

**THOMAS JEFFERSON  
HIGH SCHOOL**



**STUDENT ATHLETE  
HANDBOOK**

**2016-2017**

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

## **WJHSD STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**STUDENTS ARE THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT WHERE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY, THE MISSION IS TO EDUCATE AND PREPARE STUDENTS TO BECOME ACTIVE, CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY BY PROVIDING A CHALLENGING, INNOVATIVE, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GUIDED BY AN EXCEPTIONAL STAFF IN A SAFE, POSITIVE, CARING ENVIRONMENT, ALL OF WHICH PROMOTE EXCELLENCE.**

## **AGE**

To participate on a high school team (grade 9-12) you must not have reached your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by the June 30<sup>th</sup> immediately preceding the school year. To participate on a junior high team (grades 7-9 or 9<sup>th</sup> only) you must not have reached your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday by the June 30<sup>th</sup> immediately preceding the school year.

## **AMATEUR STATUS**

To be eligible for an interscholastic sport, you must be an amateur in that sport. You will lose your amateur status in a sport for at least one year if:

1. You or your school or an organization which you represent, or your parent or guardian, receive money or property for or related to your athletic ability performance, participation or service.
2. You accept compensation for teaching, training or coaching a sport. You may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities, or for serving as a lifeguard at swimming areas.

You may receive awards only from your school, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media or a non-profit organization approved by your principal. Permissible awards are a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, jersey, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque or similar trophy.

## **INJURIES**

Any athlete who is treated by a physician for an injury or illness during or prior to a sport season is required to obtain a physician's release before they are permitted to participate in practices or contests. The release must be from a licensed medical physician who is the attending physician of record. A medical release from a chiropractor will not be accepted. All student-athletes must have completed a PIAA pre-participation physical (CIPPE) form prior to the start of their sport season. Physicals are good for one school calendar year from June 1 – May 31.

If a student is receiving school attendance/academic accommodations for a concussion, they cannot attend practices or contests until those accommodations have been removed. Prior to participation, all accommodations must be removed and the student returned to a normal class schedule including participation in physical education class. They also must have a full medical release to return. Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion must complete the return to play protocol with the TJHS Certified Athletic Trainers prior to being released in any capacity.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Athletes must travel to and from away contests in transportation provided by the school district. Athletes are not permitted to drive on their own or ride to/from away contests with a friend or their parents. Situations may occur where, through no attempt to circumvent this rule, an athlete must be driven by a parent. This is acceptable, provided the parent notifies the athletic office or the coach in writing prior to the event.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Students are responsible for all equipment issued including uniforms and practice clothing. They are expected to return all equipment/uniforms at the end of the season and will be required to pay replacement costs for any items that are not returned or are returned in unsatisfactory condition. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the school district practice and competitions. **Students are not to use athletic equipment or clothing for gym classes or for participation on teams outside of school. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to your coach, not the athletic office.**

Within one week after the close of a season the coach and/or equipment manager will conduct a uniform return. Failure to return equipment or uniforms will result in the following:

1. Notification to parent/guardian of what is owed.
2. Withholding of report card or awards until uniform/equipment return obligation is met.
3. Students will not be permitted to participate in subsequent sports seasons until all equipment or uniform debts from previous seasons are collected or reimbursement is made.

## **LETTER AWARDS**

Requirements for earning a varsity letter are established by each coach with the approval of the Athletic Department. Each Coach will determine more specific criteria for earning a letter. Letter awards are achievement awards, not participation awards and will be distributed as such.

## **SCHOOL/PRACTICE ATTENDANCE**

A student must be in school by 10:00 A.M. in order to participate in a contest or practice session. A student may not practice or play if he/she is absent from school the day of practice or contest unless approved by the Athletic Director or Principal. A student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of their absence. Frequent tardiness to school may result in cancellation of participation privileges. Students with early dismissals must return to school following their appointment to be eligible to participate in a contest or practice that day. If a student is absent from school on a Friday, they are not permitted to attend practice or contests over the weekend.

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has been in attendance for a total of 45 days following his/her 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence. If the 20<sup>th</sup> absence occurs in the final semester, the required 45 days of attendance may continue into the following school year before they are eligible. The exception is where there is a consecutive absence of 5 or more school days due to confining illness, injury or quarantine with a physician's excuse. Attendance at summer schools does not count toward the 45 days. (PIAA Rule).

Attendance at practices during the participation season is mandatory and under the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. Failure to comply with the attendance policies of the coach can result in dismissal from the team.

In the event a student-athlete is suspended from school, they are unable to attend, practice or play in contests throughout the duration of the suspension including the final day. School suspension is considered complete when the student returns to their normal class schedule. All class work must be kept current during suspensions. If the suspension occurs prior to a school break, the student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of the break.

## **DRESS CODE**

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, you are representing the community and Thomas Jefferson High School. The way you look and dress is a direct reflection on the district and your family. As such, you are expected to wear clothes that are clean and appropriate. Coaches have the right to set more specific standards than outlined above.

## **INITIATION/HAZING/BULLYING/BEHAVIOR**

Under no circumstances will initiations, hazing or bullying of any kind be tolerated. Any student involved in hazing, initiation or bullying of another student will be dismissed from the team and appropriately dealt with under the West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy. This will include all types of bullying including cyber bullying and social media bullying. Students will be held accountable for all social media posts and could face team discipline if warranted.

In the event that a student athlete becomes aware of any situation involving these types of activities, they must report it to their coach immediately.

Students are expected to show appropriate behavior at all times. Good sportsmanship is an expectation for all student athletes. All games/practices whether home or away are considered school events. As such, all district rules and regulations apply. The same shall apply on buses or other modes of transportation.

## **PERIOD OF PARTICIPATION**

A pupil shall not represent his/her school in interscholastic athletics if they have surpassed any of the following prior to this year.

1. Been in attendance more than 6 semesters beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Played six seasons beyond the sixth grade in any sport.
3. Played four seasons beyond the eighth grade in any sport
4. Completed the work of grade nine, ten, eleven and twelve inclusive.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

The athletic office will conduct a weekly grade check. In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics and cheerleading, a student must have passed or be passing at least four full credit subjects, or the equivalent. Back work may be made up providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the district. Student-athletes who attend Steel Center Vo-Tech must have passed or be passing two full credit classes at Thomas Jefferson High School and be passing their classes at Steel Center. In the event the student is not passing four credits, they are ineligible to practice or play in contests until the next grade check.

In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards above, the student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics or cheerleading for the first fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period.

At the end of the school year, the student's final credits in his/her subjects rather than his credits for the last grading period shall be used to determine his eligibility for the following year. Student who are ineligible to end the year are not permitted to begin sports in the subsequent season until they have attended school for 15 days and have become eligible.

The approved grading scale of the West Jefferson Hills School District will be used in determining academic eligibility. An "I" grade and/or an "F" grade will be considered not passing. The Athletic Director will inform the player and the coach if they are ineligible to participate.

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

The possession, use, furnishing or transmission of narcotics, stimulant drugs, alcoholic beverages, steroids or other unauthorized substances and the use of any tobacco products by student-athletes is strictly prohibited. The West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy will be applied where there is an infraction dealing with drugs, alcohol or tobacco use.

If a student athlete is cited by the police or other authorities for the use of drugs or alcohol, the coach has the authority to administer additional team discipline.

## **SUMMARY**

This handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of rules and regulations governing our interscholastic programs. This handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included. Each coach, however, has the right to make reasonable rules more stringent than those listed in this book. Any rules not addressed in this handbook will revert to the student handbook for clarification.

Please do not hesitate to contact your coach or Athletic Director for any questions or clarification of a rule regarding your participation in our interscholastic athletic programs.

The West Jefferson Hills School District hopes you enjoy your participation in the athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson High School. We are proud of our Jaguar teams and all those student-athletes representing our district. Please remember that what you do and how you act is a direct reflection on your family, school and community.



The Interscholastic Athletic Program at Thomas Jefferson High School is an integral part of the total school program, and is designed to help our students become better citizens.

While academics have always been the primary focus of our school system, we believe that participation in athletics provide many opportunities, training and experiences not available in the classroom.

Participation in athletics is a privilege and entirely voluntary. All students are encouraged to participate but no one is required to do so. Since participation is voluntary, any student who desires to participate must be prepared to follow all rules and regulations governing athletics. Those who do not comply will not be permitted to participate.

Thomas Jefferson High School is a member of the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). WPIAL and PIAA rules must be followed in all cases of eligibility, transfer, physical examinations, insurance coverage, starting dates, use of school equipment, etc. You and your parents are required to sign and submit the last page verifying that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the rules and regulations governing participation in the athletics program at Thomas Jefferson High School.

The following are certain rules and procedures as well as standards of conduct and athletic achievement with which one should be familiar. Many of these rules and regulations have been set by the WPIAL and PIAA. Failure to comply may cause you to lose your eligibility to participate. It is important that you be aware of the requirements. Please read them and share them with your parents.

This booklet contains an outline of the PIAA rules and regulations to participate. You can find the rules and regulations in their entirety at [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org).

## **PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION**

### **TOGETHER BUILDING BETTER PROGRAMS FOR THE STUDENTS OF WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT**

#### **PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP**

Both Parenting and Coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our programs, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

#### **COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH**

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all the players on the squad in regards to rules and regulations.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, I.E., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during practice or contests.
6. Discipline which results in the denial of your child to participate.

#### **COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS**

1. Concerns expressed directly to coach or assistant coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concern in regards to a coach's expectation for your child.

As your children become involved in their athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson High School, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. This is all part of growing as a young person and building character. It teaches them how to deal with adversity and persevere through it.

## **APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES**

1. Perceived mistreatment of your child.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

## **ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES**

1. Playing time.
2. Team Strategy
3. Play Calling
4. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between a coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

## **IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH, THE PROCEDURE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW:**

1. Call or email the coach to set up an appointment. It is expected that your child will attend the meeting with you.
2. You must always follow the proper chain of command. Assistant Coach, Head Coach, AD, Principal. Please do not contact the Superintendent or school board members in regards to athletic concerns.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

Since research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, these programs have been established. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided within this booklet makes both your child's and your experience with the Thomas Jefferson High School athletic program enjoyable and rewarding.

TO: WPIAL Member School

FROM: David G. McBain  
Chair WPIAL Sports Medicine Committee

RE: MRSA Issue

With the increasing notoriety and presence of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus or MRSA infection in our general population and now emerging more into the athletic area, the WPIAL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee wanted to put some general information into the hands of school Athletic Administrators.

There are two distinct types of MRSA HA-MRSA (“hospital acquired”) and CA-MRSA (“community acquired”). Hospital acquired occurs more frequently with patients who are more acutely ill and have weakened immune systems. Community acquired, which we are seeing an increase in, is finding itself in the general population of young children and athletes due in part to the close environments they may be subject to.

***Education is the key to combating this aggressive form of staph.*** The attached handouts deal directly with the history, identification and disposition of persons with MRSA. Listed immediately below is a summary of preventative measures school districts may wish to consider in being proactive in combating this bacterium.

1. Recommend that all athletes shower at the school immediately after practices, using clean towels; the towels should be washed afterwards in HOT water, and dried in high heat until completely dry. Eliminate canvas laundry containers and bags. Make sure all gear is allowed to thorough dry in between using—shoes, pads, helmets, etc. They cannot be left in bags or in piles on the floor.
2. Mount liquid soap dispenses in all showers. Bar soap should be allowed in the showers due to the chance of sharing.
3. Athletes should take all practice clothing home daily and football should take ALL gear home weekly, with instructions to wash and clean everything before returning. Clorox wipes are a great item to use.
4. Mount liquid hand sanitizer dispensers in the doorway to every locker room, the weight rooms and the Athletic Training room, and encourage their regular use by athletes, coaches and managers.
5. Every locker room, coach’s office, Athletic Training room and weight room should have disinfectant spray readily available for spraying off any/all surfaces on demand. (Make sure the spray is effective against MRSA)
6. All athletic department personnel should be instructed NOT to use the same towel for multiple athletes.
7. All suspicious lesions are to be made known to the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) and/or school nurse immediately and managed aggressively. Athletes are held out until cleared by then attending physician. Any suspicious lesions should be cultured.
8. Athletes are encouraged to get any and all abrasions covered before every practice. Athletes with active MRSA infections are required to keep covered at all times.

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR COACH**

I HAVE READ THE ATHLETE'S HANDBOOK AND WILL UPHOLD THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS. I UNDERSTAND THE PENALTIES THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ABUSING THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING A PART OF THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT AT THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL.

---

Student's Signature

---

Date

---

Parent's Signature

---

Date