



## Athletic Handbook

### Introduction

The RHAM High School Athletic Department encourages students to participate in a wide range of activities including interscholastic athletics. There are many sports programs offered at the high school level and it is anticipated that most students will find a sports program to meet their needs.

Our sports programs are designed to work with the educational philosophy and mission statement of the district. While our programs are designed to meet the needs of a large number of students we cannot always accommodate every student to due budget limitations, facility issues and the constraints of some sports programs.

Those students who are participants are making choices that will benefit them provided they are willing to be disciplined enough to train properly, exercise good judgment in their decision making and possess a desire to work in a team oriented environment.

**Athletic participation is a privilege and not a right.** As student-athletes at RHAM there is an expectation of behavior that is exemplary and that all student-athletes must remember they are role models and representatives of the school and our community.

Please look over the following information with care and understand the significant role athletics has played in the development of our students here. Begin to learn the history of our many programs and their accomplishments. Also remember that while we are proud of the multiple conference and state championships at RHAM, we do not embrace a “win at all costs” attitude. We value ethical behavior, sportsmanship, positive values and the development of the student-athlete. We also welcome your participation and look forward to your contributions.

Mark H. Logan  
Athletic Director  
RHAM High School

## Philosophy

### A. Athletics Philosophy- Regional 8 School District Board Policy 6145

Athletics comprise an integral part of the educational program at RHAM High School and RHAM Middle School. Athletics serve as a base for the development of a positive self-image for all participants, encourage individual and group excellence, foster dedication and commitment in working toward team goals, contribute to the participants' growth in physical fitness and skills, and foster mental alertness, emotional maturity and social interaction.

### B. Underlying Beliefs

1. Our athletics program should promote high standards of academic achievement, good citizenship and individual responsibility on the playing field, in the school and in the community. In so doing, the athletics program complements and supports the academic program.
2. Participation in our athletics program is a privilege which is afforded to those individuals who possess the attitude, cooperative spirit, and the desire to represent their school and community. **In addition, students must meet the academic, attendance, and conduct requirements of the school.**
3. Our athletic program should provide valuable lessons in many practical situations that are helpful later in life, including teamwork, sportsmanship, personal responsibility for success and failure, competition, commitment and hard work.
4. Striving to win is a critical aspect of any athletic program. Winning, however, should not supersede the well-being and development of the student-athlete.
5. On the sub-varsity level, an emphasis should be placed on skill development, knowledge and implementation of team and safety rules, team play, and team cohesiveness.
6. Trust is a dynamic relationship between the coach and the athlete, reflecting confident expectations that both parties strive for excellence.
7. The development of a work ethic and teamwork combined with individual responsibility and dependability produce a shared responsibility for a team's success.

C. The interscholastic athletic program is offered as part of the total educational program at Regional School District No. 8:

1. to provide a wide basis of participation in both team and individual sports in interscholastic competition in an atmosphere that safeguards the health, safety, and general welfare of all participants.
2. to create an atmosphere for athletic participation that is designed to:
  - a. foster the development of positive attitudes of pride, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior in coaches, students, participants, and spectators;
  - b. encourage the development of team spirit and enjoyment among team members and coaches;
  - c. support the teaching of techniques for each sport in a progressive sequence as appropriate to the age and academic level;
  - d. encourage participation in all available sports by providing sufficient opportunity for students to develop individual ability;
  - e. develop and maintain a good relationship between athletic teams and the student body, faculty, administration, and community;
  - f. provide student athletes with the awareness of potential opportunities for human development afforded them through competitive athletics, including physical fitness, self-discipline, loyalty, leadership, self-confidence, and an interest in life-long athletic endeavors;
  - g. develop among all schools positive working relationships that foster good sportsmanship by coaches, players, and parents.

#### D. Equal Opportunity

Regional School District No. 8 will take affirmative action to ensure that a balanced program for men and women is maintained at all times, that equal status shall be accorded all sports, and that equal attention shall be paid to participants in all sports.

#### E. Responsibility

The primary responsibility of student/athletes and teacher/coaches is to their academic studies and classrooms respectively. Administrative regulations will provide guidance to principles as they balance the requirements of the academic and athletic program.

#### F. Management

Since interscholastic athletics are a part of the educational program designed to meet the needs of the participants, all programs shall be organized and scheduled strictly for the benefit of the participating students whose health and safety shall be of primary consideration.

#### G. Support

Regional School District No. 8 will provide the highest quality interscholastic athletic program that available resources can accommodate.

Administrative regulations shall be followed in adding and deleting a sport or level. Admission may be charged for certain interscholastic athletic contests at the discretion of the Board of Education. June, 1997

### **Mission Statement**

We believe our role as educators at RHAM High School is to provide all students with the foundation upon which to develop academic integrity, intellectual vitality, emotional maturity, personal wellness, cultural respect, global awareness and personal character. It is our goal that all students will develop into life-long learners who possess the essential core knowledge and the critical, creative, analytical and reflective skills necessary to think, listen, collaborate and communicate effectively.

To achieve this, we are committed to working with the community to provide the curricular and co-curricular opportunities necessary to meet the academic, social, emotional, artistic, physical and vocational needs of our students. We are committed to providing instruction which will address differing ability levels, learning styles and interests, and which incorporates task appropriate tools. Additionally, we are committed to providing an intellectually, emotionally and physically safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

## **Eligibility**

### Eligibility for Participation in RHAM High School Co-curricular Sports Activities Regional 8 School District Board Policy 6145.1 HS

A high school student may participate in co-curricular sport activities if he/she has maintained a C- average with no F's for the marking period preceding the commencement of the activity. The student's grades will be checked at the close of each marking period to determine continued eligibility for the activity. Should a student be ineligible for participation in co-curricular activities at the beginning of the marking period, his/her grades will be checked mid-marking period. If, at that time, the student has a C- average with no F's, the student may join or reenter the co-curricular activity.

As a member of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), junior varsity and varsity athletes must meet both RHAM's (minimum) eligibility requirements and those of the CIAC. July, 1997

## **Athletic Programs**

**Varsity Athletics:** Varsity athletic programs afford opportunities to those athletes who exhibit the greatest skills. These athletes will compete against equally talented athletes from opposing schools. The skills of Varsity athletes will be refined to provide RHAM with the best win-loss record possible.

**Junior Varsity Athletics:** Junior Varsity athletic programs offer to those students who do not yet possess the skills required of Varsity athletes an opportunity to participate in a competitive setting. Junior Varsity athletes are in the process of gaining valuable knowledge, skill, and experience required for Varsity competition. Junior Varsity athletes may, on occasion, participate in Varsity contests. Decisions of this nature are based on the evaluation of the athletes' abilities, by the coaching staff, and are not absolute.

**Freshmen Athletics:** Freshmen athletic programs are designed to provide ninth-grade students with the opportunity to participate in an instructional yet competitive setting. These programs will teach basic skills of the sport and afford athletes an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, skill development, and experience necessary for Junior Varsity competition. Not all RHAM High School sports offer a Freshmen level.

## **Athletic Offerings**

RHAM High School is a member of the Central Connecticut Conference and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference and is responsible for the rules imposed by its membership.

### **Fall Season CIAC Sports Offered**

Football- Boys Varsity, Junior Varsity and Freshman\*

Cross Country- Boys and Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Soccer- Boys and Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Volleyball- Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

### **Winter Season CIAC Sports Offered**

Basketball- Boys and Girls; Varsity, Junior Varsity and Freshman\*

Indoor Track- Boys and Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Wrestling- Boys; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Ice Hockey- Boys (co-op with Rockville, Coventry & Bolton) Varsity

Swimming- Boys (co-op with Windham & Coventry) Varsity

Gymnastics- Girls; Varsity

### **Spring Season CIAC Sports Offered**

Track and Field- Boys and Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Tennis- Boys and Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Softball- Girls; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Baseball- Boys; Varsity, Junior Varsity and Freshman\*

Golf- Boys; Varsity and Junior Varsity

Lacrosse- Boys; Varsity and Junior Varsity; Girls Varsity/Junior Varsity

### **\*Self funded**

## **Other Offerings**

Cheerleading and Dance Team are activities under the supervision of the Athletic Director. Cheerleading takes place in the Fall and Winter seasons. Dance Team is a Winter Season activity.

## **Athletic Department Policies**

### *Participation*

CIAC rules prohibit athletes from participating in more than one sport per athletic season. After tryouts have been held and member teams have been selected any athlete listed on a team's eligibility list cannot transfer their membership to another sport.

Tryout periods for teams vary by season and by sport. Some sports have a no-cut policy while other sports are limited in the number of athletes they can keep at some levels of competition. Every effort will be made to advertise tryout periods for athletes. It is the responsibility of the athlete to know when and where tryouts will take place. If there are questions they should contact the Athletic Director or the coach of that sport to secure this information. No athlete can tryout or participate in a sport until they have turned in their Permission Form and the Physical/Medical Information form. These forms are available on the RHAM High School website (<http://www.rhamhs.reg8.k12.ct.us>) under the Sports heading.

All athletes are reminded of the policies outlined in the RHAM High School Student Handbook. In addition to the eligibility rules already outlined athletes should review the following policies as well:

- **General Attendance Policy**

All athletes are expected to attend all of their classes and to be on time for their classes. Athletes cannot use their participation in sports as an excuse to miss class or time in class unless team members have been cleared to do so by the administration. Missed time as a result of misrepresenting the facts will result in an unauthorized tardy or absence and possible dismissal or suspension from the team. Any athlete serving a suspension from school may not participate in any practice and/or competition. Reinstatement begins the day following the last day of suspension.

- **Participation Fee Policy for Co-Curricular Activities and Sports Activities**

All athletes at RHAM High School are required to pay their participation fee by the date indicated by the Athletic Director for each season. Questions about payment or hardship inquiries can be made to the principal or athletic director.

- **CIAC Athletic Rules**

All CIAC rules and requirements can be found on their website [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org) under the CIAC (Athletic Division) heading. All athletes should review these and ask questions of their coach or of the Athletic Director if there are issues they have. The RHAM Athletic Department discourages in season athletes from participating in outside sports. By CIAC rules **no athlete can play for a school team and an outside team in the same sport in the same season.** The RHAM Athletic Department endorses the CIAC policy on sports specialization and encourages its student athletes to experience more than one sport. NCAA eligibility information is in the CIAC Handbook at [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org).

- **Attendance Policy for Participation in Athletics**

In addition to being in school for a minimum of four hours (unless special arrangements have been made with the administration) **all athletes are expected to be at and on time to every practice and game.** If an athlete must miss a practice or game, or knows they will be late, they must make every effort to speak to the coach **prior** to being absent or late. All athletes should be aware that the Central Connecticut Conference requires coaches to make up cancelled contests on the next available playing date including Saturdays (there are some rare cases of using Sundays in football or CIAC playoffs). At no time can an athlete leave practice or a contest early without approval from a coach. Failure to follow these provisions may result in possible dismissal or suspension from a team.

- **Substance Abuse Regulations for Student Athletes**

Supplemental to the CIAC required policies outlined in the student handbook there are other policy positions that RHAM High School endorses. All athletes, especially upperclassman, need to be role models in promoting a healthy lifestyle. The use of supplements by athletes should only occur when done in conjunction with qualified medical professionals.

#### **CIAC POSITION ON FOOD SUPPLEMENTS INCLUDING CREATINE**

The CIAC fully endorses the policies of the National Federation of State High School Associations regarding the use of food supplements by athletes. School personnel and coaches will not dispense any drug, medication, or food supplement except as in accordance with Connecticut state law, district policy, and as prescribed by a student's physician, dentist, physician assistant or advanced practice RN. The order is to be on record in the school health office listing dose, time, and length of order, side effects and emergency contact. There will also be a signed parental consent on file. The use of any drug, medication or food supplement in a way not described by the manufacturer should not be authorized or encouraged by school personnel and coaches. Even natural substances in unnatural amounts may have short-term or long-term negative health effects.



- **Dress Code**

In addition to the requirements in the student handbook, athletes may be asked to ‘dress’ for games. Generally speaking this means students should be clean, neat and appropriately attired as requested by a coach. Attire that is disruptive to the educational process or that is deemed inappropriate will not be allowed.

- **Travel**

Athletes are expected to ride to and from athletic contests with their team and their coaches on transportation arranged by the athletic department. At no time can an athlete transport themselves to an away contest. Athletes can only be transported to and from contests by an authorized and properly licensed carrier. **An athlete can ride with their parents/legal guardians if the arrangements have been made prior to the contest and approved by the coach and/or athletic director/principal.** Athletes cannot ride with another parent or guardian unless they are an authorized and properly licensed carrier and have made prior arrangements 48 hours before a scheduled contest. If an athlete misses a bus they are not permitted to participate unless extenuating circumstances allow for their participation after a review by the athletic director and/or principal.

- **Fighting**

In addition to the procedures outline in the student handbook athletes are reminded that they are not to engage in a fight before, during or after any athletic contest. If you participate at any level of athletics and join in a fight you will be subject to school based disciplinary procedures as well as those prescribed by the CIAC. Suspension from a team is an automatic consequence and dismissal from a team is possible.

### **Team Captains**

Being a captain is an honor bestowed by coaches to athletes that have demonstrated a commitment to our code of conduct and sound leadership skills. **As a team leader there are expectations of you that are greater than other athletes.** It is important to recognize that with this privilege there are responsibilities and expectations. A coach in consultation with the athletic director/principal can take away this recognition.

As a team captain **at no time** can you call for or conduct “Captain’s Practices”. As a CIAC member school RHAM High School sees this as a clear violation of CIAC Rule II.D.



**RHAM**

## **Parent/Coach Communication**

Athletics can be a nurturing and positive experience for our students. Indeed, the philosophy of athletics at RHAM declares that athletics “comprise an integral part of the educational program at RHAM.” It is with this core belief that RHAM High School encourages the best possible experience for our student-athletes during their tenure here. The involvement of parents in the total educational experience is necessary to achieve this end.

### **Parent/Coach Relationship**

Being a parent is a difficult and challenging as is coaching young men and women at the high school level. When coaches and parents work and communicate with each other the athletes will benefit. As parents with children in athletics you have a right to understand the expectations of any program and the requirements a coach has for the team. **With this in mind each coach will communicate the following information to all parents in addition to their email address and phone number:**

- Philosophy of the coach and of the program
- Expectations the coach has of the athletes involved in the program
- Locations and times of practices and contests
- Team rules and requirements other than those addressed by the athletic department
- Disciplinary actions that may result in dismissal or suspension other than those addressed by the athletic department

### **Coaches should expect the following communications from parents:**

- Notification of schedule conflicts before the start of the season or as soon as possible
- Specific concerns about a coaching philosophy and/or expectation
- Treatment of the athlete mentally and physically
- Ways for an athlete to improve
- Concerns about behavior of the athlete

More often than not most of our athletes, parents and coaches have positive experiences. There are those times when an athlete and a coach need to talk to resolve issue that may come up. The coach-athlete communication is encouraged to clear up misunderstandings and confusions.

# Parent/Coach Communication

Coaches as professionals make multiple decisions based on the needs of the program, their athletic philosophy as well as other factors. Consequently there may be times when these decisions are difficult to accept by the athlete especially when it comes to issues like playing time. Again, many of these issues can be resolved with coach-athlete communications.

There are situations that may require a conference between a coach and a parent. It is important that each party understand the other's role. When these conferences occur the following procedures should be followed to promote a resolution of the concern:

- Afford the athlete and the coach the opportunity to discuss the issue first if they have not done so already.
- If the athlete-coach meeting did not resolve the issue then call or email the coach to set up a meeting. Keep a record of the date and time of the meeting as well as any notes and/or questions.
- If efforts to communicate with the coach are unsuccessful call the Athletic Director to contact the coach and a meeting will be set up for you.
- Please do not confront a coach before, during or after a contest or a practice. These can be emotional times and rarely result in a resolution of a conflict.
- If the meeting with the coach did not satisfactorily resolve the issue than call or email the Athletic Director to set up an appointment to discuss the situation. Please provide the Athletic Director with notes and details of your meeting and the specific concerns you may have.
- If there is no satisfactory resolution to the issue than call and set up an appointment with the building Principal to discuss the situation. The Athletic Director will forward notes and concerns to the Principal.
- If there is no satisfactory resolution to the issue then call and set up an appointment with the Superintendent of Schools. The Athletic Director and Principal will forward notes and concerns.

## Discretionary Items of a Coach and Their Team

- Playing time, positioning, and event entry.
- Team strategies, game tactics, play calling.
- Any discussion about other student athletes.

## **Athlete Code of Conduct**

Participation at any level of athletics is a privilege at RHAM High School. As representatives of the school there are standards of conduct that are expected of all our athletes. By participating in RHAM athletics you are agreeing to a higher standard of behavior. This includes but it is not limited to the following:

1. Athletes will be role models for other RHAM students and will recognize this responsibility as players, students and members of the community.
2. When at home contests or at other venues athletes will conduct themselves in an exemplary manner.
3. Unsportsmanlike or unacceptable conduct as determined by CIAC officials and/or the school administration will result in disciplinary action. This may include stripping an athlete of their captaincy, dismissal from the team, or an indefinite suspension from the team.