic Code violation?
3. Invoke the appropriate penalty as prescribed under "Penalties for Violations."
4. If the offending student-athlete is currently participating in two sports, the suspension shall be levied in full for both sports. If the season ends before both penalties are fully enforced, the penalty shall continue during the next season until one (1) full sport penalty has been served.
5. The Athletic Director shall document the results of all hearings and provide a copy to the parents, coach(es) and the guidance counselor.

Penalties for Violations

- A. The penalty for a first offense shall be a suspension for the number of contests required to equal 20 points, according to the table in section C.
- B. The penalty for a second offense shall be a suspension for the number of contests required to equal 60 points, according to the table in section C.
- C. Table for determining length of suspension for 1st or 2nd offense (points per contest - based on number of contests in a regular season)

SPORT	VARSITY	J.V.	FROSH.	M.S.
Football	10	10	10	20
Basketball	5	5	5	10
Cross Country	10	-	-	10
Golf	7	10	-	-
Volleyball	2.25	3	3.5	7
Wrestling	2.5	4	-	10
Competitive Cheer	7	10	-	-
Sideline Cheer	BASED ON SPORT THEY ARE CHEERING FOR			
Baseball/Softball	3.5	3.5	4	-
Track	7	-	-	10
Soccer	7	10		
Bowling	10			

- D. The penalty for a third offense shall be a suspension for one calendar year.
- E. The penalty for a fourth offense shall be elimination from all athletic participation for the remainder of the student's high school career.
- F. Additional Provisions:
 - 1. Student-athletes who seek help regarding chemical dependency problems shall not be subject to disciplinary action provided that:
 - a. There exists no violation at the time the student seeks help (e.g. the student is not in possession or under the influence of alcohol or other unlawful drugs) and, in the opinion of the Athletic Director or Principal, the spirit of the policy has not been violated; and
 - b. No subsequent violation occurs
 - 2. A Student-Athlete who completes the MAYSII screening program, after a first or second violation, may have his/her penalty reduced by up to one-half, at the discretion of the Athletic Director and Building Principal.
 - 3. In determining the number of offenses an athlete has incurred, all "Training Rule" violations shall be numbered together. Thus, if an athlete breaks two different rules, the second infraction shall be handled as a second offense. For example, if an athlete is caught drinking and later smoking, the smoking incident shall be handled as a second offense.
 - 4. While on suspension for a 1st or 2nd Athletic Code violation, the student-athlete shall be expected to practice, and shall attend all contests with the team, but shall not dress in the team uniform.

Appeals Process

Whenever a student-athlete or his/her parents question the outcome of a hearing regarding an Athletic Code Violation, an appeal may be made to the building Principal. Such appeal must be made in writing within two days after the decision is rendered by the Athletic Director or Assistant Principal. The Principal shall schedule a meeting as soon as possible, allowing time for his/her investigation of the facts, and time necessary to assemble the interested parties.

After hearing the appeal, the Principal may take up to twenty-four hours to render a decision. The student-athlete or parents may appeal this decision by making a request in writing to the Superintendent within two days after hearing the decision by the Principal.

After an appeal is made to the Superintendent, he/she shall schedule a meeting as soon as possible, allowing time for his/her investigation of the facts, and time necessary to assemble the interested parties.

After hearing the appeal, the Superintendent may take up to two days to render a decision. For all first or second violations, the decision of the Superintendent is final. In the case of a third or fourth violation, the decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the Board of Education. Such appeal must be in writing within two days after the decision of the Superintendent is rendered. The Board of Education will hear the case at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and will render a decision within seven days after the meeting.

The Principal shall decide if the student-athlete shall continue participation during the Appeals Process. Every attempt shall be made to expedite the process, whether the student-athlete is allowed to participate during the Appeals Process or not.

Miscellaneous Rules

- A. No athlete shall wear or use any school-owned equipment or uniform except in games and practices without proper authorization from the coach.
- B. Any athlete who wishes to discontinue participation in one sport to go out for another may do so, up until the time of the first contest. After that time, he/she may only do so with written permission from both coaches and the athletic director.
- C. Students must be in attendance the entire school day to participate in a game or practice that day. Exceptions may be made IN ADVANCE by the Athletic Director or Principal for valid reasons other than sickness. When not excused in advance, the administrator will grant permission for participation only with proof that the student had a doctor's appointment for reasons other than sickness, or in the case of extenuating circumstances. NOTE: Whenever you miss school, talk with the Athletic Director in advance if you hope to participate in a game or practice that day. If the Athletic Director is not available, see the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- D. Students must use transportation provided by the school for all AWAY contests. Parents may ask permission for their son/daughter to ride home with them or another responsible adult, but only if they are at the contest, and such request is made in person after the contest. Coaches may require that all student-athletes ride the bus.
- E. DRESS CODE--Coaches are responsible for enforcing proper dress for their student-athletes during practice sessions. This includes the times before and after practice while the student-athletes are in or around the school buildings.
 - 1. Hats may not be worn in the building, except during baseball or softball practice.
 - 2. Sports bras must be covered. Girls must wear t-shirts under loosely fitting game or practice jerseys.
 - 3. Boys must wear shirts at all times in and around the school and practice and game areas.

Team Rules

Individual coaches may also establish "Team Rules" which do not conflict with the Training Rules, Code of Conduct or Miscellaneous Rules. Coaches are responsible for communicating these rules to student-athletes and their parents. Enforcement of a coach's individual rules is left up to the coach, under the direction of the Athletic Director. All rules must be approved by the Athletic Director in advance. All coaches will write a rule indicating how they will deal with school suspensions.

Current Trimester Eligibility Rules - Academic Eligibility

Academic eligibility for the current trimester will be every 2 or 3 weeks, in conjunction with the regular progress reports. Grades reported by teachers are to be based on a cumulative grade from the beginning of the trimester through the Friday preceding the eligibility check. Students must be passing four classes to be eligible. Students who are ineligible will not be permitted to dress for or participate in games or meets (beginning the following Monday) until the Monday after a succeeding grade check renders them eligible.

DUAL PARTICIPATION

Participation in two sports during the same season is allowed under the following conditions:

1. Consent of parents/guardians indicated by signing the required form.
2. The student-athlete must indicate on the form which sport is to be his/her priority sport.
The student-athlete may not miss any contests, practices or team meetings of the priority sport to participate in activities of the non-priority sport.
3. The Athletic Director shall arrange a meeting to include the student-athlete, parents/guardians, both coaches involved and the Principal. After reviewing the provisions of this rule and its application for the student-athlete in question, all persons involved shall have an opportunity to sign the "Dual Participation Form" indicating approval.
4. Until this form is completed and signed in its entirety, the student-athlete shall not attend any team meetings or practices of the non-priority sport.
5. Initiation of the Dual Participation Procedure is the responsibility of the student-athlete and/or parent(s). Coaches shall not seek out students who are already participating in another sport, and suggest Dual Participation as an option.

MHSAA 10-Point Check for Eligibility

Note: If you cannot check all 10 items on this list, see your athletic director or principal

1. You were enrolled in a high school not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day.
2. You will not have turned 19 before September 1st. (15 for 8th graders or 14 for 7th graders.)
3. You have had a physical examination since April 15, and it is on file in the school office.
4. You have not been enrolled in more than eight semesters in high school (grades 9 - 12).
5. You have passed at least 4 full credit subjects in the previous semester of enrollment.
6. You are currently passing at least four full credit subjects.
7. You have not changed schools without a corresponding move by your parents or persons with whom you were living.
8. You have not received money or other valuable consideration for participating in MHSAA sponsored sports.
9. You have not participated in non-school contests during your sport season after having reported for your school team.
10. You have not competed in an all-star or national championship after having played on a high school team in the same sport.

Rules for Resolving Event Conflicts

The Board of Education has the admirable policy of encouraging students to have as many desirable experiences in school as possible. As a result of this policy, students occasionally find that they are scheduled to participate in more than one event at a given time. When such a conflict is discovered, the criteria listed below will assist in finding an equitable and reasonable solution.

- A. Academic demands outweigh athletic events.
 - B. All decisions at any level are subject to appeal, review and revision by the Athletic Director and Principal.
 - C. The following criteria are crucial:
 - Student's role in the event (i.e., key performer, starting player, soloist vs. one of many capable of playing the part or position);
 - Nature of the event (competition vs practice; regional vs league play);
 - Number of people adversely affected;
 - Date event scheduled;
- If 1 - 4 permit, the student shall be allowed to choose.

Awards

- A. The CRITERIA for earning awards is to be established by the individual coaches. Criteria should be in writing and included in team rules.
- B. CERTIFICATES are given to all team members who meet the established criteria. Certificates indicate the level of participation (Varsity, JV, Frosh or Middle School). In addition, special leatherette certificates are awarded to athletes earning a third or fourth varsity award in a given sport.
- C. Athletes shall receive the Varsity "B" with their first varsity certificate.
- D. Athletes receive a "slash" with each varsity certificate.
- E. Captain Stars may be awarded to team captains.
- F. Metal Inserts (sport specific) are awarded to all varsity award winners.
- G. Managers and Statisticians may receive the "service" certificate at the discretion of the Coach. Juniors or seniors may earn a regular varsity certificate and accompanying chenille awards for managing, at the discretion of the coach.
- H. The Four-Year Senior Plaque is awarded to any athlete who participates in a single sport at any level all four years in high school. Athletes who accomplish this in more than one sport will receive one plaque, with each of the sports indicated on the engraved plate. This award is presented in the spring.
- I. Senior Athlete -Each year, the Athletic Department selects one senior boy and one senior girl as "Athlete of the Year." Recipients of these awards are selected based on the following criteria:
 - 1) Must be a senior;
 - 2) Must play in at least two sports during senior year;
 - 3) Athletic Excellence;
 - 4) Citizenship;
 - 5) Scholarship (minimum 2.0 GPA);
 - 6) All high school athletic participation is to be considered;
 - 7) Dependability

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT
OF STUDENT-ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

I, _____ certify that I have received a copy of the
(Student-Athlete - Please Print)

Belding High School Student Athletic Handbook.

Signature of Student-Athlete

Date

My/our son/daughter has received a copy of the Belding High School Student Athletic Handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

This form must be signed and returned at the beginning of each sports season. Please return to your coach before the first contest, as a condition of your eligibility to participate in contests during the current season.