

RINGGOLD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Athletic Handbook

A Guide for Student Athletes & Parents



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Dear Student Athlete and Parent(s):

I am pleased to welcome you into the Ringgold Athletic Program and to provide information to help you succeed at your chosen endeavor. It is our goal to provide an enjoyable athletic experience that is rewarding both on and off the playing field.

For many students, being a member of a Ringgold athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it is developed only through hard work from many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic squad for Ringgold Middle School or High School, you are becoming part of a wonderful tradition that you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been and always will be to win with honor. We all strive to win, but only in a manner that is honorable to our athletes, school and community. Over the years, our programs have accomplished the highest goals from Section, WPIAL, and State championships, to All-Conference, All-State, and All-American athletes. We hope that you will always remain committed and dedicated to upholding this high standard we have created. When you wear the blue and gold, we assume that you not only understand our tradition, but are willing to accept the responsibilities that go along with it. These responsibilities include:

- **Responsibility to Yourself:** The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to derive the greatest benefit from your high school experiences.
- **Responsibility to the Ringgold School District:** Ringgold cannot maintain its position as a respected school district unless each and every student (and parent) represents themselves with honor and dignity. By competing in athletics, you have the power to represent your school either positively or negatively. Choose wisely.
- **Responsibility to Others:** Whether it is younger students in the Ringgold School District or members of the surrounding communities, someone is always watching you. Remember that you must always set an example that is worthy of being emulated. Every day is an interview – you only get one chance to make a first impression.

The following pages comprise our athletic handbook. Please familiarize yourself with the district's policies and procedures. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Athletic Office at (724) 258-2208.

Good luck and GO RAMS!

Sincerely,

Laura Grimm
Athletic Director



MISSION STATEMENTS

Ringgold School District: To prepare our students today for the challenges of tomorrow.

Ringgold Athletic Mission: To challenge and support all student athletes to achieve success and a sense of self-esteem through participation in competitive athletics. It is through participation in competitive athletics that students will develop the necessary skills to become good people and productive members of a globally competitive workforce.



ATHLETIC OFFERINGS

The Ringgold Athletic Program consists of twenty one (21) varsity teams, eight (8) junior varsity teams, and twelve (12) middle school teams. All of these groups compete in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). The local district of the PIAA that our school competes in is District 7, commonly known as the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL).

- Baseball:** This spring sport is offered for boys and is comprised of junior varsity and varsity teams.
- Basketball:** This winter sport is offered to 7th and 8th grade boys and girls, as well as junior varsity boys and girls, and varsity boys and girls.
- Competitive Spirit:** This multi-season sport is offered to boys and girls and is comprised of a varsity team.
- Cross Country:** This fall sport is offered to 7th and 8th grade boys and girls, as well as varsity boys and girls.
- Football:** This fall sport is offered for boys and is comprised of 7th and 8th grade teams, as well as junior varsity and varsity teams.
- Golf:** This fall sport is offered to boys at the varsity level.
- Soccer:** This fall sport is offered to 7th and 8th grade girls and boys, as well as junior varsity boys and girls, and varsity boys and girls.
- Softball:** This spring sport is offered to 7th and 8th grade girls, as well as junior varsity and varsity teams.
- Swimming:** This winter sport is offered to both boys and girls at the varsity level.
- Tennis:** Tennis is a fall sport for girls and comprised of a varsity team. This is offered as a spring sport for boys and is comprised of a varsity team.
- Track:** In the winter, an indoor track program is offered to both boys and girls at the varsity level. In the spring, outdoor track is offered to boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade, as well as the varsity teams.
- Volleyball:** This fall sport is offered to 7th and 8th grade girls, as well as junior varsity and varsity teams.
- Wrestling:** This winter sport is offered for boys and is comprised of 7th and 8th grade teams, as well as a varsity team.



ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Laura Grimm <i>Athletic Director</i>	724-258-2200, ext. 2122 lgrimm@ringgold.org
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Thamar Perry <i>Athletic Trainer</i>	perrytl2@upmc.edu
Brandon McClendon <i>Athletic Trainer</i>	mcclendonb@upmc.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

Jason Minniti <i>Principal</i>	724-258-2200 jminniti@ringgold.org
Mary Grace Stutzman <i>Assistant Principal</i>	724-258-2200 mstutzman@ringgold.org
Lisa Mauro <i>Assistant Principal</i>	724-258-2200 lmmauro@ringgold.org
Guidance Office	724-258-2207
Attendance Office	724-258-2200, ext. 2312
Security Office	724-258-2200



STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Ringgold High School has a rich history of success in high school athletics. Not only are the administration, staff, and community committed to building upon that history, but we are also committed to maintaining a high level of integrity throughout our athletic program. Student athletes are encouraged to develop responsibility and commitment, an understanding of the importance of teamwork, and respect for self and others.

The Ringgold Athletic Department should provide the opportunity for participation in a wide variety of healthy, beneficial and enjoyable athletic experiences, in order to develop favorable habits and attitudes, which will ultimately aid in the development of wholesome young adults. Such participation is a privilege, not a right, and therefore can be taken away from a student if that student does not comply with the policies and procedures of the School District, or if they fail to live up to their responsibilities.

Young people learn a great deal from their participation in interscholastic athletics. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, competition, and how to win and lose gracefully are an integral part of each team in our athletic program. Athletics play an important part, too, in helping the individual student develop a healthy self-concept as well as a healthy body. Athletic competition adds to our school spirit and helps all students (spectators as well as participants) develop pride in their school.

The Ringgold School District believes that a dynamic athletic program is vital to the educational development of the student. While athletics play an important part in the life of student athletes, academics are the most important aspect of interscholastic life. As an athlete, you may love sports; however you must prepare yourself for other aspects of life. Academic success – especially as it requires rigorous effort now and in college – will assist you by forcing you to learn to time-manage, study, problem solve, and prioritize. As such, academic success is required as a prerequisite to athletic opportunity.

Every effort will be made to support the Athletic Program with facilities, equipment, and with the most qualified staff available. Coaches, directors, and sponsors should teach the specific skills necessary for improvement in athletics and provide guidance in the development of self-realization, good sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership, ethical behavior, and an appreciation for the importance of practice.



PHILOSOPHY OF DIFFERENT ATHLETIC LEVELS

Middle School

The Ringgold Athletic Department believes that students need to be able to explore athletics at the age when they are learning about themselves and their abilities. Middle School athletics are to focus on participation so that students can discover their abilities, build their confidence and improve their performance in the classroom. It is important for students to get involved with school activities, to meet new people and to develop interests. While we take great pride in winning, a “win at all costs” mentality is not condoned. At this age, practices and games are to develop skills and learn about the game and rules. In turn, this preparation will enable students to participate at the next level.

Junior Varsity

The Junior Varsity level serves as a transition from a developmental philosophy to a more serious, competitive philosophy. The focus of this level is to practice learned skills and prepare to play at the next level. Junior Varsity experience allows student athletes to adapt to the speed, skill and talent of high school competition. Student athletes are exposed to the traits it takes to be successful. Such traits include hard work, time management, and discipline.

Varsity

The Varsity level is the culmination of the athletic experience and is the highest level of competition in high school athletics. Emphasis at this level is on the application of the fundamentals of the sport, dedication, desire, hard work and sacrifice. Playing time is at the coach’s discretion and should be geared toward winning the competition while upholding both school and team rules. Success is not necessarily indicated only by wins or losses, but measured by the quality of the effort, performance, and achievement of goals.

Note: The District would like to offer every student who is interested in a sport the opportunity to participate. However, occasionally the number of athletes becomes too large to effectively teach, supervise, or enable the student athletes to meet the minimum expectations and safely compete. Therefore squad reductions may occur at these levels of competition.



CODE OF ETHICS

The following is the PIAA Athletic Courtesy By-Law by which every school, student athlete, coach, official, athletic director, principal and fan must abide to ensure a strong Code of Ethics is maintained.

Athletics should foster clean sports. It is the privilege and duty of every person connected with athletics to exemplify these principles in that person's own actions and earnestly advocate them before others.

1. The rules of the game are to be regarded as mutual agreements, the spirit and letter of which no honorable person would break. The stealing of advantage on sport is theft.
2. No advantages are to be sought over others except those in which the game is understood to show superiority.
3. Unsportsmanlike or unfair means are not to be used, even when they are used by opponents.
4. Visiting teams are to be honored guests of the home team and should be treated as such.
5. No action is to be taken nor course of conduct pursued which would seem unsportsmanlike or dishonorable if known to one's opponent or the public.
6. Remember that the student spectator represents his or her school the same as does the athlete at all home and away contests.
7. Any spectator who continually evidences poor sportsmanship should be requested not to attend future contests.
8. Decisions of officials are to be abided by, even when they seem unfair.
9. Officers and opponents are to be regarded and treated as honest in intention. In games when opponents conduct themselves in an unbecoming manner, and when officers are manifestly dishonest or incompetent, future relationships with them should be avoided.
10. Good points in others should be appreciated and suitable recognition given.
11. The practice of "booing" is regarded as discourteous and unsportsmanlike.



I. ELIGIBILITY

Preliminary Note: The Athletic Department will conform to all policies of the Ringgold School District. This handbook will not override School Board approved policies. If there is any conflict between a School Board policy and any policy, procedure or other content of this handbook, School Board policy shall prevail.

Each student athlete of the Ringgold Middle/High School will be expected to be in compliance with all regulations of the PIAA and WPIAL, including those that are not specifically listed in this section. Please refer to the appropriate handbook for the full text of all policies and regulations.

A. Academics

In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition, a student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time curriculum. Where required, this curriculum or its equivalent must be approved by, and conform to, the regulations of the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania School Code, as well as any local policies established by the local school board.

Weekly Eligibility

A student must meet the following criteria in order to remain eligible:

- Must be passing at least four (4) full-credit subjects, or the equivalent; AND
- Must not be failing more than one subject
- Any student receiving a grade of “D” or “F” will be required to attend school sponsored “homework help” every day it is offered either prior to or in lieu of practice until the grade is brought up to at least a “C.”

Eligibility shall be cumulative from the beginning of a grading period and shall be reported on a weekly basis (every Friday). Where a student’s cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period does not, as of Friday, meet the standards provided for in this Section, the student shall be ineligible from the immediately following Sunday through Saturday. When school is closed on Friday for any reason, the Athletic Director and Principal may determine student eligibility.

End of Grading Period

In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must have met the following criteria to remain eligible:

- Must have passed at least four (4) full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, during the previous grading period; AND
- Must have an overall GPA of 2.3 in their core subjects or NCAA-approved eligible courses OR an overall GPA of 2.5

Back work may be made up, providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the school. In cases where a student’s work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards provided for in this Section, said student shall be ineligible to participate



in interscholastic athletics for the first fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period. At the end of the fifteen (15) days, the ineligible student may become eligible if his or her grades meet the current academic standards.

*At the end of the school year, the student's final credits for the entire year shall be used to determine his or her eligibility for the fall season of the following school year.

B. Age

Maximum Age Rule: A student athlete shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition upon attaining the age of nineteen (19) years, with the following exception: If the age of 19 is attained on or after July 1, of the year in question, the student shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete throughout that school year.

C. All-Star Contests

You will lose athletic eligibility in the respective sport for a period of one year if you participate in an all-star contest in that sport. The PIAA determines amateur status and the criteria for amateur status may change from time to time as dictated by the PIAA and if a question arises, the PIAA should be contacted directly.

D. Amateur Status

Student athletes must be amateurs in order to participate in any PIAA sponsored contest. An amateur student is one who engages in athletic competition solely for the educational, physical, mental, social and pleasure benefits derived thereof. The loss of amateur status occurs when:

1. The student and/or student's parents receive compensation for related athletic ability, participation, performance, services, or training in a sport.
2. The student plays on a professional team or as an individual professional athlete in a sport.
3. The student signs a contract whereby the student agrees to compete in any athletic competition for consideration.
4. The student sells or pawns the student's athletic achievement awards.

It should be noted that the PIAA determines amateur status and the criteria for amateur status may change from time to time as dictated by the PIAA and if a question arises, the PIAA should be contacted directly.

E. Attendance

Regular attendance is vitally linked to success in school and athletics. In order to be eligible to participate in any interscholastic athletic contest, a student must have been regularly enrolled in a secondary school and in full time attendance thereafter. A student is eligible only at the school at which he or she is enrolled.



Game Day/Daily Practice

To participate in extracurricular activities, including games and practices, student athletes must be present in school no later than 10:15am at the high school and 10:49am at the middle school, and any early dismissal may not take place before 1:00pm. The student athlete's tardy or early dismissal **must be excused** as per the School District guidelines.

If a student athlete has an unexcused absence the day before or the day a holiday recess begins, the student athlete will be ineligible to participate until school resumes and they have been in attendance a full day.

Semester Absences

Student athletes will be ineligible to participate in any activity or sport if he or she accumulates fifteen (15) or more non-attendance occurrences per semester. Occurrences include **all** excused/unexcused absence, excused/unexcused tardiness, and excused/unexcused early dismissal.

The attendance procedure will be as follows:

- After the 10th non-attendance occurrence, a courtesy letter will be sent home notifying the student athlete and their parent(s).
- The 15th non-attendance occurrence will result in an automatic one (1) week suspension from all athletic and extracurricular activities. This suspension will be served from the immediately following Sunday through Saturday.
- Every additional non-attendance occurrence will result in an additional week of suspension.

F. Discipline

All student athletes must abide by the current School District discipline code set forth and approved by the School Board. Violation of the school discipline code may result in an immediate suspension or complete termination of a student's participation in activities and athletics. Our student athletes must represent the very best of the School District, both on and off the competition surface. Extracurricular activities are a privilege, not a right, and this privilege can be revoked at any time with just cause.

Student athletes who are assigned detention must report to detention, even if they have a practice or game scheduled. Student athletes may not practice or play while under an in or out-of-school suspension. For example, a student athlete suspended for Friday, Monday, and Tuesday may not participate in weekend school-related activities, including practice. A student who completes his or her suspension on Friday remains ineligible to play or practice until the next school day.

At any time, the administration reserves the right to review a violation and impose further discipline if necessary. Coaches may further restrict, suspend or remove a student athlete from the team as documented in the individual sport's team rules.



G. Home-Schooled, Cyber or Charter Students

All home-schooled, cyber or charter students must live in the Ringgold School District and abide by the same set of rules as set forth by the PIAA and described in this handbook. Home-schooled, cyber or charter student athletes must also show evidence of academic eligibility, required immunizations, and appropriate health screenings. Additionally, charter students are only eligible to participate in a Ringgold extra-curricular activity if their charter school does not offer such an activity. If there are any questions regarding home-schooled, cyber or charter students, please contact the Athletic Director immediately.

H. Participation in Multiple Sports

In keeping with our philosophy to fully develop our student athletes and in line with keeping our athletic teams as competitive as possible, student athletes are strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of sports for Ringgold if they are capable.

A student athlete's physical and mental health is just one of many concerns that the administration, coaches and teachers have for their students' well-being. Although there is no set policy against a student participating in more than one sport during any one season, and occasionally it works for the student athlete, it is recommended that student athletes should play only ONE sport during the fall, winter, and spring seasons. This is largely due to the grueling practice and academic workload for high school students. Student athletes must remember that they are students first and athletes second. Trying to do too much will affect a student's health and also his or her academic and athletic performance.

I. Period of Participation

The period of participation is limited to students who have not:

1. Been in attendance more than eight (8) semesters beyond 8th grade; except in cases of long, confining illness or injury which necessitates repeating a grade. To waive the 8-semester limitation, providing all other eligibility requirements are met, requires approval by the WPIAL Board of Control.
2. Played four seasons beyond the 8th grade in any one form of interscholastic athletics; or
3. Completed the work of grades 9, 10, 11, 12 (inclusive).
4. Note: A student is considered as representing his or her school during a particular season or sport only if he or she has participated in a game or interscholastic scrimmage or any part of a game or interscholastic scrimmage. A student who enters school in the second semester and plays two partial seasons in the same sport in separate school years shall be considered as playing the equivalent of one (1) season.

The period of participation may change from time to time as dictated by the PIAA, and if a question arises, the PIAA should be contacted directly.



J. Physicals

The Ringgold School District must follow the guidelines set forth by the PIAA requiring that all student athletes participating in interscholastic competition have a pre-participation physical examination.

This exam must occur **no earlier than June 1st** for all sports in the upcoming school year.

Student athletes will have to do one of two things PRIOR to the first day of tryouts in order to satisfy the physical examination requirement:

1. If the student athlete has not had a physical AFTER June 1st of the given year, they will need to have a complete examination and fill out the entire packet.
2. If the student athlete has a physical to participate during the fall or winter season of the current school year, they will only need to fill out the recertification forms, which include student information as well as a medical release that is signed by their parents.

The health and well-being of every student athlete is our top priority. It is also important that our students learn responsibility and the ability to set priorities. The following procedures will help ensure that the School District is in compliance with PIAA regulations:

1. The school will offer pre-participation physicals during the school year. The date and place of these physicals will be announced and publicized in the school several weeks prior to the physicals being administered.
2. Student must obtain the proper forms from their coach, the Athletic Office, or the school website. ***No other forms will be accepted.***
3. Completed physical forms are to be turned in to the coach, athletic trainer, or athletic office ONLY, as soon as possible and prior to the first designated practice. **If completed physical forms are not received, the student athlete will NOT be allowed to practice or participate in that sport until all paperwork is received. No exceptions.**

The ultimate responsibility for obtaining a physical exam and becoming eligible to participate in a sport will be up to the individual student athlete and their family.

K. Transfer Students

All transfer students and questions of residence will be thoroughly checked by the Athletic Director and approved by the Principal to see if they are in compliance with all PIAA rules before the student can be declared eligible to compete on an interscholastic sports team. Please contact the Principal or the Athletic Director immediately if you have transferred in to the district or plan to transfer out.



II. PROHIBITED ACTIVITY & BEHAVIOR

The rules and regulations in this section shall apply to any violations on and off school premises during the season of participation. Any violations during the off-season or summer break could also result in disciplinary action.

A. Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco

There is a zero tolerance policy for drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco use and any such use is a direct violation of School District rules. Any violations of this nature may result in suspension from athletics for a period of time, including the entire season. In addition, further punishment may be necessary and will be subject to the discretion of school administration.

B. Hazing

It is the goal of the Ringgold School District to provide a safe and positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district. As such, hazing, whether instituted by one person or by a group of people, is not permitted by the School District and is not condoned in any circumstance.

Hazing is any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the mental, physical, or academic health or safety of a student. This includes, but is not limited to any situation which:

- Creates a risk of injury to any individual or group
- Causes discomfort to any individual or group
- Causes embarrassment to any individual or group
- Involves harassment of any individual or group
- Involves degradation of any individual or group
- Involves humiliation of an individual or group
- Involves ridicule of an individual or group
- Involves or includes the willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in an organization

It includes physical injury, assault or battery, kidnapping or imprisonment, intentionally placing at risk of mental or emotional harm (putting “over the edge”), degradation, humiliation, the compromising of moral or religious values, forced consumption of any liquid or solid, placing an individual in physical danger (at risk) which includes abandonment, and impairment of physical liberties which include curfews or other interference with academic endeavors.

Hazing will result in disciplinary action against those administering, participating in, and/or responsible for the hazing. This may include suspension or removal from



athletic participation. If necessary, legal charges may be filed with the police department that can include: disorderly conduct, harassment, reckless endangerment, or any other appropriate charges.

Please refer to the School District policy for full text of the current policy and any other relevant information regarding hazing.

C. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is considered a violation of School District policy and student athlete expectations. Sexual harassment includes:

1. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person over a recipient when
 - a. Submission to such conduct is made either an implicit or explicit condition of the individual's eligibility, academic status, or ability to use University facilities and services; or
 - b. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for a decision that affects tangible aspects of the individual's eligibility, academic status, or use of school facilities; or
2. Unwelcome and unsolicited language or conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it could reasonably be expected to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment; or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance.

Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment prohibited by law and School District policy. Either men or women can be harassed by members of the same or opposite sex. If you believe you are being harassed, seek help – the earlier the better. The School District will respond to complaints and prohibits retaliation against those who raise complaints.

D. Steroids

The Ringgold School District prohibits the use of anabolic steroids or any other performance enhancing drugs that have been deemed illegal or unsafe by anyone involved in interscholastic athletics, except for a valid medical purpose as prescribed by a physician. Any violations of this nature may result in suspension from athletics for a period of time, including the entire season. In addition, further punishment may be necessary and will be subject to the discretion of School administration.

III. IN-SEASON POLICY & PROCEDURES

A. Squad Reduction

According to the philosophy of the Ringgold School District, we strive to provide an opportunity for student athletes to learn through active participation in sports. An athlete's success within the athletic program is often determined by the level in which he or she is participating. Fundamental growth, progression from one year to the next,



increased physical fitness, personal development, as well as winning can all be successes of the individual student athlete. With that in mind, it is the intent of the athletic program to involve as many students as possible. Unfortunately, it is occasionally necessary to reduce the number of athletes on the roster. In the event that squad reductions are necessary the following policies will be followed:

Reduction Process:

The Ringgold Athletic Department believes that coaches are in the best position to determine which student athletes will remain on the roster. The coach in charge of each individual team is responsible for the selection of the members of that team. They can choose to evaluate talent on their own or with a designated group of qualified people.

It is also the coach's responsibility to inform the athletes and parents of the tryout process and evaluation tool being used prior to the first day of tryouts.

If student athletes must be eliminated from the squad, it is the coach's responsibility to personally inform the individuals either by a verbal or written communication. Impersonal methods of notification will not be utilized.

Concern/Complaint Process:

If a student athlete or parent has a concern with the tryout process, they should follow the chain of command set forth below:

1. Student athlete should address question to the coaching staff.
2. Parent and student athlete should request a meeting with the coach or coaching staff.
3. Parent, student athlete, and coach will meet with the Athletic Director.
4. Parent, student athlete, coach and Athletic Director will meet with the Principal.
5. Unresolved issues will be referred to the School Board.

B. Team Captains

The selection of a team captain is not an easy task. There are many criteria that go into defining a captain of a high school sports team. Captains must be student athletes that the rest of their team, the adults in the school community and the community at large will respect and support. On the same hand, captains in turn must respect and support their teammates at all times. Captains or leaders must never put themselves above the team. Captains must understand that they are subject to the same rules and consequences as every other member of the team.

The captain or co-captains of a team shall be selected by team members and/or the coaching staff and are responsible for the leadership of that team on and off the field. The position of captain is one of honor, leadership and responsibility. As a result, student athletes serving in that capacity are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in and out of school. Any captain involved in any violation of the discipline code that results in a school or athletic suspension may lose their captaincy.



Captain(s) may be removed for just cause by the head coach with the approval of the Athletic Director.

C. Team Rules

Coaches are encouraged to develop a set of team rules and regulations which governs their particular sport. These rules must be approved by the Athletic Director and kept on file in the Athletic Office. When a student becomes a member of a team, he or she is committing to all the rules and expectations of that team and coach.

These rules and regulations will be published prior to the season and distributed to the student athletes at the beginning of the official season.

Acknowledging that students by nature of their youth and inexperience are still developing life skills which include time management and prioritization of responsibilities, the School Board, Administration and all coaches shall encourage each student athlete to strive to achieve the highest academic and athletic standards both as individuals and as a team.

If, during the course of planned season activities, a situation develops which places academic standing or attendance at an academic activity at risk, it is the **student athlete's responsibility** to bring this issue to the attention of their head coach as soon as possible in order to reach a resolution.

Full participation and attendance at all competitions, practices, and events is expected of all team members. In the event of an extreme personal or family emergency, at the request of the parents/guardians and with the approval of the head coach or Athletic Director, participation may be excused or abbreviated. This may only be arranged at the discretion of the head coach or Athletic Director prior to the event.

D. Medical Issues

Health Insurance:

The Ringgold School District requires all prospective student athletes to have adequate health insurance prior to any participation. Ringgold does not provide medical insurance coverage for its athletes, and the Ringgold School District, its employees, representatives, and agents are not liable for any medical or hospital care and all related expenses. Therefore, each individual is responsible for any medical care and all related expenses resulting from any cause whatsoever in connection with the said sport.

Injury Procedure:

The athletic trainer will be responsible for the management and treatment of all athletic injuries. All injuries must be reported to the athletic trainer as soon as possible. The athletic trainer, not a coach, will determine whether an injured player is capable of practicing and/or playing.



Any student athlete, who is taken to a physician as recommended by the athletic trainer or by the parent as a result of a possible injury, must provide a written medical release to the athletic trainer in order to return to participation in his or her sport.

If there is a difference of opinion between the athletic trainer and the parents over the athlete's ability to practice or play, a written medical release is required to override the decision of the athletic trainer.

Training Room/Athletic Trainer:

- Athletic Trainers: Provided through UPMC
- Location: Main floor HS building adjacent to the Girls Locker Room and beneath the bleachers in the Stadium.
- Hours: Approximately 1:45pm – 7pm plus JV/Varsity home events during regular school days. Weekend hours are determined as necessary.

If you need to set up a time to meet with the trainers individually, please call the Athletic Office.

E. Student Transportation

The Ringgold School District provides transportation to all scheduled away events/competitions. It is important for student athletes to ride the bus to and from all contests for many reasons, including team unity, shared responsibility for team equipment, coaches' discussion and instruction before and after contests, etc. Therefore all student athletes are required to ride the bus to AND from all contests.

In rare circumstances, an occasion or emergency may arise and it is necessary for a parent to drive their child to or from an athletic contest. In such cases, they must complete and comply with the "Athletic Travel Release" form prior to the scheduled event. Only parents/guardians will be permitted to transport a student athlete, they are not permitted to ride home with another family. Before they are released, the parent or guardian must present themselves to the coach.

*Note: No more than three (3) travel releases will be granted in an individual season except in the case of family or medical emergency.

F. Cancellation of Events Due to Inclement Weather

Based on a cancellation or early dismissal of school, as directed by the Superintendent of Schools, due to inclement weather, the following shall apply:

1. All practices and competitions are cancelled unless administrative approval is given. Administrative consideration will be given based on the immediacy of the competition and the severity of the weather/road conditions.
2. All coaches may request permission to use school facilities on the day of cancellation. This must be done on a day-by-day occurrence.
3. Student athletes cannot be required to attend a practice or activity during a school closing even if administrative approval was given. Participation must be voluntary.



4. All home activities involving spectators are cancelled unless administrative approval is given.

G. Equipment Return

Student athletes are responsible for any and all equipment (including uniforms and practice gear) issued by the school. You will be expected to return all equipment at the end of the season; otherwise, you will be financially responsible for any missing items.

Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the practices and competitions of the school sport in which it was issued.

It is unfortunate that some people steal but that does not void your responsibility for returning or paying for all that was originally issued to you. If you fail to pay for non-returned or overly-abused equipment, you will not be permitted further athletic participation at Ringgold and records and transcripts may not be released until all obligations have been cleared.

H. Athletic Awards

All awards will be distributed to the coaches by the Athletic Director and then to the individual athletes. Anyone who quits or is removed from a team prior to the completion of the season, including post-season playoffs, will not receive a letter nor any other individual or team award even if the criteria for earning that award had been met prior to quitting or being removed.

Requirements for earning a varsity athletic letter will be determined by the Athletic Director and head coach for each sport individually prior to the start of the season and a copy of these requirements will be retained in the Athletic Office. All students will be notified at the end of the season as to their lettering status.

I. Athletic Scholarships and Recruitment

Although student athletes do not officially “sign” with a college or university until their junior year of high school, the recruitment process begins during freshman year. If you are interested or think you might want to play at the next level, make your coaches aware of this early on – do not be afraid to ask for their help!

A copy of all NCAA eligibility and academic requirements will be kept in the Athletic Office.

IV. DAY-TO-DAY POLICY & REGULATIONS

A. Instructions to Student Athletes

1. Student athletes will not be permitted in any area of the building after school, except those areas designated by the coaches or Athletic Director.



2. Student athletes should report immediately to the locker rooms after dismissal to prepare for practices beginning right after school. All other practices should be scheduled to begin at a defined time.
3. No practice arrangements – formal or informal – are permitted without the presence of supervisory coaching personnel.
4. Student athletes are not to remain after school unless coaches are present.
5. Athletic shoes with spikes are not to be worn in the High School building at any time.
6. Student athletes are to leave their automobile in the designated student parking areas.

B. Weight Room

1. The weight room is to remain locked at all times and only opened by a coach during a scheduled time approved by the Athletic Director.
2. Nobody is to be in the weight room alone. Wait outside the weight room for a coach. Under no circumstances is any student athlete permitted to be in the weight room unsupervised.
3. Shirts and shoes are required at all times.
4. No food or drinks (except water) are allowed inside the weight room.
5. Lifters must work with a partner.
6. Replace all weights on racks immediately following use.
7. Do not abuse the equipment. This equipment will have to be used for years to come. Any reckless use of the equipment or careless behavior may result in having weight room privileges revoked.
8. Any equipment that is broken must be reported immediately to the Athletic Director.
9. No horseplay or profanity.
10. To reduce the risk of infections, wipe equipment after use to sanitize before the next individual uses the equipment.
11. Know your limits! Work with your coach or instructor in determining your weight limits.
12. Do the lifts correctly. It is better to use lighter weights with proper form than heavier weights and run the risk of injury.
13. All lifting programs and directions MUST BE erased from the dry erase boards before leaving the weight room.

C. Social Media Policy

As mentioned throughout this handbook, playing and competing for the Ringgold School District is a privilege. Student athletes are held in the highest regard and are seen as role models in the community. As leaders you have the responsibility to portray your team, your school and yourselves in a positive manner at all times. Sometimes this means doing things that are an inconvenience to you, but benefit the whole team.



Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media sites have increased in popularity, and are used by the majority of student athletes here in one form or another. Student athletes should be aware that third parties, including the media, faculty, future employers and NCAA officials, can easily access your profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments and posters. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the student athlete, the Athletic Department and the School District.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, comments or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another institution; taunting comments aimed at a student athlete, coach or team at another institution and derogatory comments against race and/or gender).
- Content that depicts or encourages violent or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, etc.).

If a student athlete's profile and its contents are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the above behaviors, he or she will be subject to the following penalties:

1. Written warning
2. A meeting with Athletic Director and Head Coach
3. Penalties as determined by the athletic department, including but not limited to possible suspension from his or her athletic team.

For your own safety, please keep the following recommendations in mind as you participate in social media websites:

- Set your security settings so that only your friends can view your profile.
- You should not post your email, home address, local address, telephone number(s), or other personal information.
- Be aware of who you add as a friend to your site – many people are looking to take advantage of student athletes or to seek connection with student athletes.

If you are ever in doubt of the appropriateness of your online public material, consider whether it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as the Ringgold Athletic Department's and the School District's. Remember, always present a positive image and don't do anything to embarrass yourself, the team, your family or the school.



V. PARENT ATHLETIC INVOLVEMENT

Your child's success or lack of success in sports does not indicate what kind of parent you are. Having a student athlete who is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient and tries their best IS a direct reflection of your parenting.

A. Positive Parenting

- Be a positive motivator.
- Do not degrade the coach or their staff; we all make mistakes. Instead emphasize loyalty and perseverance, and use it as a teaching moment.
- Encourage your child to play for the enjoyment of the experience.
- Do not focus on personal statistics, game scores, or athletic scholarships.
- Encourage participation in several sports. Specialization leads to decreased enjoyment and burnout.
- Be realistic about your child's abilities.
- Be a good role model.
- Encourage good decision making.
- Talk to your child on a daily basis.

B. Team Practices

For all Ringgold athletic teams, all practices are "closed" practices, which means no family members, supporters, or non-school employed personnel are permitted in the locker rooms, training room, weight room, gymnasium or outdoor field areas before or after each practice, unless authorized by the head coach of that particular sport.

Acts of non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis through a joint effort of the Athletic Department and Ringgold Police.

C. Parent/Coach Relationship

Communication/Information Coaches Should Provide to Parents:

- Coach's expectations of players and their parents
- Locations and times of all practices, competitions, and team activities
- Team requirements (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- Team rules and guidelines
- Lettering requirements
- Disciplinary procedures
- Information regarding procedures to contact coaches

Communication/Information Parents Should Provide to Coaches:

- Notification of any schedule conflicts (in advance)
- Specific concerns in regard to the coach's expectations of their child
- Information regarding their child's injuries and medical condition



- Correspondence or status of their child's recruitment

Appropriate Concerns for Parents to Discuss with Coaches:

- Treatment of their child
- Ways to help their child improve
- Concerns about their child's behavior or performance in school

Concerns NOT Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches:

- Playing time/positions/assignments
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student athletes

D. Procedure to Discuss Concerns:

1. Parents should not confront coaches or engage in controversial discussion with coaches, either in person or via telephone, immediately before, during, or after a practice or game.
 - a. Failure to comply with this request will result in a meeting with the administration and consequences may include being prohibited from attending future events.
 - b. Discussions during times of high emotions do not promote resolution of issues.
2. Parents should wait until the following day and request a meeting or telephone call to discuss concerns.
 - a. If a parent meeting is desired, the parent should call the coach to schedule an appointment in advance.
 - b. If the coach cannot be reached, the Athletic Director should be contacted to schedule the meeting.
3. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent may schedule an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
 - a. The Athletic Director will not meet with any parent unless a prior meeting has been held with the coach.
4. Coaches may also schedule a meeting with the Athletic Director to discuss issues with parents.
5. If the situation remains unresolved, a meeting with additional appropriate administrators will be scheduled.

E. Booster Organizations

All Booster Clubs must abide by the Ringgold School District Booster Policy.



Role of the Club

All of Ringgold High School's Athletic Booster Clubs serve as an organization of parents/community persons who are dedicated to:

- Supporting, encouraging and advancing the athletics program and related activities of Ringgold High School, thereby cultivating school spirit, promoting good sportsmanship, and developing high ideals of character.
- The Club shall promote projects to obtain team related needs necessary to provide an adequate athletic program for the school.
- The club shall not seek to influence or direct the technical activities or policies of the school administration or of the school officials who are charged with the responsibility of conducting the athletic program of the school.
- The club shall do nothing which violates the rules of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association or in any way jeopardizes the membership of the school in the association.

Financial Responsibilities

The booster club will contribute financially to meet the needs of the athletic teams that otherwise would not be addressed. Primarily, the monies of the Booster Club will be expended for: food for athletic teams, senior night expenses, athletic jackets and patches, items needed for fundraising projects, supplies for concession stand and other events, etc.

Relationship with Coaches

A Booster Club should always consult with the Head Coach and be sure their goals and activities are aligned to the vision of the Head Coach for the specific sport program. A Booster Club shall not attempt to get involved with the coaching aspect of the sport. No discussions should take place concerning items such as: player selection, playing time, strategies, play selection, etc.

Relationship with the School Administration

The Athletic Director shall be invited to all athletic booster meetings, and attend as necessary to act as the official liaison between the school and the booster club. However, the school administration will be available to answer booster concerns and questions as they arise.



Student Athlete Agreement Acknowledgement

I, _____, have read, understand and agree to abide to the above expectations, rules and guidelines of the Ringgold Athletic Department to the best of my abilities. I understand that my failure to do so will jeopardize my participation in interscholastic athletics.

I also understand and acknowledge that although participation is encouraged at all levels of athletics, playing time is NOT GUARANTEED.

Student Athlete Name (Please Print)

Student Athlete Signature

Date

Parent Agreement Acknowledgement

I, _____, have read, understand and agree to abide to the above parent expectations of the Ringgold Athletic Department to the best of my abilities. Additionally, I agree to encourage and help my child abide to the above expectations, rules, and guidelines to the best of his or her abilities.

I also understand and acknowledge that although participation is encouraged at all levels of athletics, playing time is NOT GUARANTEED.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

****Please sign and return****

Student Athlete Acknowledgement of Risk

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have been properly advised, cautioned, and warned by the proper administrative and coaching personnel of the Ringgold School District that by participating in interscholastic athletics, I am exposing myself to the risk of serious injury, including but not limited to, sprains, fractures, ligament and/or cartilage damage which could result in temporary/permanent impairment in the use of my limbs; brain damage, paralysis, or even death. Having been so cautioned and warned, it is still my desire to participate in interscholastic athletics. I hereby further acknowledge that I do so with full knowledge and understanding of the risk of serious injury to which I am exposing myself through participation.

Student Athlete Name (Please Print)

Student Athlete Signature

Date

Parent Acknowledgement of Risk

I, _____, the parent/guardian of _____, hereby acknowledge that I have been properly advised, cautioned, and warned by the proper administrative and coaching personnel of the Ringgold School District that my child named above, by participating in interscholastic athletics, may suffer serious injury, including but not limited to, sprains, fractures, ligament and/or cartilage damage which could result in temporary/permanent impairment in the use of my limbs; brain damage, paralysis, or even death. Having been so cautioned and warned, it is still my desire to give my consent to my child named above to participate in interscholastic athletics. I hereby further acknowledge that I do so with full knowledge and understanding of the risk of serious injury to which my child is exposed to through participation.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

****Please sign and return****