

*INDPENDENCE LOCAL SCHOOLS*

ATHLETE

&

PARENT

HANDBOOK

**Fall**

Cheerleading

Cross Country (B/G)

Football

Golf (B/G)

Soccer (B/G)

Volleyball

**Winter**

Basketball

Cheerleading

Swimming (B/G)

Wrestling

**Spring**

Baseball

Softball

Track and Field (B/G)

## Athletes

### (SPORTSMANSHIP)

The Independence Local School Districts' interscholastic sports program has an outstanding tradition and reputation. Not only has there been a long history of success on a competitive level; they have also developed a positive reputation regarding sportsmanship and character. Student-athletes at the Middle School and High School are expected to display the highest degree of sportsmanship both on and off the athletic field. We expect our coaches, players, students, parents, alumni and community to represent the Independence interscholastic sports programs with class and dignity at all times. The list below are specific responsibilities of our athletes:

1. Treat your opponents with respect.
2. Play hard, play fair and always play within the rules.
3. Respect the rights of the students from the opposing school.
4. Respect the decisions of the officials.
5. Support the cheerleaders.
6. Respect the authority and decisions of the coach.
7. Display self-control at all times and always set a positive example for others to follow.
8. Win and lose with dignity. Always represent the Independence Athletic Department with class.

### (ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY)

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) requires those students in grades 9-12 must pass a minimum of **five one-credit courses, or the equivalent**, in the immediately preceding grading period. In addition, the Independence Local School District requires that a student-athlete must have a minimum 1.5 grade point average (GPA) and no more than one F in the immediately preceding grading period.

## (CO-CURRICULAR GUIDELINES)

### 1. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The use and / or possession of drugs (narcotics, hallucinogenics, intoxicants, counterfeits, look-alikes, designers), anabolic steroids, controlled substances and alcohol by any Independence athlete or any school organization member is absolutely forbidden. If any student is found in violation of this rule by any Independence administrator, athletic coach or organization advisor or by any law enforcement agency, in or out of season, on or off campus, the infraction will result in the following disciplinary actions.

#### FIRST OFFENSE (Option One)

If presently involved in a sport or other co-curricular activity, the student will be suspended for one full calendar year from the date of violation. If the student agrees to active participation in the *Insight Program* the term of denial shall be thirty percent of the regular season competitions scheduled in any sport. For co-curricular organizations, the term of denial shall be thirty percent of the duration of the yearly activities of that organization. Completion of the Insight Program is mandatory.

A full season is described as including all regular season contests scheduled for that specific sport. Should the offense occur during the season, denial to participate could be carried over into the next sport in which the athlete participates if the thirty percent requirement is not met. An offense which would occur prior to the beginning of an athletic season would require the athlete to miss thirty percent of the next sport in which they participate. An athlete will not be allowed to go out for a sport once the pre-season activities have commenced.

Athletes participating in more than one sport during a season (ex. Cross Country & Soccer) will be required to miss thirty percent of each sport. Active participation in each individual sport would occur once the thirty percent requirement has been met for that particular sport.

Students participating in co-curricular organizations would be required to meet the thirty percent criteria before they shall be permitted to resume active participation in the club or organization.

### FIRST OFFENSE (Option Two)

Students will have the option of agreeing to participate in a chemical assessment to be administered by a district-approved agency. The cost of the assessment will be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Results and recommendations from the assessment will be shared with school officials. Once assessment information has been discussed, the student will be reinstated in their co-curricular program.

If some aspects of the recommendations are discontinued by the student prior to termination by the facility, athletic or organization eligibility will be denied for the 30%.

### SECOND OFFENSE

A second offense during the student's middle or high school career could result in suspension from all athletic programs or organization activities for one full calendar year from the date of the second offense. The Review Committee will review each individual case to determine whether or not active participation or denial will be recommended.

The Review Committee has outlined the following steps which could result in the student's ability to resume active athletic or organization participation:

- 1) The student must undergo a chemical assessment and will agree to follow recommendations, which are a direct result of the evaluation.
- 2) All information pertaining to the student's chemical use will be shared directly between the assessment facility and school officials.
- 3) If any aspect of the recommendations are discontinued by the student prior to termination by the facility, athletic/organization eligibility will be denied not only for one full calendar year but also throughout the student's entire senior year.
- 4) If any more chemical-related offenses occur, the student will automatically forfeit athletic/organization participation through the end of his/her senior year.
- 5) The student and his/her parents or guardians will be required to sign a contract which will outline all the information that has been previously presented.

*If the athlete follows all the above mentioned recommendations he/she will be eligible to participate in the next sport season. He/she will be required to sit out the remainder of the current sport in which they are participating. If the infraction occurs between seasons the athlete will not be able to participate in the upcoming sport season but will be eligible for the following sport season.*

*If the student follows all the above mentioned recommendations he/she will be eligible to participate in the group or organization during the next semester.*

### SELF-REFERRAL BY STUDENTS

Students may take advantage of a self-referral policy to gain information, guidance, counseling and/or assessment in regard to his/her use of alcohol and/or drugs. First time voluntary referrals **DO NOT** carry any punitive consequences.

1. Students are allowed one (1) voluntary referral during their high school involvement in athletics or clubs/organizations.
2. Self-referrals can be made by the student or his/her parents or guardians.
3. Referrals must be made to a coach, advisor, athletic director, teacher, administrator, guidance counselor or Substance Abuse/Wellness Coordinator.
4. Students will complete the schools' Insight Program or will be referred to an approved assessment facility.
5. Self-referrals cannot be used by students as a means to avoid consequences once a rule of the Independence Schools athletic and co-curricular alcohol and drug policy has been violated.

## 2. TOBACCO AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The use and / or possession of tobacco in any form (cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco, etc.) at any time is absolutely forbidden. If the student is found in violation of this rule by any Independence administrator, athletic coach or organization advisor, in or out of season, on or off campus, the infraction will result in the following disciplinary actions.

### FIRST OFFENSE

The first time offender shall be denied participation in the athletic program for one full season while the student participating in other co-curricular programs shall miss participation in organizations or clubs for sixty school days. The term of denial may be reduced to twenty percent of the scheduled regular season competitions or by thirty school days for club or organization participation if the student agrees to active participation in the *Tobacco Awareness Program*. Completion of the program is mandatory.

### SUBSEQUENT TOBACCO OFFENSES

Each subsequent violation of the tobacco policy will result in denial to participate in the athletic program for one season and for students involved with organization activities a two-month suspension will be applied.

## 3. DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

1. The athlete must participate in all practice sessions and will strictly adhere to the guidelines established by the principal, athletic director and coach.
2. The athlete must attend all athletic contests but will not be allowed to dress. Each coach will have the discretion to decide where the athlete will sit/stand during the athletic contest.
3. Students must complete the Insight and Tobacco Programs before the end of the school year. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the student being ineligible for further participation in athletics and other co-curricular activities.
4. The principal or athletic director will submit immediate written notification to the parent/guardian and athlete regarding the disciplinary action.
5. The athlete must be transported by school authorized transportation to and from the contest.

6. The athlete may receive post-season team recognition (Ex. Varsity Letter, JV Certificate, Participation Certificate) if they have met the criteria established by the coaching staff of each specific sports program.
7. Situations not contained in this policy will be reviewed by the administration, athletic department and club/organization advisors with final decisions being made by the building principal.

### (ATTENDANCE)

Students who participate in after school or evening co-curricular activities must be in attendance for a minimum of one-half of the school day of the event. One half of the school day would be 1½ :00 p.m. Special circumstances may arise (Example: family funeral) in which the Principal or Athletic Administrator may permit the student to participate. Students who have received an in or out of school suspension will not be permitted to attend the co-curricular activity.

### (TRANSPORATION)

All participating school personnel (coaches, players, cheerleaders, statisticians, managers, etc.) must be transported by school authorized transportation to and from the contest. Parents and/or legal guardians may make a written request of the coach to release the student to their custody due to emergency exceptions. The coach may deny the request due to team considerations. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to drive athletes to and from contests even with parental permission.

### (PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION)

The relationship between coaches and parents must be open and honest because each is directly involved with the student-athlete. This relationship is an integral part of the athletic department philosophy to provide opportunities for student-athletes to participate and develop positive character traits. The following standards should characterize this relationship:

1. Coaches will have a parent meeting at the beginning of the season to explain rules, procedures, schedules, and other information that is vital to their program. If parents cannot attend the meeting, they should make alternate arrangements to talk with the coach.

2. Coaches will not be expected to meet with parents during a practice, before or after a game or other times when the coach has the responsibility of care of his/her athletes. At the appropriate time, coaches will discuss the following issues:

- ~ skill level and development
- ~ attitude / behavior
- ~ academic progress
- ~ mental and physical treatment

Coaches will not discuss the following issues:

- ~ playing time
- ~ team strategy
- ~ play calling
- ~ other athletes

3. Coaches will expect direct communication from parents in order to create the best possible environment for the student-athlete. These expectations are as follows:

- ~ Communicate concerns/questions directly to the coach.
- ~ Notification of schedule conflicts well in advance.
- ~ Support of the program by assisting your child with such things as:
  - practice attendance
  - study habits/academic performance
  - personal issues

#### Procedure to communicate with a Coach

- a. Call for an appointment with the coach.
- b. If contact cannot be made, call the Athletic Administrator to set up a meeting.

#### Procedure if meeting with a Coach did not provide Resolution

- a. Call for an appointment with the Athletic Administrator to discuss the situation.
- b. Based on information obtained at this meeting the necessary decisions can be made to resolve the situation.



## (MULTIPLE ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION)

The Independence Local School Districts' philosophy is to provide a vast array of activities to all of our student-athletes. Participation in multiple activities has become the norm and it is not uncommon for student-athletes to be involved with more than one co-curricular activity at a time.

When conflicts between co-curricular activities occur, the student-athlete is expected to notify the coaches, advisors or directors of the impending conflict well in advance. This will provide the staff adequate time to develop a plan of action that will be in the best interest of all parties concerned. The staff should take into consideration the following prioritization of activities:

1. State level activity
2. Regional level activity
3. District level activity
4. CVC conference level activity
5. Building level activity
6. Practice, rehearsal, etc.

When conflicts cannot be cooperatively resolved between the staff members, the building principal, in consultation with the staff, will have the final say in resolving the conflict.

### Shared Athlete Guidelines

Student-athletes at Independence High School are allowed to participate in more than one sport during the same season. While such participation is not necessarily encouraged or recommended, the athletic department will make every attempt to work together so the best interests of the student-athlete and sports team(s) are maintained. The guidelines for multiple "same season" participation are as follows:

1. One sport will be chosen as primary and one as secondary.
2. A contract will be developed between coaching staffs and the student-athlete.
3. The student-athlete follows the rules of each sports team.
4. The student-athlete cannot change primary sports during the season without forfeiting participation in both sports, unless agreed upon by both coaches.
5. The student-athlete will declare a primary sport.

## (GENERAL ATHLETE GUIDELINES)

1. Each student-athlete must have a completed Physical Examination form on file with the School Nurse. The student, parent and physician must sign the form. Participation in any sport activity (practice, scrimmage, and scheduled contest) will not be allowed until the physical exam form has been filed.
2. Each student-athlete must have a signed Co-Curricular Guidelines form filed in the main office prior to participating in any sport activity. The student-athlete and his/her parents must sign the form indicating that they are in agreement and will comply with the regulations.
3. Student-athletes may be denied participation in a sports program based on academic ineligibility and/or violation of team rules. A conference will be scheduled between the coach and the student-athlete and his/her parent(s) to discuss the denial of participation. An appeal can be made to the principal regarding the coach's decision.
4. All student-athletes will have the opportunity to purchase school insurance. Parents not interested in participating in this program will be required to sign an insurance waiver that will be made available through the main office.
5. Any student athlete who joins a team once the first sanctioned contest as been played, will not be allowed to compete until they have practiced the same amount of time that they missed. (Ex. Football player misses 15 practices – Will practice 15 days before competing)
6. Parents/Athletes will need to inform their IMS/IHS coach prior to the start of the season that they plan to participate on a non-interscholastic team (AAU, JO, Travel, etc.).
7. Parents/Athletes will need to provide a schedule/calendar to their IMS/IHS coach outlining the possible dates may conflict with the team schedule prior to the start of the interscholastic season.
8. Coaches will utilize the "Three Strike" rule regarding unexcused absences caused by participation in non-interscholastic programs such as travel, JO, AAU etc. Coaches will be given the discretion to determine what is excused/unexcused and to also work with the student-athlete in developing a practical and workable schedule. Here are the procedures:
  - a. Miss game/practice: Sit (1) game
  - b. Miss 2<sup>nd</sup> game/practice Sit (2) games
  - c. Miss 3<sup>rd</sup> game/practice Possible dismissal from team

9. Pay to Participate Fee

The student athletes of Independence Middle School and Independence High School will be required to pay a \$65.00 fee to participate on an athletic team each season. The following guidelines will be followed:

~\$105.00 maximum fee per athlete for the school year

~\$165.00 maximum fee per family for the school year

The \$65.00 participation fee must be collected no later than one week from the first interscholastic contest. No athlete will be allowed to practice, scrimmage and/or compete in a sanctioned contest until the participation fee has been paid.