

Dear Parents and Student-Athletes:

The following information is being made available for you so that you are aware of the Pennfield School's and the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Athletic Policies.

Please take time to read the policies and make sure your son/daughter understands his/her part in our athletic program. As representative of the Pennfield School District and community, the student-athlete will be held to exacting standards outlined in this handbook. Participating in interscholastic athletics is a **privilege**, not a right, and this privilege is conditioned upon the student-athlete's willingness and ability to comply with the rules contained within the Athletic Handbook.

We offer a well-rounded athletic program, and you, the parents and student-athlete are an integral part of it.

Respectfully,

Brett Steele, CAA
Athletic Director
Pennfield Schools
(269) 961-9777

POTENTIAL DANGERS IN ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION: Parents/Guardians and student-athletes should fully understand and appreciate the risk of serious personal injury associated with participation in the interscholastic athletic program provided by the Pennfield Schools. Participation in school athletics involves flying objects, swift movement of bodies, which many times are airborne, and unavoidable collisions are certain.

Athletic activities are hazardous, and taking part in such activities is calculated risk-taking on the part of the student-athlete and parents/guardians. It is also understandable that to many young adults, the potential benefits exceed the potential hazards. The very element of a calculated risk makes the participation a stimulating adventure and satisfies the student-athlete's desire for competition, strenuous effort, and creative activity. Reducing injuries to a minimum without subtracting from this adventure is a continuous goal of our coaching and administrative staff.

A student participant and his/her parent or guardian must sign the "Pennfield Schools Training Rules and Statement of Understanding Form", which acknowledges that the student-athlete and his/her parent or guardian understands and agrees to abide by the rules as set forth in the Athletic Handbook. **This form must be signed and returned to the athletic office before he/she will be able to participate in anyway.**

HIGH SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY RULES

In order to participate in interscholastic athletics at the Senior High School level, all student-athletes must comply with the following eligibility rules:

1. Pennfield/MHSAA eligibility rules will be in effect for the previous academic semester.
 - A. A student must have passed 5 of 6 classes during the previous semester or card-marking period, in order to participate in athletics the following card-marking period (MHSAA requires 66% passing). We will look at semester grades when they are available and card-marking grades after the first and third card-marking periods. See MHSAA handbook sec.7c on credit make-up.**
 - B. No student can compete in interscholastic athletics who has been enrolled in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, for more than eight semesters. The seventh and eighth semesters must be consecutive.
 - C. Any student wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics is required to have a current school year physical examination, dated after April 15th of the previous spring.
 - D. A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under nineteen (19) years of age except that a student whose nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs on or after September 1st of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year
2. Pennfield/MHSAA eligibility rules will be in effect for the card-marking period (1st and 3rd card marking periods of the academic year).
 - A. A student must have passed 5 of 6 classes during the 1st and 3rd academic card marking, in order to participate in the remainder of the current semester (MHSAA requires 66% passing). If a student fails multiple classes during the 1st or 3rd card marking period they will not be eligible to compete until the next academic grading period (semester) is complete.
 - B. Final semester grades will take precedence over card-marking grades when they are available after any grading period. For example, the second card marking grade and the fourth card marking grade will not be a factor in determining a student's academic eligibility because at both of these times of the year, final semester grades will be earned.

3. Pennfield “current” eligibility standards are as follows:
 - A. A full time student must be **passing 5 out of 6 classes** on the Monday of the week of competition in order to participate in athletic practices or contests that week.

** A student on reduced schedule must be passing all classes. **A student must be taking at least 5 classes that count for High School credit at Pennfield in order to participate in athletics.**
 - B. The athletic department will distribute to the coaches on Monday a list of those students who are ineligible to participate in athletic practices and contest(s) for that week (Monday through Sunday) due to academic reasons (failing multiple classes). It is imperative that all student-athletes realize their academics should be their top priority and that any interscholastic athletic involvement is secondary to their academic achievement.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the MHSAA/PHS has waived the minimum academic requirements for eligibility for the beginning of the first card marking period of the 2020-2021 academic year. We will continue weekly grade checks after the third week of classes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY RULES

In order to participate in interscholastic athletics at the Middle School level, all athletes must comply with the following eligibility rules.

1. Pennfield / MHSAA eligibility rules will be in effect for the previous semester.
 - A. **A student must have passed 6 of 7 classes during the previous semester or card-marking period, in order to participate in the following card-marking period (MHSAA requires 66% passing). We will look at semester grades when they are available and card-marking grades after the first and third card-marking periods. See MHSAA handbook sec.7 c on credit make-up.**
 - B. Any student wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics is required to have a current school year physical examination, dated after April 15th of the previous spring.
 - C. A seventh (7th) or eighth (8th) grade student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) years of age respectively except that a student who reaches that birthday on or after September 1st of a current school year is eligible for interscholastic athletic contests for the balance of that school year.

2. Pennfield/MHSAA eligibility rules will be in effect for the card marking period (1st and 3rd card marking periods of the academic year.)
 - A. A student must have passed 6 of 7 classes during the 1st and 3rd academic marking period, in order to participate in the remainder of the current semester (MHSAA requires 66% passing). If a student fails multiple classes during the 1st or 3rd card marking period they will not be eligible to compete until the next academic grading period (semester) is complete.
 - B. Final semester grades will take precedence over card marking grades when they are available after that grading period. For example, the second card marking grade and the fourth card marking grade will not be a factor in determining a student's academic eligibility because at both of these times of the year, final semester grades will be earned.
3. Pennfield Middle School "current" eligibility standards are as follows:
 - A. A student must be **passing 6 out of 7 classes** on the Monday of the week of competition in order to participate in athletic practices or contests that week.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the MHSAA/PMS has waived the minimum academic requirements for eligibility for the beginning of the first card marking period of the 2020-2021 academic year. We will continue weekly grade checks after the third week of classes.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

The following rules apply to students who participate in interscholastic athletics for Pennfield Schools. Participants include student-athletes and managers.

COMMITMENT: A student must realize that the athletic training rules are in effect for a student in the middle school once they join their first sport in the middle school and in the high school once they join their first sport in the high school. These rules apply twelve months a year and are not limited to the student-athlete's behavior at school-sponsored activities or on school property. A student-athlete who violates the athletic training rules will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the penalty provisions.

TEAM RULES AND REGULATIONS: Each coach may have his/her own set of rules specific to their team, which has been approved by the Athletic Director and will be enforced by the coaches and administration.

JOINING/DROPPING A SPORT: Students wishing to be a member of an athletic team must make every effort to begin on the first official day of tryouts/practice for that particular sport, if they expect an opportunity to make the team. If a student does not make the cut in one sport he/she may try out for another sport during that same season. An athlete who has participated for more than two weeks or to the final cut and chooses to quit will not be able to participate in another sport or extracurricular athletic activity during that sport season. (Season is defined as: the first day of practice until the final post season competition. Fall, winter, and spring.)

SPORTS PARTICIPATION: Academics are the most important part of the school day for a student. Being a member of an athletic team is very demanding and time consuming; therefore it is our belief at Pennfield that most students should participate on only one athletic team during any sports season. There are students who are talented enough both academically and athletically who could do more than one sport during the same season. Starting in the 2008 fall season it has been allowed on a limited basis, students to participate in two sports in the same season. To do so the student must apply through the athletic office **prior** to the start of that sport season.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: No athlete shall participate in any phase of the athletic program that does not have on file in the athletic director's office a physical examination for the current school year. This physical must be signed by a physician, indicating that the student has passed a physical examination and is able to compete in athletic practices and contests. For the physical to be valid, the physical examination must be given after **April 15** of the previous school year. As a further condition of participation, an unemancipated minor's parent or guardian must also consent to such participation. In the cases of serious injury or extended illness, school officials reserve the right to require an athlete to be re-examined by a physician before being allowed to participate in interscholastic athletics.

******Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the MHSAA has waived the need for a new physical exam for student-athletes in grades 7-12, who had an athletic physical on file last school year. These individuals, however, must complete the MHSAA Health Questionnaire. If no new health issues have occurred since the last physical exam on file, this will meet the MHSAA requirement for the 2020-2021 academic year.***

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT: School equipment issued to a student- athlete during the season is their responsibility. They are expected to keep it clean and in good condition. Loss or damage of any equipment is the financial responsibility of the student-athlete. The student-athlete will receive credit for items returned only if they return those items that were issued to them. Athletic equipment must only be worn for its intended purpose. The use of equipment without permission of the school authority, while not participating in an athletic contest or practice, is prohibited.

A student-athlete **WILL NOT** be issued equipment for the next sport season until all equipment is returned, or financial reimbursement has been made for lost or damaged equipment from a previous sport. ***The only uniforms to be worn by teams members are those items purchase by the school or given prior approval by the Athletic Director.***

TRANSPORTATION POLICY: Parents at an away event may choose to transport their own children home. ***However only a student's parent can transport their own children, no other student will be allowed to ride home with another individual who is not their own parent when school transportation is provided.*** The coach may allow this request with a signed statement from his or her parent/guardian(s) at the event which includes the date, time, and the names of their children transported by parent/guardian(s). This policy was put into place by a Transportation Committee in 2015 made up of community members including parents, coaches, administrators, and board members.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE: The coach has the right to request a change in dress or grooming.

PRACTICE/GAME ATTENDANCE: A student-athlete has a responsibility to be at all scheduled practices and games. If they must miss they should inform their coach in advance. A student- athlete missing a practice/game without a valid reason may lose the privilege to participate, as determined by the coach in charge of that sport.

WORKING ATHLETE: Working athletes like other student-athletes must maintain academic eligibility, comply with all training rules, and not allow work to interfere with practices or games. Learn to put the team's welfare first.

LOCKER ROOM PROCEDURES: It is recommended that all student-athletes shower after practices and games. Roughhousing and throwing towels or other objects is not allowed in the locker room. No one except coaches and student-athletes in the current sport are allowed in the locker room facility. Student-athletes must have their coach's permission and be supervised in order to use the training room. NO GLASS containers are allowed in the locker room area. NO CLEATS are to be worn in the locker room or school building. ***It is of growing concern with the use of cell phones in the building especially in the locker rooms. Therefore all cell phones are to be used outside the locker room. While in the locker room they are to be turned off and locked up. Violations of this policy will be enforced as outlined in the student handbook.***

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

While social media outlets can be an enjoyable and effective way to communicate with others it can also be very disruptive to the educational setting if used improperly. Interscholastic athletics are educational based and should be viewed as such by all students, parents, and community members. Students are encouraged to use social media only in ways that can be productive and positive in nature. Any inappropriate use of social media outlets or platforms may result in consequences which could result in disciplinary actions including removal from athletic participation. Behaviors that will not be condoned include but are not limited to any messages that include profane, lewd, sexually explicit, indecent, derogatory language, or inappropriate photos of any kind. Any social media messages that are intended to do harm or bring embarrassment to another group or individual will be deemed as punishable by those same consequences mentioned above.

ATHLETIC INSURANCE: Our insurance program for interscholastic sports is financed by the Board of Education and is based on rates proportionate to our claim experience. Payment of claims will be made after any family or employer group insurance has contributed its maximum. The program is supplemental coverage for amounts in excess of what any family or group insurance fails to pay. This insurance only covers injuries sustained by participants in the school district's interscholastic athletic program. This insurance does not cover injuries sustained by students in physical education classes or intramural activities. School insurance covering physical education and intramurals may be obtained through the school in August.

DUAL SPORTS: The following guidelines are in place for any student-athlete who may be considering playing two sports during the same sports season.

1. The student-athlete and parents must set up an appointment with the athletic director to discuss this process in advance.
2. Consent must be given by parents by completing the dual sport form.
3. Both coaches of the sports being considered must be notified in advance to discuss the possibility of the student-athlete participating in the two sports. A priority sport must be declared by the student and understood by the coaches.
4. When a conflict arises among the two sports, the participant will proceed through the priorities in this order.
 - a. Student-athlete must declare a priority sport.
 - b. The priority sport will take over whenever a conflict exists.
 - c. Contests take precedence over practices.
5. Schedules will not be altered for the two sport student-athletes.
6. The athletic director and the principal will meet to determine if the student-athlete meets the MHSAA and school academic requirements required for dual sports participation. These requirements require the individual student must carry a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and must not have an E in any class at any time.

AFTER SCHOOL: Upon completion of all afternoon classes, student-athletes are to take all needed items (books, coats, etc.) to his/her athletic locker, in order to avoid entering hall areas after school.

ATHLETIC AWARDS: In order to receive athletic awards, student-athletes must maintain team membership beyond the last activity of the sport, return all equipment, attend all team meetings, and maintain the personal rules of conduct for student-athletes of the Pennfield School District. Any student-athlete on suspension will not be considered for/or given their athletic award until they have completed their suspension. A student-athlete at Pennfield High School will receive the following awards for their successful participation in one of our athletic programs.

FRESHMEN:

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. One time in their career they will receive their graduation numerals.

JUNIOR VARSITY:

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. Will receive a Panther head one time during their career.

VARSITY:

First Year

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. Will receive a pin for the sport each time they complete a season.
3. Will receive a block "P" one time during their career.

Second Year

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. Will receive a pin for the sport each time they complete a season.

Third Year

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. Will receive a pin for the sport each time they complete a season.
3. Will receive a medal.

Fourth Year

1. Will receive a certificate for each season they complete.
2. Will receive a pin for the sport each time they complete a season.
3. Will receive a plaque.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE

When a person (such as a student, a parent, a coach, a teacher, or an administrator) has a question, or concern, or complaint regarding an athletic situation, we have found the following line of communication most effective in resolving issues.

1. **START WITH THE SOURCE.** Talk directly with the coach, in private, face to face, away from the practice site or game area. A telephone call may be necessary to arrange an appointment.
2. **IF NECESSARY, TALK NEXT WITH THE HEAD COACH OF THE SPORT.**
3. **IF NECESSARY, TALK NEXT WITH THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.**
4. **IF NECESSARY, TALK NEXT WITH THE PRINCIPAL.**
5. **IF NECESSARY, TALK NEXT WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT, OR THEIR DESIGNEE.**

All complaints should be heard at the lowest possible level before intervention by a higher authority can occur. This system works very well so we are committed to abide by it. However, the next level arbitrator will always be willing to meet with a complainant if sub-level discussions do not accomplish their intended purpose.

When stating your concern be prepared with facts in so far as you understand, or can ascertain them. Think through your expectations for the outcome resulting from voicing your concern. That is, be clear about what you hope will happen as a result of your meeting.

As you converse with the coach or other authority, repeat back what you hear he or she say to be sure that you understand the important points. Stay calm and friendly as you talk and listen. Perhaps take notes.

Before the sessions ends, have a plan which is clearly understood by all parties. Check for mutual understanding. Set a time and method of responding if necessary.

Help your child learn to resolve his or her own differences. When a student successfully deals with difficult situations, he or she learns and grows. Of course, a parent always retains the right to intervene on behalf of a child.

We always assume that all parties have the best interest of the student in mind when concerns are discussed, and we make every effort to assure that the student is not penalized or placed in an awkward position as a result of voicing a complaint.

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

The following are the attendance regulations for students in any extracurricular activity.

In order to participate in a meeting, practice, activity, game, or match, a student must be in attendance in classes on the day of the activity. The following are the exceptions to the attendance regulations. These exceptions must be verified with a note or pass from the appropriate person:

A. Doctor, dentist, or funeral.

B. Family emergency - parents must notify one of the principals before the end of the school day (2:30 p.m.) about the absence. Students' personal business, such as: hair cuts, shopping, working, etc. will not be considered as family emergency.

C. A student who is ill must be in attendance at least half of the school day. In case of illness in which the student misses last hour of the school day, a "Permission to Play" statement signed by the parent/guardian or phone call from parent/guardian must have been received by the appropriate coach before the athlete may be allowed to participate. The statement must indicate that the athlete is physically able to participate.

D. Any school-related absence such as field trip, guidance counselor appointment, special permission of teacher, etc.

In all the above cases it will be the student's responsibility to provide verification of the reason for absence to the athletic director, coach, or advisor to the activity he/she is involved. A note/pass from the parent, teacher, or principal will be accepted as verification. If the absence falls under one of the above excused absences and occurs on a Friday or the day prior to a vacation period, a note of verification of excused absence presented to the person in charge of the activity will permit the student to participate in activities on the weekend or during the vacation period.

TRUANCY from class for the entire hour will result in a non-acceptable excuse and the student will not be permitted to participate in any activity that afternoon or evening. All absences that are not verified by a note or pass and/or not in accordance with the "exceptions to the attendance regulations" will be considered as not acceptable and the student will not be permitted to participate in the activity that day. If the situation occurs on a Friday or on the day prior to a vacation period, the student will not be allowed to participate until he/she is in attendance on the next regularly scheduled day of school.

If at any time a question or uncertainty about a student's attendance arises, please contact the building principal.

TRAINING RULES AND REGULATIONS: Training rules are a MUST for each student-athlete who participates in the interscholastic athletic program within the Pennfield Schools. Student-athletes are expected to abide by these rules, not only for their own welfare, but also because student-athletes are role models who represent the students of the school both on and off the athletic field. It is considered a **PRIVILEGE**, not a right, to participate in athletics at Pennfield.

These regulations apply to all Middle School and High School athletic team members 12 months a year for their career once they begin playing on their first athletic team for Pennfield Schools. These regulations are not limited to student behavior at school sponsored activities or on school property. We believe that a student- athlete is an athlete at all times, all year, for their entire school career, once they begin participating for a Pennfield athletic team. A student's middle school athletic record will begin over at the start of their high school career.

VIOLATIONS: The following behaviors constitute a violation of the Pennfield Schools Athletic Regulations and subject the student to penalty as outlined in the penalty section:

1. Athletes who possess, manufacture, use, distribute, sell, or are under the influence of tobacco or tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, including "look a like" drugs, drug paraphernalia, over the counter stimulant concentrates, and/or mood altering substances such as inhalants, steroids, human growth hormones or other performance-enhancing drugs are in violation of the athletic regulations. For purposes of this section the term "distribute" includes the "hosting" of a party at which any of the substances listed are provided. Any student-athlete who refuses a preliminary breath test (PBT) by a law enforcement official when requested will be considered in violation of this section of the athletic policy.

It shall not be a violation of the training rules for a student-athlete to use or possess a prescription or patent drug when taken pursuant to a legal prescription issued by a licensed physician for which permission to use in school has been granted pursuant to Board policy. A student shall notify his/her coach or activities sponsor if he or she is taking a prescription medicine which could alter the student's behavior or affect the student's ability to participate in the activity.

2. Students shall not engage in acts of cumulative or gross misconduct (i.e. theft, malicious destruction, breaking of local, state, or federal laws, etc.), including but not limited to behavior which is addressed in the Student Handbook.

PENALTIES: All penalties will be assessed at three levels based on severity of violation(s), as outlined below. Each level will represent point(s) against a student-athlete's record. All points will be cumulative towards a student-athlete's penalties. The different point values will be percentages of season suspensions from athletic contests for that student-athlete as outlined in this section. The percentage of time not completed in one season will be recalculated for the next season they participate. If the student-athlete does not complete a sport because of quitting or being removed by the coach the penalty from the violation will not be deducted until the next sport they participate. Student-athletes will be expected to practice and attend all contests (will not dress in uniform) the same as the rest of the team members.

A. Level 1 (1 point)

- Possession/use of tobacco, tobacco products, nicotine juice, an e-vape device, or vapor juice of any kind.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.
- Acts of cumulative or gross misconduct, misdemeanors of \$0-\$100.00.

B. Level 2 (2 points)

- Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, including "look a like", over the counter stimulant concentrates, and/or mood altering substances such as inhalants, steroids, human growth hormones or other performance-enhancing.
- Refusal of a (PBT) test.
- The hosting of a party at which these substances are known to being used at the host's party.
- Acts of cumulative or gross misconduct, misdemeanors \$101.00 and above.

C. Level 3 (3 points)

- Manufacturing, distribution, or sale of alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, including "look a like", over the counter stimulant concentrates, and/or mood altering substances such as inhalants, steroids, human growth hormones or other performance-enhancing.
- The hosting of a party at which these substances are provided by host.
- Acts of cumulative or gross misconduct, felonies.

SUSPENSIONS: In order for suspensions to be in effect a student-athlete must be an active member of an athletic team or has been a member of an athletic team previously during their school career. This includes for the penalty of one full season. When a student-athlete is out for one full year they will not be a member of a team during that year. If a suspension is not completed in the current season it will carry over to the student-athletes next sport season.

POINTS:

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| 1 point | Suspension for 25% of the season. |
| 2 points | Suspension for 50% of the season. |
| 3 points | Suspension for one full season. |
| 4 points | Suspension for one full calendar year. |

Any accumulation beyond 4 points will cause a student-athlete to be suspended for their entire career with possible reinstatement after one year if that student-athlete participates in an approved substance abuse program, tobacco cessation program, and or a community service program, as approved by the principal and athletic director. All cost to be incurred by the student-athlete and their family. These programs must be completed before a student-athlete is allowed to begin participation on any athletic team.

DATE OF VIOLATION IS DEFINED AS "ADMINISTRATIVE CONFIRMATION OF THE VIOLATIONS."
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PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH VIOLATIONS:

1. An administrator/athletic director will promptly investigate all alleged violations. An investigation may be initiated under the following circumstances, but not limited to:
 - A. Their observations.
 - B. Reports by a faculty member or school employee.
 - C. Reports by law enforcement personnel.
 - D. Reports by parent/guardian of the student involved in the violation.
2. Upon completion of the investigation, if a violation has occurred, the administrator/athletic director will take necessary disciplinary action as is appropriately outlined in the Athletic Handbook.

APPEAL PROCESS: A student-athlete found in violation of the athletic code of conduct has the right to be heard as outlined below. The student-athlete **will not** be permitted to participate in contests during the appeal.

Appeal Committee: An accused student-athlete may ask in writing within five calendar days of verbal or written notification of the violation to have his/her appeal heard by an appeal committee comprised of the principal or their designee, and two coaches (selected from out of season coaches).

The appeal committee shall meet and issue a written determination within two school days of receiving the appeal to the student-athlete, parents/guardians and Athletic Director.

Appeal Board: A student-athlete may appeal in writing to the Athletic Board within two school days of receiving written notice of the Appeal Committee's decision. The appeal should be submitted to the superintendent. The Appeal Board shall consist of the superintendent or his/her designee and two members of the Board of Education, as designated by the President of the Board of Education.

The Appeal Board shall meet and issue a determination within ten school days of the student's appeal. Written notice of the Appeal Board's decision shall be made to the student-athlete, parents/guardians, and Athletic Director. The decision of the Appeal Board is final.

Sexual Harassment, Hazing & Bullying: These actions will not be tolerated and will be addressed as outlined in the student school handbook. These will be dealt with on a case by case basis. If a student-athlete is found to be guilty of any of the above acts they will be assessed a penalty by the athletic department based on the severity of the act.

ELASTIC CLAUSE: In the event the Code of Conduct or other school policies or procedures do not cover situations that arise, the administration and the Board of Education reserve the right to establish such rules and conditions to respond effectively to unanticipated or unique circumstances.