

# **Needham High School**

## **Student-Athlete Handbook**



*August 2016*

# NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

## STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

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# NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC & CLUB ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

## I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE / MISSION

The Interscholastic and Club Athletic Programs at Needham High School are an integral component of the comprehensive educational environment and are committed to the total physical, social, emotional and mental development of all students who participate. Aligning with the Mission of the Needham Public Schools to develop a “partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, and fosters integrity,” the Athletic Programs also support District Goal 2.0 which ensures that students have the social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware, to have social and relationship skills, to self manage, and to make responsible decisions.

The Programs also encourage all student-athletes to take pride in themselves, their teams, school and community. In order to do this, they need to learn what it means to cooperate with others, to set individual and team goals, to manage their time balancing all areas of their lives, to understand difference and embrace diversity, to win and lose with class and respect, and to learn the physical and technical skills demanded by their sports.

As members of the Needham Programs, student-athletes are expected to demonstrate proper respect for all coaches, teammates, officials, spectators and equipment. All student-athletes are also expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct and sportsmanship both on and off the playing field, as they are at all times representatives of their teams, their school and their community. NHS Athletics adheres to a student-centered, process-based philosophy, and works with all participants to understand the Positive Coaching Alliance’s “**ROOTS** of Honoring the Game.” **Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates, and Self:**

- **R**ules have been implemented to make the games as fair as possible, refuse to bend the rules to win.
- The level of play is elevated with a worthy **O**pponent so treat them with respect, remember “fierce & friendly”.
- **O**fficials enforce the rules to ensure fair play, respect the call even if you disagree.
- Act appropriately towards your fellow **T**eammates and never embarrass the team on or off the field.
- Play with **S**elf-respect and live up to one’s own standards to honor the game.

NHS athletes who play by these ideals and standards ensure high quality competition for participants and spectators.

## II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & TRY-OUT POLICIES

The NHS Athletic and Club Sport Programs maintain teams at the Freshman, Junior Varsity, Varsity, and Club levels. More than 1600 student-athlete participation spots are available each school year on our 34 interscholastic offerings and Club Sport options. At the JV, Freshman and Club levels, participation and skill development are stressed as younger athletes learn the rules of the sports and are introduced to a wide variety of competition levels. Playing time at these levels is based upon practice attendance, work ethic, attitude, commitment to the team, and athletic skill. Cuts are limited in our Club Sport programs. Varsity athletes work to develop their skills and knowledge to the highest degree, while competition levels and expectations are raised. Varsity teams also allow talented athletes the chance to excel and prepare for future collegiate competition and to compete for League, Sectional, State, and Regional Championships.

Tryouts for programs are open to all students providing they meet the standards of academic eligibility, school citizenship and basic physical/health qualifications. Participation in the Athletic and Club programs is granted to students who meet and maintain these standards.

It is important to remember participation in athletics is a privilege and that students try-out voluntarily and, for some teams, risk being cut. During the try out period, coaches will provide a clear explanation and set of criteria about their expectations. It is the responsibility of each student to demonstrate to coaches that he/she can meet the expectations set forth. **Students cut from one team are encouraged to try-out for, or shift over, to another no-cut team if there is space available in the program.** Students who are cut from a team will be informed individually by the head coach, and when appropriate, other members of the coaching staff as well. After try-outs begin, no athlete may voluntarily leave one team and try-out for another without the consent of both coaches involved, the student’s family, and the Athletic Director. **Statement on Participation:** *For all NHS students looking to participate in Athletics, there is an opportunity available each season as no cut options exist in the fall, winter, and spring.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** When a freshman has demonstrated an advanced level of ability, he or she may be placed on a varsity level team after consultation with the athlete, his or her parents, the Coach and the Athletic Director.

### III. 2016-2017 NHS INTERSCHOLASTIC & CLUB OFFERINGS *WITH STARTING DATES*

#### **FALL 2016**

*Var/JV Football start **Friday** 8/19, Var Dance & Cheer May start **Monday**, 8/22, All other Fall Sports start **Thursday** 8/24*

- **Cheerleading** - Var (cuts) – *Tryouts held in spring of 2016*
- **Boys & Girls Cross Country** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **Dance** - Var (cuts) – *Tryouts held in spring 2016*
- **Field Hockey** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **Football** - Var / JV / 9th (no cuts)
- **Golf** - Var (cuts)
- **Boys Soccer** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts)
- **Girls Soccer** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **Girls Swimming & Diving** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Girls Volleyball** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts)

**FALL CLUB OPTIONS** (*Start Dates TBA*): **Cheerleading** (possible cuts) / **Dance** (possible cuts) / **Sailing** (no cuts)

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#### **WINTER 2016-2017**

*Practices/Tryouts for all Winter Sports start on **Monday, November 28, 2016***

- **Boys Basketball** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts)
- **Girls Basketball** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **Cheerleading** - Var (cuts)
- **Dance** - Var (cuts)
- **Gymnastics** Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Boys Ice Hockey** - Var / JV (cuts)
- **Girls Ice Hockey** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Boys & Girls Alpine Skiing** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Boys Swimming & Diving** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **Boys & Girls Indoor Track** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **Wrestling** - Var / JV (no cuts)

**WINTER CLUB OPTIONS** (*Start Dates TBA*):

**Cheerleading** (possible cuts) / **Dance** (possible cuts) / **Coed Bowling** (no cuts) / **Coed Squash** (no cuts) / **Coed Fencing** (*no cuts*) / **Coed Snowboarding** (*no cuts*)

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#### **SPRING 2017**

*Practices/Tryouts for all Spring Sports start on **Monday, March 20, 2017***

- **Baseball** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts)
- **Boys Lacrosse** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts)
- **Girls Lacrosse** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **Rugby** (no cuts)
- **Softball** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **Boys Tennis** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Girls Tennis** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **Boys & Girls Track & Field** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **Boys Volleyball** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)

**SPRING CLUB OPTIONS** (*Start Dates TBA*):

**Boys & Girls Ultimate Frisbee** (no cuts) / **Sailing** (cuts may be needed) / **Water Polo** (no cuts)

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Due to roster and space limitations for some teams, along with shifts in interest and numbers of students coming out for given programs each season, policies around cuts being made for the sports listed above may have potential to change from year to year. An indication of the likelihood of cuts being made is listed above

#### IV. DEPARTMENT INFO, ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES & IMPORTANT POLICIES

##### Athletic Department – Room 609 (*outside of the B gym*)

Director of Athletics: **Mr. Micah Hauben** micah\_hauben@needham.k12.ma.us  
781-455-0800 x2143

Assistant AD/Club Coordinator: **Dan Lee** daniel\_lee@needham.k12.ma.us  
781-455-0800 x2544

Athletic Department Secretary: **Dana Langley** dana\_langley@needham.k12.ma.us  
781-455-0800 x2105

HS Athletic Trainers: **Ori Rochbert** nhsatc@needham.k12.ma.us  
781-455-0800 x2105 **Ally Collins** nhsatc@needham.k12.ma.us

HS Strength & Conditioning Coach: **TBA**

Middle School Athletics Operations: **Allie LeBlanc** allie\_leblanc@needham.k12.ma.us

MS Athletic Trainer: **Jackie Hall** jacquelyn\_hall@needham.k12.ma.us

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Team Name: **Rockets**  
Colors: **Navy, Gold & White**  
State Affiliation: **Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)**  
League: **Bay State Conference (BSC)**

- BSC Carey Division: Braintree, Brookline, Framingham, **NEEDHAM**, Newton North, Weymouth
- BSC Herget Division: Dedham, Milton, Natick, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley

*An academically qualified student, who does not have any outstanding fees or equipment due, will only become eligible to Tryout/Participate in the NHS Athletic Program if the following requirements are met:*

1. **SEASONAL ATHLETIC REGISTRATION/PERMISSION FORM** submitted by posted deadlines prior to each season of athletic participation (*Fall - **GOLD**, Winter - **BLUE** & Spring - **GREEN***);
2. Current **DOCTOR'S PHYSICAL** (*good for 13 Months*) **MUST** be on file before first season of athletic participation and updated/new physicals need to be submitted along with registration/permission forms;
3. Completion, by both student-athlete & parent(s), of state-mandated online **CONCUSSION EDUCATION COURSE** once each school year before the first season of athletic participation (approved free course available at [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion));

**ONCE STUDENT MAKES ROSTER:** Payment of NHS Athletic or Club Fees & applicable Sport Surcharges must be paid by the seasons user fee deadline (*request for reduction of fee forms are also available in Athletics Office*).

*Please also visit the NHS Athletics web page at:  
<http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics>  
for athlete and team information and updates, forms, links, and complete team schedules.*

## **SEASONAL ATHLETIC REGISTRATION FORMS**

A signed (*by student & parent/guardian*) and completed NHS Seasonal Athletic Registration Form must be submitted before *EACH* athletic season (Fall, Winter, Spring) of participation. If a current Doctor's Physical is not on file, an up-to-date Physical (*good for 13 months from the date of the physical*) must be submitted to the Athletic Office at least ten (10) days prior to the start of try-outs/first day of practice for an athlete to be eligible to participate. *Seasonal Registration Forms are color-coded: Fall "GOLD"; Winter "BLUE", and Spring "GREEN".*

## **NOTE ABOUT TIMING OF DOCTOR'S PHYSICALS**

It is strongly recommended that annual physicals be scheduled between June 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> as exams administered during this period of time cover students for the complete school year. New physicals need to be submitted as soon as, if not before, the old ones expire, even if the expiration date occurs during a season of participation.

**No athletes will be allowed to practice or compete until both the Season Registration Form and a current Doctor's Physical have been submitted and the School Nurse has signed off on the eligibility of the athlete.** Seasonal Registration Forms are available at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics> and in the Athletic Office. Once completed, they can be dropped off, faxed, mailed, or scanned and emailed to Athletic Office. Up-to-date eligibility information is also posted prior to each season outside of the Athletic Office.

## **ATHLETIC USER FEES, SURCHARGES & FAMILY CAP INFORMATION**

Once team rosters are set, each athlete must pay the NHS Athletic User Fee of \$285.00 or the NHS Club Team Fee of \$225.00 per sport per season before the first regularly scheduled contest in order to receive a uniform and to be eligible to compete.

*Varsity Ice Hockey and Alpine Ski families should be advised that a \$300.00 surcharge per player has been implemented for all students who make one of the NHS teams (Varsity Boys or Girls Ice Hockey, Varsity/JV Boys or Girls Alpine Ski). Surcharge for JV Boys & Girls Ice Hockey and Snowboarding is \$250. All Swimmers and Divers (Varsity/JV Boys or Girls) will be charged a \$50.00 surcharge. Students participating in Club Sailing in the fall and/or spring or will be charged a \$175.00 surcharge for each season. Winter options Club Squash (\$175.00), Club Bowling (\$75.00) & Club Fencing (\$125) also carry surcharges. Spring Club Water Polo (\$75) Newly proposed Club Sports may also have surcharges apply.*

User Fee/Surcharge checks should be made out to: **NHS Athletics** and should include the name of the student-athlete and which sport the fee is covering. Checks should be brought or mailed into the Athletic Office. If you choose to mail in the User Fee, please be aware that until the check is received and processed, the athlete will not be eligible to participate in any sport. *Please note that there is a Family User Fee Cap of \$1,140.00 per school year (surcharges do not count towards the Family Cap).*

## **REQUEST FOR REDUCTION OF ATHLETIC USER FEE FORM**

If a student qualifies for the Free and Reduced Lunch Plan, the student is also eligible to receive a reduced Athletic User Fee of \$50.00, but must fill out a Request for Reduction of Athletic User Fee Form to receive the discount. All families also have the ability to submit a Request for Reduction Form in the case of financial hardship, which will be reviewed and either accepted/declined on a case-by-case basis. Request for Reduction of Fee Forms are available in the Athletic Office and if accepted, reduce the User Fee for the given season to \$100.00 per athlete (*Reduction of Fee Request Forms must be submitted for each season of participation*).

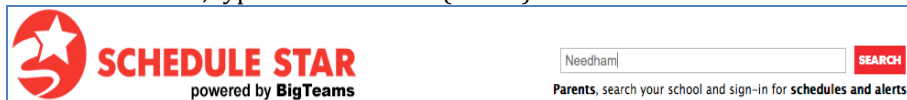
## V. SEASON SCHEDULES, PROGRAM UPDATES, LINKS, FORMS, ATHLETE & TEAM INFO

Please visit the NHS Athletics Website at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics> for program updates, athlete and team information, links to all forms, and complete season schedules.

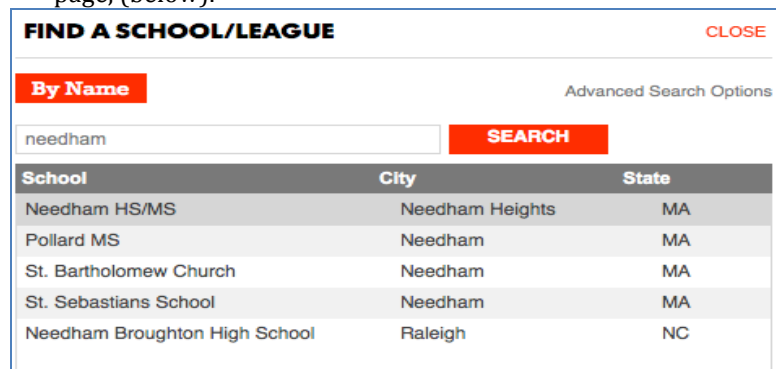
Season competition schedules for all teams can also be found by visiting [www.schedulestar.com](http://www.schedulestar.com) or using the links provided on the Athletics website at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics/Schedule>.

When using Schedule Star, please follow directions below for specific team and season schedules:

- Visit [www.schedulestar.com](http://www.schedulestar.com)
- In search bar, type in "Needham" (below)

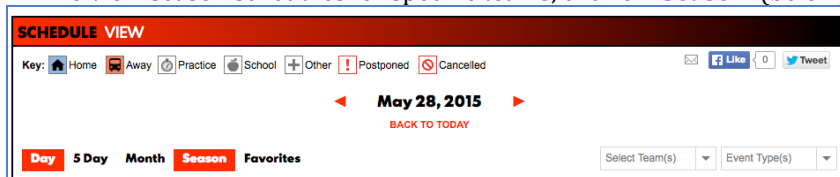


- From the list that comes up, click on "Needham HS/MS", this will lead you to Needham's general monthly schedule page, (below).

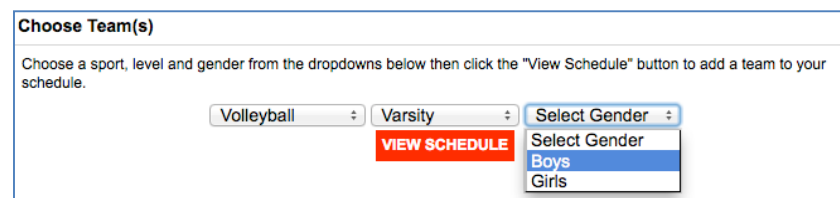


School	City	State
Needham HS/MS	Needham Heights	MA
Pollard MS	Needham	MA
St. Bartholomew Church	Needham	MA
St. Sebastians School	Needham	MA
Needham Broughton High School	Raleigh	NC

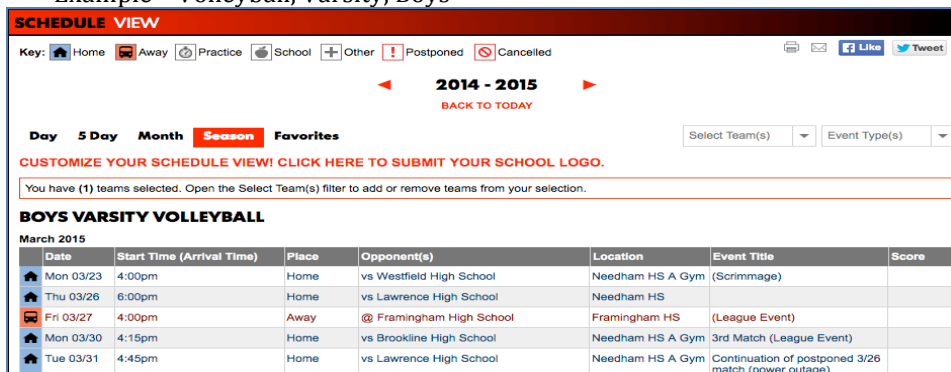
- To view season schedules for specific teams, click on 'Season' (below)



- Three options will come up 'Select Sport', 'Select Level', and 'Select Gender'. Use these drop down menus to search for specific team season schedules (below).



- Example - Volleyball, Varsity, Boys



Date	Start Time (Arrival Time)	Place	Opponent(s)	Location	Event Title	Score
Mon 03/23	4:00pm	Home	vs Westfield High School	Needham HS A Gym	(Scrimmage)	
Thu 03/26	6:00pm	Home	vs Lawrence High School	Needham HS		
Fri 03/27	4:00pm	Away	@ Framingham High School	Framingham HS	(League Event)	
Mon 03/30	4:15pm	Home	vs Brookline High School	Needham HS A Gym	3rd Match (League Event)	
Tue 03/31	4:45pm	Home	vs Lawrence High School	Needham HS A Gym	Continuation of postponed 3/26 match (power outage)	

## VI. GOVERNING BODIES

### **Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)**

Needham High School is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and is therefore governed by Association "Rules and Regulations." Under MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set their own policies, rules and/or regulations as long as they are more restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA. Rules governing individual sports vary depending upon the sport. One of the primary functions of the MIAA is to sponsor and conduct post-season tournaments leading to the determination state champions. The MIAA Handbook is available for review at [www.miaa.net](http://www.miaa.net) as well as in the Principal's Office and the Athletic Office.

The MIAA is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations and is bound by Federation's set of rules, policies and regulations.

### **Bay State Conference (BSC)**

Needham High School is a member of the twelve (12) school Bay State Conference (BSC). The BSC is governed by the MIAA and its own Constitution. A copy of the Constitution is available for review in the Athletic Office. Most game schedules at all levels of competition are set by the BSC. Schedules at the varsity level are divided into two (2) divisions for championship play, while at the junior varsity and freshman levels, schedules are divided into seasonal play.

The BSC "Carey Division" includes the following high schools:

**Braintree, Brookline, Framingham, NEEDHAM, Newton North, Weymouth**

The BSC "Herget Division" includes:

**Dedham, Milton, Natick, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley**

Interdivisional scheduled play is common for most teams and non-conference contests are often also scheduled against schools from other surrounding communities.

## VII. SELECT RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### **The following rules and regulations shall be adhered to by all NHS student-athletes:**

- All NHS student-athletes must abide by current MIAA, BSC, and NHS Rules and Regulations.
- All team members are responsible for equipment issued to them and will be assessed for the replacement cost of any items lost or vandalized. Student-athletes not accounting for such replacement costs will be prohibited from further athletic participation until such assessments are paid. Any items lost, stolen, or vandalized must be reported to the supervising coach immediately.
- Inappropriate behavior and actions unbecoming to NHS students will result in action taken at the discretion of the coaches, the Athletic Director, and in some cases, the NHS Administration. This action may range from a warning, to immediate suspension from the team, depending on the severity of the offense.
- A student who has been suspended, whether in-school or out-of-school, is automatically excluded from participation in extracurricular activities until s/he has returned to school and completes a full day of attendance.
- If a participant is expelled from a team due to disciplinary reasons, or because of an infringement of any local, league or state rules, the participant forfeits his/her claim to any awards earned for that sport season. The participant also forfeits his/her privilege of attending postseason team activities or events.
- Any student in any sport who willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent shall be removed from that contest immediately and shall not participate in any sports for one year from the date of the incident.



## VIII. CHEMICAL HEALTH/ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY VIOLATIONS (MIAA RULE 62)

Needham High School enforces a Chemical Health Violation Policy for student-athletes who are in or out of season. The policy states:

***“During the school year, from the second Monday preceding Labor Day (start of Fall practices in August) through the last day of school or MIAA tournament play, whichever ends latest, a NHS student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy-sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol, marijuana or any controlled substance.”***

If a violation occurs during the enforceable timeframe, but out of a season of participation, the penalty will be enforced the next season of participation. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her doctor. Use of tobacco, smokeless tobacco, electronic tobacco devices (including e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, hookah pens, etc.) and steroids are also prohibited.

When information is presented to the administration about a possible violation, a mandatory meeting will be arranged with the student-athlete involved, the Principal, Assistant Principal and/or the Athletic Director, in order to give the student an opportunity to be heard.

### **a) First Violation:**

When the Principal, Assistant Principal or designee, confirms, following the opportunity for student to be heard, that a violation has occurred:

- The student shall become ineligible and lose eligibility for the next consecutive regular season interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all regular season contests in that sport. For the student, the length of penalties will be dependent upon the season when the sanction will occur.
- The ineligible student will also not be permitted to participate in any non-regular season contests during the violation period, including but not limited to preseason scrimmages, jamborees and play days. *The non-regular season contests missed do not count towards the 25% rule for regular season contests.*
- No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program.
- It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation.
- Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student’s next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.
- Any NHS Team Captain found in violation will have a review of his/her captainship. Decisions on captain status (probation, suspension, removal, etc.) will be made at discretion of Athletic Department & Team Coaches.

### **b) Second and Subsequent Violations:**

When the Principal, Assistant Principal or designee confirms, following the opportunity for student to be heard, that a violation has occurred:

- The student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive regular season interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs.
- The ineligible student will also not be permitted to participate in any non-regular season contests during the violation period, including but not limited to preseason scrimmages, jamborees and play days. *The non-regular season contests missed do not count towards the 60% rule for regular season contests.*
- Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student’s next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.
- If, after the second violations the student, of his/her own volition, becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum penalty of 40% of consecutive regular season interscholastic contests. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such certification.

- If a third violation takes place, there will be no opportunity for reduction of the 60% season suspension. The student also risks permanent removal from any and all athletic participation. The possibility for removal will be determined through a review of the student case, involving the student, his or her family, the Athletic Director, Assistant Principal(s), coach(es) and additional administrators or counselors as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.
- Any NHS Team Captain found to be in violation a second time, will have captaincy status removed for the remainder of the current season (if in-season when violation takes place) or for the next season of participation (if out-of-season when violation takes place).

## **IX. ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

Below are the attendance and absence policies and procedures for all student-athletes at NHS:

- Students absent from school may not participate in any extra-curricular activities that day.
- Any students being excused for medical reasons from physical education classes may not participate in any athletic activities that day.
- Students who are dismissed from school by the school nurse due to illness or injury may not participate in extra-curricular activities for that day, including athletic events and practices/activities, student performances, school-sponsored trips, etc.
- Students who miss any classes due to entering school late or leaving school early are ineligible to participate in any games, practices, or extra-curricular activities that day.
- Students who are absent from school on Friday, or the last day of the week, without an approved excuse, are ineligible to play on the next calendar day after the absence.

In relation to athletic and extra-curricular participation, the School and the Athletic Department support certain absences as excused, as long as a written request is submitted to the appropriate Assistant Principal for pre-approval and authorization. These include, but are not limited to:

- School-sponsored trips that are considered an extension of the classroom;
- Documented college visits (with a limit of three excused absences);
- Family emergency situations and funerals;
- Pre-planned appointments with a school or outside counselor, or with a physician.

### **a) Varsity Teams:**

Families of student-athletes on varsity teams should understand that all three regularly scheduled school vacations (December, February, April) occur during athletic seasons and that the athletic program continues to operate. Although extended absences from team functions, either during school vacation periods or while school is in session, are discouraged, the Athletic Department recognizes the fact that certain circumstances do require them. Students who are planning to be absent from team activities for an extended period of time due to family trips, religious obligations, or college visitations (as examples) are expected to inform their coach regarding the absence as soon as plans are made and at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. Policies are set at the specific team level for how each case is handled, however, for example, if an athlete misses one game or more than one practice, under such circumstances, he/she may miss the first scheduled contest after his or her return. Although prior notification of a planned absence is mandatory, such notification does not eliminate the consequence. An athlete is required to earn his or her position back upon return.

### **b) Junior Varsity and Freshman Teams:**

During school vacation periods efforts are made to limit Junior Varsity and Freshman contests against other schools, however, due to seasonal constraints and weather issues, events will sometimes be scheduled during vacations and on holidays. Practices may also be held (coaching decision) for students who are not on extended absences as defined in the Varsity Section above. All available team members are expected to attend team practices.

### **c) Daily Team Attendance:**

It is extremely important that a coach be notified if a student is not going to be present at a practice or game for any reason, but specifically when a student is out of school on that day or when there is another conflict that exists. The

coaches in our programs expect their athletes to be present at all team related activities and may suspend a team member from practices and/or contests for absences. While students can be “excused” from team activities for illness, injury, academic, family or religious reasons, prior notification is expected. Please remember students who leave school early or who enter school late without an approved excuse cannot participate in any games, practices, or extra-curricular activities that day. In the case of after school academic commitments or obligations with teachers, a note from the teacher must be brought by the student-athlete to his or her coach upon arriving late to practice.

## **X. LOYALTY TO NHS TEAM: BONA FIDE TEAM MEMBER RULE**

A Bona Fide member of a NHS team (Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman, or Club) is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team sessions (e.g. practices, tryouts, competitions). Bona Fide members of NHS teams are precluded from missing a high school practice, competition or team activity in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity/event in any sport recognized by the NHS Athletic Department (as listed on page 4 of this Handbook). First Offense: Student athlete is suspended for 25% of the season. Second Offense: Student athlete is suspended for an additional 25% of the season, and is ineligible for tournament play immediately upon confirmation of the violation.

### **Bona Fide Team Member Waiver Guidelines (*MIAA Rule 86*)**

On occasion, a student might find himself/herself in potential conflict with the Bona Fide Team Member Rule. This can happen when a student-athlete has an association with an out-of-school team or has an opportunity to participate in some special tournament or on a special team. A waiver of the Bona Fide rule excusing the student from the school activity that day and allowing the student to participate in such a non-school event is possible under the guidelines set forth below. Before a waiver request is made through the NHS Athletic Department ALL of the following points must be considered:

- The non-school event must be a significant experience -- not one normally available to most anyone.
- The invitation must have come from a personalized invitation -- not a form letter that went to a large number of students.
- It must be clear that the student is not being exploited and that the student is truly being singled out to participate.
- The amount of time being missed from school will definitely be considered.
- The number of school team activities being missed will be a factor considered.
- There is a limit to the number of times that a student could qualify for a waiver. It would be extremely rare that a student-athlete would be granted more than one waiver per year.
- The request for a waiver must have the written support of the NHS Principal, the Athletic Director, the parents of the athlete, and the NHS coach.

Waivers will be considered on an individual basis on the merits of each case. Requests for a waiver need to come through the NHS Athletic Director at least three (3) weeks prior to the event student will be participating in. The Bay State Conference has its own Eligibility Review Board (ERB) for Bona Fide Team Member waiver requests and has the final approval authority for all cases when supported, the NHS Athletic Director will work with the student and family to complete the waiver form to be submitted to the BSC ERB. (Sample MIAA Form can be reviewed at [http://www.miaa.net/contentm/easy\\_pages/view.php?sid=38&page\\_id=88](http://www.miaa.net/contentm/easy_pages/view.php?sid=38&page_id=88)).

## **XI. ONLY ONE (1) SCHOOL SPORT PER SEASON PERMITTED**

A student-athlete shall participate in only one recognized NHS sport in any defined school sport season (Fall, Winter, or Spring), including tournaments and/or championships in that season. For the purposes of this rule only, a student-athlete officially becomes a member of his/her team for the sport season on the date of that school's first regular season contest in that sport. Exceptions are as follows:

- If a licensed physician recommends that an athlete terminate participation in a sport for medical reasons after the first contest, the athlete will be permitted to join another team if he/she receives the written approval of a licensed physician.
- A school may approve a varsity or sub varsity request to join a second varsity or sub varsity team after terminating his/her membership with the first varsity or sub varsity team, providing written approval is received from the principal, athletic director, and both coaches involved with the change, and it happens within the first 1/2 of the season.
- **Note on Try-outs & Cuts:** *Students may only try-out for one team at a time, however, students cut from one team are encouraged to try-out for, or shift over, to another no-cut team if there is space available in the program.*

**PENALTIES:** If a student-athlete violates the one-sports rule, he/she will be ineligible for that season, and all contests in which he/she participated in both sports must be forfeited.

## **XII. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

A student must have passed, and received full credit in, five subjects (four of which must be majors) and not received more than one failing grade at the end of the most recent quarter (i.e. 2nd quarter marks, not semester grades, determine 3rd quarter eligibility), and must presently be taking at least five subjects (four majors) in the current quarter, to be eligible to participate in the Interscholastic Athletics Program.

To be eligible for the fall season, a student is required to have final passing grades and received full credit in at least five subjects (four majors) for the preceding academic year and may not have received more than one failing final grade for the year. The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determining only on the date when grades for the marking quarter, or final grades, have been released to the parents of all students.

When a student is determined to be academically ineligible by the Athletic Director, the student's guidance counselor and coach will be notified about the situation and asked to touch base with the student and/or family directly. Academically ineligible students may not participate in any team practices, scrimmages or interscholastic contests during the ineligibility period.

- Passing is considered to be a 60 or above in all graded classes.
- Needham High School (NHS) carries a higher academic standard than the MIAA, and as such, the MIAA recognizes the NHS standard as its own in all NHS student cases. NHS may not, after the fact, declare such students who meet the lower MIAA standard as eligible for upcoming competitions.
- Incomplete grades may not be counted toward eligibility until they are made up following school policy.
- Repeated subject work upon which credit has once been received cannot count a 2nd time for eligibility.
- A class taken during the summer can only count towards eligibility if the class was previously pursued and failed during the preceding academic year.
- Students receiving services under Chapter 766 whose individualized education plan is a 502.4 or more restrictive prototype may be declared academically eligible by their Principal provided that all other eligibility requirements are met.

## **XIII. ATHLETIC TEAM/ STUDENT-ACTIVITY PSYCH GUIDELINES**

Needham High School wants to ensure the integrity of the learning environment and the emotional and physical safety of all students, while also supporting activities that promote school and team spirit. When handled in appropriate ways, Team/Group Psych can be a positive, rewarding experience for those involved, however, we, as a School Community, expect and require the following protocols and guidelines be followed:

### **What Psyches SHOULD be:**

- A positive way to promote team/group spirit and unity;
- A fun, rewarding experience for all team/group members;
- An activity that supports the team/group as a whole, helps to strengthen relationships, and helps foster a culture of respect.

### **What Psyches SHOULD NOT be:**

- Distracting to learning environment or educational flow of the school day;
- A way to single out a particular individual or segment of the team/group;
- An embarrassing or hurtful experience, publicly or privately, for any team/group members;
- A requirement for social acceptance on to the team;
- Offensive to other students/student groups, faculty, staff or other members of the Needham Community.

### **In accordance with school policy, Psyches shall NOT include:**

- Any type of props or accessories, or extra items to carry/have during the school day (i.e. balls, bats, cones, toga sheets, coolers, tools or weapons of any kind, folding chairs, sticks, life vests or swim floaties, ski goggles, flags, etc.);
- Food or Candy - *No Psych Bags*;
- Inappropriate attire (all clothing choices must adhere to school dress code).

### **Appropriate Psych Examples Include:**

- Game Jerseys
- Shirt & Tie
- Hawaiian Shirts with Shorts
- Holiday Sweaters
- All members of team/group wear same color or neon clothing
- Pro-Team Jerseys

## **XIV. STATEMENT ON PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AND MUSIC**

NHS is committed to doing our best to enable students to be active participants in both our academic musical ensembles and our school athletic teams. As such, when performance schedules are set and athletic contests are determined, the Athletic and Fine & Performing Arts Directors meet in the summer to try to avoid potential conflicts. However, due to the nature of both, there will inevitably be some conflicts where athletes who are musicians are required to be with the team and the music ensemble at the same time. The way to handle this is *with timely and immediate communication* as soon as the potential conflict arises. As such, **it is the athlete-musician's responsibility to:**

- a) **Immediately** check the required music performance dates and times against the athletic team's game schedule. You will receive the school year's academic music performance required dates during the first day or two of classes. You should receive your athletic team's game schedule at the beginning of practices, or when the team is announced.
- b) **If joining team after the school year begins**, don't forget check the new team's game schedule against the music ensemble dates that you are already committed to.
- c) Where a conflict appears, **immediately** bring it to the attention of **both** the music ensemble director and the athletic team's coach to determine what, if any, options or

accommodations there may be. Remember that both the music ensemble and the athletic team depend on each and all members to support each other.

- d) If the conflict appears irreconcilable, then bring it to the attention of **both** the ensemble director and the coach, who will work with the Athletic Director and Director of Fine & Performing Arts to see if any other arrangements might be possible (such as adjusting game/concert times/dates, etc.) Bringing it to the attention of all parties involved as soon as you can is the key. Conflicts that come to light at the last minute have much less possibility of being adjusted.
- e) If the musician-athlete has acted in a timely fashion as described above, and there is still no way to resolve the conflict, then the music directors and coaches involved will ensure that the musician-athlete clearly understands all options and or consequences of doing one or the other. Whenever possible the best long term interests of the particular student involved will be taken into account measured against the ensemble/team needs/consequences.

**Special Note about After School Music Ensemble classes (such as Chorale, After School Chorus, Jazz Ensemble):** Your participation on a regular basis in these class meetings is required as in any other academic class. As such, if your particular athletic team has practices/games that conflict on a regular ongoing basis with the ensemble class schedule, then you may have to make a decision about your ability to actually participate in the group or be on the team. According to school policy, practices are not to officially begin until 3:15, but there is still usually some overlap with the music class meeting requirements. As in the above, the key is to immediately bring this to the attention of the ensemble director and coach before committing to the athletic team or the group. These adults are committed to trying to help you while, at the same time, maintaining the integrity of the groups involved. As always, timely communication is the key. We may not be able to solve all conflicts, and difficult choices may need to be made, but it should be done in a timely, calm and logical manner. **Beginning the conversation is the responsibility of the student-athlete musician.**

## **XV. AGE LIMITS**

A student must be an undergraduate under nineteen years of age, which has not yet accumulated the credits required for a diploma, with the following exceptions:

- A graduate of a high school in February or June may represent his/her school in athletics until the close of the school semester if otherwise eligible.
- A student who earns credits required for a diploma prior to attending eight semesters in a 4-year high school, who is not granted a diploma, may continue to represent his/her school if he/she continues to take at least 20 credits of prepared work or its equivalent if otherwise eligible.
- A student may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that his/her nineteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year.

## **XVI. TRANSPORTATION**

The school provides bus transportation or a suitable substitute to most "away" contests. All team members are expected to travel to these contests using the school-provided transportation. Exceptions to this policy must be requested in writing to the Athletic Director by a student's parent prior to the contest. Parents may pick up their child at the conclusion of an away game if they make their presence known to the coach. Parents may only drive a student, who is not their child, home from an away contest if a written note or email is submitted by the parents of the student who will be traveling home with another family to the coach at least 24 hours in advance. In most instances, students will not be allowed to drive themselves to and from away contests.

## **XVII. ATHLETIC TRAINERS AND TRAINING ROOM**

Needham High School is extremely fortunate to currently have two highly qualified and skilled ATC Athletic Trainers on staff and a well equipped training center. On school days, the Trainer's hours are usually 2:00pm until the conclusion of the last practice session or home contest. During weekends or on days when school is not in session, the Trainer is required to be on site only for contests and for some scheduled scrimmages. Occasionally, the Trainer will be on site for "non-school" day practice sessions.

At certain times, Trainers and the facility can be extremely busy. Due to this, access to the training room and its services are limited to athletes who are there for care only; it is not to be used as a student lounge. Training services will be granted on a first come, first served basis on practice days. On game days, students will be treated in an order that will allow bus and/or game commitments to be met. The Training program exists to help athletes receive the best possible care.

In the event of an athletic injury, the Trainer and/or Physician is/are in immediate control. At away contests, if a Trainer or Physician is not present, the host school medical personnel are in control. If no medical personnel are present, members of the coaching staff are instructed to "take charge" of the situation and, if warranted, call for emergency care. After an injury, a student may not return to competition without clearance by the Trainer. ***If a student-athlete is referred to the outside care of a Physician, the student-athlete may not, under any circumstances, return to participation until a written note from the Physician is submitted to the Trainer, Athletic Director and/or NHS Nurses clearing the student-athlete for participation.***

## **XVIII. CONCUSSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **a. Purpose**

Use of these guidelines is intended to minimize the effects of sports concussion injuries for NHS student athletes. A comprehensive approach will be used. This involves education of athletes, coaches, parents, school personnel and event officials, as well as the supervision and management of an injured student during the recovery period from a concussion. Baseline neuropsychological testing of contact sport athletes, sideline assessment by the athletic trainers, follow-up neuropsychological testing of injured athletes, and medical referral and return to participation are included. Although every concussion is different, standardized guidelines for monitoring and management of concussed athletes is desirable to effect the most inclusive intervention, to monitor recovery, reduce complications, and reduce the risk of repeat brain injury of concussed athletes.

**b. Concussion Legislation & Pre-Participation Education Requirements** from “*Department of Public Health 105 CMR 201.000: Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities*” (complete legislation can be found at [www.mass.gov/dph/injury](http://www.mass.gov/dph/injury))

### **CMR 201.008 Participation Requirements for Students and Parents:**

- Each year the NHS Athletic Department, on the NHS Athletics Seasonal Registration Form as well as on the NHS Athletics website and in the Student-Athlete Handbook, will provide a list and internet links for DPH-approved on-line courses for all students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents in advance of the student's participation.
- All students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents shall satisfy the following pre-participation requirements:
- **Ongoing Requirements.** If a student sustains a head injury or concussion during the season, but not while participating in an extracurricular athletic activity, the parent shall complete the Report of Head Injury Form, and submit it to the athletic trainer, athletic director and/or school nurse.

**Each year, before the student begins practice or competition, the student and parent shall:**

- Complete current DPH-approved training regarding head injuries and concussions in extracurricular athletic activities and provide signed acknowledgement on the Seasonal Registration Form that they have read and understand the DPH-approved written materials ([www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)) or have taken the approved CDC free online education course:

**Center for Disease Control & Prevention - [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)**

Course: ***“Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports”***

- Before the start of every sports season, the student and parent(s) shall complete and submit the **NHS Athletics Seasonal Registration Form**, signed by both, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history; any head, face or spine injury history; and any history of co-existent concussive injuries. *While pre-registration forms are accepted in June of each year for the following Fall Season, if a head injury, or other significant injury, takes place after the June submission, but before the start of Fall Season, it is required that a new, updated Registration Form be submitted along with a Physician’s note.*

### **c. ImPACT Concussion Testing**

ImPACT testing is a computerized neurocognitive assessment tool that assists health care professionals in determining an athlete’s ability to return to play subsequent to suffering a concussion. It consists of tests that evaluate an individual’s immediate & delayed memory, cognitive thinking, and reaction time.

An athlete suffering from a concussion will take a “post-injury test,” the raw score from this test is compared to population normative values, and the athlete’s own previously tested baseline. The resultant information assists the health care professional in determining whether or not that athlete is ready to return to play.

ImPACT baseline testing is conducted on a priority basis; athletes participating in sports that consist of high levels of contact are baseline tested sooner than those in sports requiring less contact. Athletes in some sports, where there is little to no contact will not be scheduled for ImPACT testing unless a specific request is made.

Baseline tests are valid for two years, with the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade athletes, and athletes that have never been tested before, being tested each year by one of the NHS Certified Athletic Trainers. Students who have suffered a concussion within the previous two years will be tested each year.

### **d. CMR 201.011: Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play**

Each student who is removed from a practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits any signs and symptoms of a concussion, must be seen by a licensed physician (Primary Care, Emergency, etc.) and provide written documentation from the physician of the diagnosis and return to participation criteria. The NHS Athletic Trainer will then work in consultation with the physician and his or her office to bring the athlete through the NPS-approved graduated return-to-participation protocol (*found to follow*). It is important to note, that according to the legislation, and to Needham Public Schools policy, only **“a duly licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician”** may authorize a student to return to participation.

*Please remember that even though a student may be cleared to play by an outside physician, in the case of a concussion or suspected concussion, the NHS Certified Athletic Trainer has the final say about if a student will be cleared to return-to-participation or not.*

### **e. Needham Public Schools: Concussion Return-to-Participation Policies and Procedures**

- One page printable document to follow on Page 17:



## Needham Public Schools

### Concussion Return-to-Participation Policies and Procedures

A concussion is a form of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury that results from a direct blow (i.e. head coming in contact with another object) or indirect blow (i.e. blow to another part of the body). Concussions can be life-threatening if not treated correctly or too aggressively.

It is important that athletes, coaches, parents, school personnel and event officials are able to recognize common signs and symptoms of concussion:

#### Signs (what you see)

*Inappropriate emotions	*Irritable or angry behavior	*Loss of consciousness
*Loss of orientation	*Memory problems	*Personality change
*Poor balance/coordination	*Poor concentration	*Mood swings
*Vomiting	*Easily distracted	*Vacant stare/glassy eyed

#### Symptoms (what they tell you)

*Blurred Vision	*Dizziness	*Sleep disturbance
*More sleep than usual/Drowsiness	*Fatigue	*Headache
*Feel “in a fog” or “swimmy”	*Feel “slowed down”	*Nausea
*Nervousness	*Ringing in the ears	*Sadness
*Seeing stars	*Sensitivity to light	*Sensitivity to noise

#### State Requirements

##### Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student who is removed from a practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits any signs and symptoms of a concussion, must be seen by a licensed physician (Primary Care, Emergency, etc.) and provide written documentation from the physician of the diagnosis and return to participation criteria. The NHS Athletic Trainer will then work in consultation with the physician and his or her office to bring the athlete through the NPS-approved graduated return-to-participation protocol.

#### Bottom Line

- When in doubt, pull them out: You know your athletes, if you suspect he/she sustained a head injury, call the ATC or inform their parents (if ATC is unavailable).
- If for some reason no one is available, call Needham Dispatch and send to ER.

#### Return-to-Participation Procedure

We have adopted a dynamic return-to-participation policy adapted from recommendations from the Division of Sports Medicine at Children’s Hospital. It is based on stages and will be monitored by the NHS Athletic Trainers, the NHS Nurses, the Athletic Director, and the Parents, as well as coaches (**WE WORK AS A TEAM!**). An athlete must experience no signs/symptoms for 24 hours in order to progress to the next stage, should he/she experience symptoms, he/she will return to previous stage:

#### ATHLETICS GRADUATED RETURN-TO-PARTICIPATION LEVELS

- Level 1:** No activity (to progress beyond Level 1, Stages 1-5 of Return-to-Academics Plan must be completed and student must be cleared for full academics)
- Level 2:** Light activity (walking, light biking, light elliptical)
- Level 3:** Moderate activity (running, bike, elliptical, swimming, light sports specific work: shooting baskets, throwing, etc...)
- Level 4:** Non-contact training with some light strength training if available
- Level 5:** Return to full contact practice: must be cleared medically
- Level 6:** Full return to play. Final clearance, in consultation with licensed physician, from NHS Certified Athletic Trainer required.

## **XIX. NHS FITNESS CENTER**

The NHS Fitness Center is open and staffed by the NHS Strength & Conditioning Coach after school each day from 3:00-5:00pm. Individual and team conditioning sessions may be set up with the S & C Coach by coaches or students directly. The Fitness Center is available during open hours to all NHS students, regardless of athletic status or participation, along with all Needham Public Schools employees. Fitness Center rules and policies must be abided by at all times and the S & C Coach reserves the right to suspend or ban any students for violation of the rules and policies (posted in the Fitness Center).

## **XX. ANTI-HAZING AND ANTI-BULLYING**

### **1. Needham High School Policy Addressing Bullying**

Bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation will not be tolerated in the Needham Public Schools. This includes all forms of bullying that involve students either on campus, on buses, or anywhere on school grounds or while engaged in school sponsored events or activities. While it is recognized that we have an obligation to our students and school community to respond effectively to all bullying that happens while school is in session, school personnel will also make every reasonable attempt to intervene with situations where bullying might happen outside of school, but the ramifications are brought into the school building.

In addition, Schools will not tolerate retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment, bullying, and/or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school. Persons who engage in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to: reprimand, suspension, expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration to be appropriate.

#### **A. Definitions:**

**Bullying** is conduct that is repeated by one or more students and targets another student, causing one or more of the following:

- physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to his/her property;
- placement of the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her personal property;
- a hostile environment at school for the targeted student;
- infringement of the rights of the targeted student at school; or
- material and substantial disruption of the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying generally involves “picking on” a student over time and may include conduct such as hitting and shoving; pressuring a student into taking an action he/she does not wish to take; words that involve threats, teasing, put-downs or name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations and social isolation.

**Cyberbullying** is bullying through use of cell phones, computers, or other technology and may include conduct such as sending mean or threatening email messages, instant messages or text messages; creating web content (including but not limited to social networking sites) that makes fun of, humiliates, or intimidates others; and posting or sending embarrassing pictures of others. It may also include creating a website, blog or posting by which the creator/author impersonates another person.

**Hostile Environment** is a circumstance in which the targeted student becomes so concerned about bullying that he/she is unable to participate in and concentrate on his/her schoolwork and other school activities.

**Retaliation** involves a student “getting back at” another student because of a belief that the student reported bullying or provided information about it to an adult or others who may help the targeted student.

B. Acts of bullying (including cyberbullying) and retaliation are prohibited:

The Needham Public Schools prohibit bullying (including cyberbullying) and retaliation as defined above under the following circumstances:

- on school grounds or any property next to school grounds;
- at the bus stop or on school buses or any other school vehicle;
- at any school-sponsored, or school-related activities, functions or programs;
- through use of any school computers, internet connection or other school based technology;
- at a location or during activities that are not school related, or by using a private computer or cell phone, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student, infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school, or otherwise disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

C. How to Report Bullying:

Students who believe they are targets of bullying or retaliation, or who know about bullying conduct should report the conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal or other school staff member, who will in turn report the incident to the principal.

All school personnel are mandated to report any incidents of bullying that they witness. In addition, parents are encouraged to report any incidents that may involve bullying. All members of the school community are responsible for keeping students safe. We expect that the community will set a positive example and not tolerate students who might create unsafe situations for other students.

D. Consequences:

The Principal or his/her designee will be responsible for taking steps to investigate and otherwise address reports of bullying and retaliation. Students who engage in bullying will be subject to discipline by the Principal or Assistant Principal, subject to any procedural requirements. Disciplinary actions will be based upon the severity of the incident and whether it is an isolated incident or involves a pattern of behavior over a period of time. Needham High School uses a progressive disciplinary model. As such, consequences on findings of bullying will be based on the severity and repeated nature of the incident. Some examples of consequences are:

- a verbal or written warning,
- mandated counseling,
- removal of privileges,
- social or co-curricular suspension,
- detention,
- suspension, up to expulsion.

In addition to taking disciplinary action, the Principal/designee will report conduct relating to bullying and retaliation to local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

## E. Closing a Complaint Regarding Bullying:

In the event the school staff determines that bullying or retaliation (as defined in this policy) has taken place, the Principal or designee will, in addition to taking disciplinary action:

- Notify the parent or guardian of the aggressor
- Inform parents of the targeted student of the steps that have been taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation to the extent consistent with applicable legal restrictions.
- Notify local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges against the aggressor may be pursued.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent school staff and/or school committee (if applicable) from addressing and taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying/cyberbullying or retaliation, as defined above, but that is nevertheless inappropriate for the school environment.

The above language is intended to be consistent with the Public School's Policy Addressing Bullying. A copy of complete policy is available at [http://rwd1.k12.ma.us/student\\_development/Bullying\\_Prevention](http://rwd1.k12.ma.us/student_development/Bullying_Prevention)

## 2. Policy Prohibiting Hazing

*Students are strictly prohibited from participating in initiation or membership rites in connection with school-sponsored activities when their conduct may reasonably be seen as demeaning or assaultive in nature. This prohibition applies even if those targeted give "consent" to such conduct. Students afforded the privilege of participating in athletics and other school sponsored activities are expected to take a leadership role, both by avoiding such conduct themselves and by reporting any such conduct by others to the Principal or his designee. Students who participate in this type of conduct, even as a bystander, or who become aware of it and fail to report it can expect to be excluded from athletics and other extracurricular activities. In addition, they may be subject to suspension and even expulsion from school.*

*Students are also reminded that the Massachusetts General Laws imposes criminal sanctions for particularly serious circumstances involving initiation rights and other conduct, by stating as follows:*

**Section 17:** Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in section eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

**Section 18:** Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section 17 and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. (See M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19).

## **XXI. ROLE OF THE COACH**

Needham High School acknowledges the substantial amount of time coaches and teammates spend with each other. We know how important the relationships that develop between teammates and between a coach and an athlete can be. We see coaches as teachers, mentors, and role models. In addition to teaching the skills and strategies of athletics, coaches must model and encourage positive citizenship, integrity, commitment, and strong work ethic. While keeping the entire team in mind, one of a coach's top priorities must be to assist in the healthy physical, social and emotional development of each student-athlete.

## **XXII. ATHLETE/COACH RELATIONSHIPS**

Participation in athletics should be an enjoyable experience for all parties involved; student, coach and parent. There is no doubt that participation tends to be emotionally charged and dealing constructively with these emotions can be an excellent learning experience. In most cases, athletic competition is extremely positive and complements the educational experience enjoyed by students at Needham High School. Occasionally conflicts between coaches and students arise. These conflicts must be addressed and resolved immediately so that the many benefits of athletic involvement may continue to contribute to the emotional and physical growth of Needham High School students.

## **XXIII. COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Athletic involvement is highly emotional and very time consuming. Because of this, conflicts and issues between a student and his/her coach may arise. It is imperative that any conflict and/or issue be addressed immediately and as directly as possible so that it can be resolved promptly.

**FIRST STEP: Personal Student-Coach Contact** - The athlete should discuss the issue with his/her coach as soon as possible. Sometimes a parent of an athlete may wish to contact the coach. In order for the contact to be productive, it is suggested that athletes and/or parents avoid contacting a coach at the following times:

- **Either prior to or immediately following a contest**
- **During an active practice session**
- **During a time when other students are present or when it would be obvious to others that the discussion is taking place**
- **When there is not sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion**

The best solution is to ask the coach, either over the phone or in person, if an appointment could be made to discuss the issue. A parent or student may also leave a note for the coach in the Athletic Office.

**SECOND STEP: Student-Athletic Director Contact** - If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student and/or parent should contact the Athletic Director. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory conclusion then a meeting will be scheduled involving all concerned parties in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. Since athletic seasons are relatively short, issues should be addressed immediately. While there can be no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful discussion of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

**THIRD STEP: Student-Administration Contact** - If there is still not a satisfactory resolution, the student or parent should contact the High School Principal. The Athletic Director should be informed that this contact is going to be made.

The Athletic Department strives to hire the best possible coaches who are committed to ensuring a positive environment for all athletes. As a department we strive to build player/coach relationships and recognize that all interactions provide a healthy learning opportunity. While we realize that at times an athlete and his or her parents may have a concern with a particular coach and may not want to speak directly with the coach, we feel it is essential that athletes and parents do speak with coaches directly to resolve any concerns. An issue cannot possibly be resolved unless those directly involved have a candid, open conversation regarding the problem. The coach is the person most familiar with the student athlete in the context of the team environment. Coaches and players interact daily at practice and games and have the mutual information necessary to discuss any situation that may arise. This positive communication is of utmost importance.

#### **XXIV. SPECTATOR CONDUCT AT ATHLETIC CONTESTS**

Overzealous fans can create peril to interscholastic athletics. A pass or ticket into an interscholastic athletic event entitles spectators to one thing: the privilege of watching and supporting the talented student-athletes of two schools as they exhibit what they have learned on the athletic field, court, pool, diamond, etc., as an extension of the classroom.

While attending an athletic contest, you are a representative of Needham High School and the Needham community. Unsportsmanlike actions by spectators are a reflection on the school, and especially, on the young men and women comprising the teams representing Needham High School. Students attending interscholastic athletic contests, conducted either in schools or at private facilities, are subject to all school regulations and are expected to adhere to proper rules of behavior as established by the administration.

*A few distinctive guidelines have been established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA "Sportsmanship Manual"):*

1. Show interest in contest by enthusiastically cheering & applauding the performance of both teams.
2. Show proper respect for opening ceremonies by standing at attention and remaining silent when the National Anthem is played.
3. Understand that a ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally attack others, or to be obnoxious. Maintain self-control.
4. Do not "boo", stamp feet, or make disrespectful remarks toward players or officials.
5. Learn rules of the game, so you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
6. Know that noisemakers of any kind are not proper for indoor events.
7. Obey and respect officials and faculty supervisors who are responsible for keeping order. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
8. Stay off the playing area at all times.
9. Do not disturb others by throwing material onto the playing area.
10. Show respect for officials, coaches, cheerleaders, and student-athletes.
11. Pay attention to the half-time program and do not disturb those who are watching or participating.
12. Respect public property by not damaging the equipment or the facilities.
13. Know that school officials reserve the right to refuse attendance of individuals whose conduct is not proper.
14. Refrain from the use of alcohol or drugs on the site of the contest or off of it.