

GUNNISON MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK



2023-2024

I. INTRODUCTION

Athletic and activity participation presents young people with unique and exciting opportunities. With those opportunities comes the responsibility of being a positive extension of the school and a positive role model for others. It is essential that all participants and their parents understand that participation in Gunnison Middle School athletics and activities is a privilege, not a right, and therefore a high level of academic and behavioral standards must be maintained. The Athletic/Activity Code is the primary source of specifying those standards and expectations. All participants and their parents/guardians are expected to thoroughly understand its content and application. It is the hope of GMS coaches and sponsors that participation will help participants by:

- 1. Promoting and developing the concept of teamwork.**
- 2. Promoting athletic success, good grades and incentive to stay in school.**
- 3. Building character and self- esteem**
- 4. Understanding and demonstrating exemplary sportsmanship**
- 5. Learning value of discipline and responsibility**
- 6. Providing extra-curricular activity.**
- 7. Promoting school spirit.**
- 8. Providing experiences that may lead to continuing education beyond high school.**

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is the cornerstone of a quality athletic/activity program. Gunnison Middle School is committed to placing sportsmanship as a top priority in all school activities. Respect for one's self, opponents, and officials is expected of coaches/activity sponsors, participants and spectators at all times. Displays of poor sportsmanship may warrant suspension of participants and/or the banning of spectators from attending athletic/activity events.

The development of a sound mind, body, and character are the basic reasons for activities and athletics. This is the basis upon which we expect our programs to be conducted. Other goals, which complement the development of a sound mind and body, include:

- 1. Knowledge of the rules and the various sports**
- 2. The acquisition of fundamental skills in the various sports**
- 3. Teaching and practicing the ideals of sportsmanship**
- 4. The achievement of the ability to participate in individual and team efforts**
- 5. Learning to win humbly and to lose gracefully**
- 6. Learning the importance of proper conditioning**
- 7. Self-discipline**

It must be recognized that the activity/athletic program is but one part of the student's overall education. Athletics are intended to complement the other areas of the student's education to produce a well-balanced and well-educated individual. It must also be emphasized that although the activities of the participants participating in many of the sports are given a high degree of public acclaim by virtue of the public performance of the student, a strong and acceptable performance in the classroom is the prerequisite for participation in the athletic program.

It is recognized that the athletic coach, by virtue of his/her close association to the participants, exercises considerable influence upon the participants. This power to influence must not be underestimated in relation to its relative importance and impact upon the lives of the participants. It is expected that each coach will use common sense, discretion, and good judgment in helping the participants to form attitudes and behavior patterns, which often will last a lifetime. Rule enforcement must be consistent and immediate.

Character building is esteemed as the most important goal of the athletic program. Character building is placed above all other aspects of the many positive outcomes for our participants who participate in school-sponsored athletics.

BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

Your conduct at activity and athletic events is on display for all to see. If **YOU** want to represent Gunnison Middle School in athletics and activities you are expected to **BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL!**

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

PRE-SPORT/ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

The following forms must be **SIGNED BY ALL APPROPRIATE PARTIES** and on file before a student may begin practice or is issued equipment. This year it is on PlanetHS/Big Teams website.

- 1. Student Athletic/Activity Code Contract**
- 2. Physical Examination (Athletics only)**
- 3. Parent Permission for Participation**
- 4. Emergency Information Card**
- 5. Insurance Coverage for Athletic/Activity Injuries**

A student's physical exam is in effect for 365 calendar days.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide insurance protection for the student while participating in athletic/activity programs. The school district makes available student insurance plans which offer coverage for any accident or injury resulting from participation in school related programs.

- 6. Athletic/Activity Fee Paid in Full or Payment Plan approved by Athletic Director**
Contact the athletic/activity director for information regarding fee waivers.

FEES

Student athletic fees are currently \$75.00 per sport with a family cap of \$375 per year. The family cap pertains to GMS athletics only and does not include other schools or clubs. **Participants will not be refused participation for the inability to pay fees. There are payment options. Financial hardships may be discussed with the athletic director.**

EQUIPMENT

It is understood that the athlete/activity participant accepts the responsibility for all equipment issued and shall provide for its proper care, storage, and return. Athletes/activity participants shall assume responsibility for the equipment not returned when due and shall be suspended from athletics/activities until all equipment is either returned, paid for, or arrangements have been made through the Principal or the Athletic/Activity Director for replacement of such equipment.

CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

Allow at least 24 hours after a contest to approach a coach, then, participants or parents with concerns about the athletic program at GHS are encouraged to observe the following procedures:

- 1. Player - Coach**
- 2. Player - Coach - Parent**
- 3. Player - Coach - Parent - Athletic Director.**
- 4. Player - Coach - Parent - Athletic Director – Athletic Counsel (at least two head coaches from other sports)**

TEAM SELECTION

ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY INJURIES

If at any time during participation, a doctor removes a student from participation because of an illness or injury, the student must have a written release from a doctor before participating again. The written release must be given to the coach/supervisor and/or Athletic Trainer.

The release may be satisfied if upon removal the doctor specifies the duration of the student's restriction from participation and/or competition.

A coach/supervisor may refer a student for a medical evaluation if he/she believes the student to be in physical danger. If this occurs, a doctor's written release is required before the student may return to practice/participation.

TRANSPORTATION

Athletes/Activity participants are always encouraged to ride the designated school vehicle to athletic/activity events when provided. Participants are not allowed to drive themselves or other participants to an event. If parents are transporting their student or another student to an event, written permission is required and must be given to the coach/sponsor prior to the trip. If a parent/guardian wishes to transport their son/daughter home after an event they must first sign their student out with the coach/sponsor. If a participant intends to leave an event with a person other than school personnel or their parent, prior written permission must be provided to the coach/sponsor. The driver must be at least 21 years of age.

*NOTE - If a participant causes disruption on a school vehicle they may be suspended from riding any district transportation for up to one calendar year.

III. ELIGIBILITY

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

GMS has adopted plan uCLASSROOM CONDUCT

Student athletes are expected to be good examples of Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence during competition and in the classroom. Students who receive a classroom conduct referral to the GHS Administration are subject to disciplinary action according to the Student Handbook, as well as further disciplinary action from the Athletic Director and/or Head Coach.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Athletes/Activity participants must be in school for the full day on the day of an event. (Doctor appointments, activity absences, or emergency situations are an exception.)

Athletes/Activity participants must be in school periods 5, 6, & 7 in order to practice. (Doctor appointments, activity absences, or emergency situations are an exception.)

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

Attending school is the number one priority.

If a student has an unexcused absence in any class period during a school day, it will result in a portion of playing time lost in the next contest or event depending on the sport. If a student has a second unexcused absence, that student will not be able to participate in the next contest or activity. If there are two contests or events in that week, the student will be able to participate in the second contest or event. Parents/guardians must excuse the absence within 24 hours, or the absences will be marked unexcused, and playing time will be forfeited.

Athletes/Activity participants must be in school all day after an early morning practice (Doctor appointments, activity absences, or emergency situations are an exception.) Failure to attend ALL classes after an early morning practice will have consequences determined by the coach/activity director, and/or the Athletic Director.

Athletes/Activity participants must be in school all day the day following a weekday game/event. "Sleeping in", regardless of parental excuse, may be regarded as an unexcused absence and may warrant a consequence to be determined by the athletic director and coach/activity sponsor.

Participants must attend pep assemblies during their sport season or face suspension for the next athletic contest/activity event. Contact the coach/sponsor, Athletic Director, or Principal if an exception arises.

TARDIES

It is expected that student athletes lead by example inside and outside of the classroom. If a student athlete receives two or more tardies in a week, it will result in lost playing time in the following competition.

SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

If a student is suspended from school (in and/or out) the student will not be eligible for the next competition/event he/she may compete in.

If a student is suspended from school, the student will not be able to participate in any practices until the suspension is completed. The absence from practice will be considered as one unexcused practice no matter how many days the student is suspended.

If a student is suspended from school for a second time during a sport/activity the student will be suspended from that sport/activity for the remainder of the season.

PRACTICE ATTENDANCE

Athletes must attend a minimum of half the practices between contests in a given week in order to be eligible for the following contest. Practices before a contest must be attended. Not only should attendance be communicated to the GMS Office, student-athletes have the obligation to communicate with the coach, as well. Exceptions to this rule may be given in consultation with the coach and Athletic Director for cases such as family emergencies.

PARTICIPATION FOR NON-GMS STUDENTS

Students who are not currently enrolled at Gunnison Middle School (e.g. homeschool, non-GWSD online programs) are encouraged to participate in GMS athletics and activities. Students are bound by the Code of Conduct expectations and eligibility requirements. Students are expected to provide grade/progress reports to the Athletic Director every Wednesday that the student is participating in the sport or activity by 12:00 pm.

QUITTING A SPORT

If a student chooses to quit a sport/activity he/she is expected to do it properly. The student should make his/her reasons known to the coach in person and must return all equipment and clear all financial responsibilities with the school. **Fees may be returned if a student quits a sport/activity within the first two weeks of practice** (It is the student's/parent's responsibility to request a refund of fees).

Gunnison Middle School Athletic Code of Conduct

LIVING BY THE CODE

Participation in athletics and activities should be:

- Enjoyable to participants and spectators/fans/audiences;
- Educational in both academic pursuits and citizenship;
- Ethical, practicing values of respect, responsibility, and perseverance.

Our primary goal in any athletic/activity is to promote the education and development of the whole student, including having the opportunity to learn and practice values and skills that have been shown to contribute to success later in life. Participants, parents, coaches and sponsors are expected to live by and enforce the principles of the Gunnison Middle School (GMS) Athletics Code of Conduct during AND out of season/activity, in or out of uniform, on or off school grounds, and at all school sponsored events, including travel. All participants, parents, sponsors, and coaches should understand that the Athletic Code of Conduct is a special code with high standards applying to all participants in GHS athletics and activities.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES/ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS

Participants are expected to conduct themselves in a commendable manner at all times in school and the community with special emphasis on appropriate behavior during interscholastic contests, and toward opponents, officials and spectators. The use of profane language and/or unsportsmanlike conduct, the harassment, intimidation or assault upon another individual or another individual's property will not be tolerated. **All athletic and activity participants and their parents should understand that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right.** Given that point of emphasis, ALL participants representing Gunnison Middle School in competition are expected to follow training and practice rules as outlined by the Athletic/Activity Code and by their sport/activity specific rules & regulations. Gunnison Middle School administration and staff also recognize that the expectations set forth in this contract are not only intended

to teach proper behavior, respect and responsibility but also to promote the safety and welfare of every GMS student.

CODE VIOLATIONS

The building principal will have the authority to make the final decision in all code violation matters. 1. The possession, distribution, sale, use (chewing, smoking, inhaling, vaporizing, ingesting, injecting or application) and/or being under the influence of marijuana, illegal drugs, alcohol, and controlled substances, including the possession/use of paraphernalia and vapor pens.

2. Unbecoming behavior or flagrant disregard of established school policies and governmental laws.

- GMS Student Rules of Conduct and Behavior apply at all school-sponsored activities both on and off campus.

When is this contract in effect?

This contract is in effect throughout the participant's high school career (from the time the participant first signed the contract until the day of graduation). Code violations will be enforced during the school year only (defined as the first day of fall practice through the last day of school and/or the official end of an activity/sport season); however, participants who are charged with, or convicted of, criminal offenses are subject to suspension and disciplinary action on a year round basis. Examples of criminal offenses include, but are not limited to: DUI, sale of or possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia, crimes of violence and theft.

Is the code in effect while I am out of season?

Participants who violate the Code of Conduct out of season within the time frame identified above, or while participating in a school sanctioned activity during the summer months (i.e. camps, fundraising events, etc.), are subject to disciplinary action at the beginning of the next competitive season or the next activity in which they are involved.

What happens if a violation is reported?

Any violation reported to the school administration will be investigated. Persons reporting said violation MUST be willing to testify in person or in writing if requested. Also see NOTIFICATION AND DUE PROCESS below. **Note** - participants and parents should be aware that while school personnel do not monitor websites and/or social media looking for incriminating evidence, such sites are public and may be used during an investigation.

Does this contract contain a "guilt by association" clause?

No; however, if a participant knowingly opts to be physically present at a venue in which unbecoming behavior or illegal activities are on display, the participant may be subject to disciplinary action per team rules/policies, to be carried out by a head coach or sponsor.

NOTIFICATION AND DUE PROCESS

The participant and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified as soon as possible of any alleged code violation. The participant and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have an opportunity to meet with building administrators regarding the allegations. At that time the participant will have the opportunity to admit to the alleged code violation or to present evidence and/or challenge evidence presented against him or her. After this meeting, the athletic director and/or building administrator will then render a decision which will result in one of three actions.

1. The participant has admitted the violation and a suspension will be assessed and served.
2. The athlete has denied the charge; however, the athletic director and/or building administrator will assess a suspension based on the evidence.
3. The alleged violation will be dropped due to insufficient evidence.

If a suspension is assessed at this time, the athletic director or building administrator shall inform the participant's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the decision and the basis for it. Notification will be either in person, by phone or in writing.

APPEAL PROCESS

The parent(s)/guardian(s) or participant may appeal the decision first to the Athletic/Activity Council. Athletic/Activity Council will render a decision and present it to the building principal. If there is still a question, the parent(s)/guardian(s) or participant may appeal the decision in writing to the superintendent or superintendent's designee, within three (3) school days after the decision of the athletic director or building administrator. The superintendent or his/her designee will, within three (3) school days of receipt of the written appeal, arrange a meeting between the appropriate parties to review the suspension. This meeting will be conducted by the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. At this meeting the

student will again be provided the opportunity to present on his/her behalf and challenge evidence that has been presented. A summary of the meeting, including the decision made, will be put in writing by the person conducting the meeting and a copy sent to the athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) school days after the meeting has been held. The school shall consider this decision final. **Violations are cumulative over a four (4) year tenure.**

FIRST VIOLATION

For athletics with 11 or fewer contests will be a one (1) contest suspension and for sports with more than 11 contests the sanction will be a two (2) contest suspension. For activities, minimum suspension is to be the next event (additional suspension to be determined by sponsor and administration).

Honesty Clause

- We believe that honesty, integrity, and accountability are becoming and desirable behaviors. Participants who come forth and self-report a code infraction on their own volition (prior to the infraction being reported by a separate entity) have the opportunity to receive a reduction of up to no more than 50 percent in given disciplinary actions. Sanctions will be reduced **ONLY** if the participant is willing to engage in restorative justice practices. A completion date for restorative justice practices shall be set by the participant, parent/guardian, coach/sponsor and athletic director prior to the next scheduled activity or event. Failure to meet set completion date nullifies the option for the honesty clause reduction.
- The actual and specific restorative justice program for the participant will be devised, created and agreed upon by the participant, parents/guardians, coach/sponsor and athletic director.
- The actual reduction of disciplinary action will be determined by the head coach or sponsor and the athletic director.
- The honesty penalty reduction is available on the first violation only and results in the participant waiving his or her right to appeal the suspension.

Restorative Justice

Examples of restorative justice programs include but are not limited to established restorative justice activities, research projects, sharing findings with teams/activity groups, community/volunteer services, and/or individual or group counseling. Note: this is not an exhaustive list of possible practices; they are examples based upon the requirements in Colorado state statutes for prevention, intervention and education. Additional examples provided by the Colorado School Safety Resource Center are provided in this packet.

SECOND VIOLATION

For athletics with 11 or fewer contests will be a two (2) contest suspension and for sports with more than 11 contests the sanction will be a four (4) contest suspension. For activities, minimum suspension is to be the next two (2) events (additional suspension to be determined by sponsor and administration). Second violations require the completion of a mandatory restorative justice program that coincides with the provisions outlined above.

THIRD VIOLATION

Any subsequent violation occurring at any time during a participant's tenure at Gunnison Middle School will result in a suspension from all athletics/activities for 365 days, beginning at the time of the third violation. Possible reinstatement of eligibility may be considered after the initial 365 day suspension and completion of a set rehabilitative/counseling/restorative justice program, with oversight by the Athletic/Activity Council and Athletic Director.

VIOLATION DURING ATHLETIC CONTEST OR ACTIVITY EVENT

Participants who violate the Code of Conduct during an athletic function/activity event will be immediately dismissed from the program and will forfeit all lettering and post-season honors.

CARRY-OVER RULE

A suspension will be carried over and enforced into the participant's next sport/activity season if the suspension has not been completed. (The next sport/activity season being the next sport or activity that the participant is a bona-fide team member.

Please sign and return this code of conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In order for a student to participate in an activity or athletic program, the student's parent/guardian(s) must sign and return the acknowledgement of "this contract" to the building athletic/activity director.

In the event that information is reported to the school, I agree to cooperate fully with the school's investigation and if needed, I will give the school a release for criminal justice and or juvenile justice records to complete the investigation. If I refuse to give consent when asked, this would become grounds for a contract violation.

_____ Participant Name
Printed Parent/Guardian Name Printed

_____ Participant
Signature Parent/Guardian Signature

_____ Date Date

**The Code of Conduct is online for your convenience.*
