

Westford Academy

**Athletic Handbook
2009-10**



**GREY GHOSTS
"THE SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE"**

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Westford Academy athletic programs is to provide an opportunity for student-athletes to participate and share in a positive environment of spirited competition. Our goal is to instill basic values that build character, self-discipline, and self-esteem as an individual and member of a team through the involvement in an interscholastic athletic program.



Grey Ghosts
The Spirit of Excellence

I. Introduction

Interscholastic Athletics...the extended classroom.

“Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing!” That is a quote we often hear when people talk about sports. In today’s world of professional sports, you might substitute the word “money” for winning. In either case, that phrase clearly is what separates interscholastic sports from professionals.

Interscholastic athletics have one main purpose, to add to the opportunities for young adults to develop their character and individual capabilities. In the classroom, students are exposed to academic courses in math, science, language, history, etc. As well as obtaining a broad awareness and knowledge of those areas, students find their niche and gravitate toward their favorites as they start to define their future. Likewise, other opportunities such as athletics, music, drama, journalism, computer science and other clubs, allow students to develop their “special” skill.

What it means to be a student-athlete...

At our level of athletics, student-athletes learn much more than specific sport skills, they learn values and experience valuable lessons in life. To be successful, you must have a strong work ethic. The time and effort that student-athletes put into practice represent a commitment to work and improve their skills. A commitment which becomes evident when the “game” begins.

Student-athletes also learn to depend on others. Team sports are a microcosm of life. We depend daily on our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to succeed. Nowhere is that more evident than in a team

sport where student-athletes learn to work together with others. The ones who score the points or goals don’t have the opportunity unless a teammate “blocks, rebounds, passes” or performs their role. The teammates who work hard in practice but may not gain much game time, are every bit as valuable as the ones who play because they make everyone better through practice. Everyone on a team has a role and contributes to the team success.

Interscholastic athletics also help student-athletes deal and cope with adversity. A critical element of sports is keeping score. That means someone will win the game and someone will lose. But even in defeat, student-athletes learn what it takes to improve and what they can do either as an individual or as a team to become better. In the grand scheme, the score of a single game has little impact on their life, but the experience gained will last forever.

Honesty is another characteristic of athletics. A student-athlete knows when he or she is giving their best effort. They also know when they follow or break team rules. As a member of an interscholastic team, the student-athlete has a responsibility to their teammates, coaches, parents, and classmates to be faithful to their commitment. When they fail to do so, they not only do themselves an injustice, they let many others down whom are trusting and depending upon them.

Expectations...

To be successful, everyone needs to know and understand the goals and objectives. At Westford Academy, we provide a student-athlete handbook to help share our desires and goals for our students and athletic community. In the handbook, we have outlined the purpose

of our programs and expectations for everyone involved; student-athletes, coaches, parents, and fans. We want interscholastic athletics to be a vehicle to teach solid values and build character. Our goal is to give every student-athlete an opportunity to succeed.

How is success measured? Success is not measured in wins and losses and it is not measured in touchdowns, goals, or points. Success is measured in hard work, honesty, teamwork, sportsmanship, and character. Every individual is different and has a particular skill. Those who use their skill and give their very best effort to take advantage of their own opportunity, are the ones who succeed.

Opportunity...

At Westford Academy, we compete in 31 MIAA sponsored programs. Within those sports, we offer varsity, junior varsity, and in some cases freshman competition. There is excellent participation by the student body and many opportunities for our male and female

student-athletes. In recent years as a member of the Dual County League, Westford Academy has developed a strong tradition of excellence in athletics.

There are many ways students can participate in interscholastic athletics beyond being a player. Every team needs managers to help assist the coaches and run the team activities. Another area is journalism. We are always looking for students who have an affinity for writing to cover our teams and write for either the school newspaper or our website. Finally, every student is welcome to join in the athletic community as a fan and support our school teams.

Interscholastic athletics is an important aspect of our community. It has a role in helping to develop our young adults into solid and productive citizens. It provides an opportunity for the entire community to participate in a positive and active role. I invite all of you to join with us and share in the fun and excitement which comes with interscholastic athletics at its' best.

Robert J. Conley
Director of Athletics

II. Interscholastic Athletic Programs

SEASON	SPORT	LEVEL
Fall	Football	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen
	Soccer, Boys	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen
	Soccer, Girls	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen
	Field Hockey	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen
	Volleyball, Girls	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen
	Golf, Coed	Varsity
	Cross Country, Boys & Girls	Varsity & JV
	Cheerleading	Varsity & JV
	Winter	Basketball, Boys
Basketball, Girls		Varsity, JV and Freshmen
Ice Hockey, Boys		Varsity & JV
Ice Hockey, Girls		Varsity
Wrestling		Varsity & JV
Indoor Track, Boys & Girls		Varsity & JV
Gymnastics		Varsity
Swimming, Boys & Girls		Varsity
Alpine Ski, Boys & Girls		Varsity
X-Country Ski, Boys & Girls		Varsity
Cheerleading		Varsity
Spring		Baseball
	Softball	Varsity, JV & Freshmen
	Outdoor Track, Boys & Girls	Varsity & JV
	Tennis, Boys and Girls	Varsity & JV
	Volleyball, Boys	Varsity & JV
	Lacrosse, Boys & Girls	Varsity, JV, & Freshmen

Activity Fee

Student-athletes are asked to pay an activity fee to help offset the cost and expense of athletics here at Westford Academy. Although money is allocated through the annual budget, it does not cover the total amount of costs incurred throughout the year. The activity fee is set at the beginning of the school year and all Student-athletes are expected to pay the fee

prior to the first contest. Activity fees are non-refundable.

In the event of hardship, student-athletes or their parents/guardians should contact their respective coach or the Director of Athletics for assistance.

III. Rules and Regulations

Westford Academy is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association. As such, we adhere and comply with all of the rules and regulations set forth and published in the MIAA handbook. A copy of the MIAA handbook is maintained in the Athletic Department and is available to review by students, parents, and interested citizens.

Westford Academy has additional requirements and standards, in some cases more stringent than the MIAA, which student-athletes must meet in order to participate in our interscholastic programs. This includes attendance, academics, and general conduct. Student-athletes must present proof of parental permission in order to participate in athletics.

Coaches and administrative officials are responsible to implement and carry out all rules and regulations.

Academic

All student-athletes are required to meet a minimum standard of academic performance. We believe that all students should strive for excellence in all courses. In order to meet eligibility guidelines for athletic participation, students will be eligible if they fail no more than one (1) class. This does not mean that we encourage students to fail a class, but students are eligible for participation in our athletic programs if they fail one course. If a student fails two (2) or more classes, the student is ineligible for such participation.

Meaning of participation if non-eligible;
Athletics: If determined to be non-eligible because the student has failed two (2) courses, the student is not permitted to practice or participate with their team in any way. Upon the issuance of the next progress report, should it be demonstrated that the student is passing all classes, s/he may practice and participate in

the sport (at the discretion of the coach) but are not permitted to “suit up” or participate in any competition, including scrimmages, against another school’s team until the issuance of the next report card when eligibility will be re-determined. If the student has received more than two (2) failing grades, the student is ineligible for the duration of the quarter (until the issuance of the next Report Card) and may not try out, practice or participate with the team in any way.

This includes the term preceding the start of the season and any reporting period that occurs during the course of the season. Students that fail to meet the requirements are ineligible until the next reporting period. Eligibility is determined on the day report cards are issued by the school. Progress reports are not acceptable for return to eligibility in MIAA events. Final grades from the previous school year will determine eligibility for activities during the first grading quarter.

Attendance

In order for student-athletes to participate in practices or games, they must be recorded as having met the school attendance criteria. To be eligible, the student-athlete must be on time to school for the opening period and stay through the end of Period 4; or be in school by the start of Period 3 and stay in school for four periods. Student-athletes must meet attendance requirements on Friday in order to participate in weekend contests. Student-athletes in either in-house or out-of-school suspension are not allowed to participate in practice of events during the suspension period. Reasonable exceptions to this rule must be cleared through administration or the athletic department prior to the absence.

Medical

Student-athletes are required to have successfully completed a physical within 13 months prior to participating in tryouts, practices, or events. Proof of physical must be provided to the coach prior to participation. If a physical expires in the course of the season, the student-athlete will be allowed to continue participation to the completion of the season. Each student-athlete is required to complete an emergency form with information regarding parental or guardian contact. Student-athletes are responsible for their own medications (i.e. inhalers, epi-pens) and the administration of such medicines.

Student-athletes who are injured and not able to play, are required to have authorization from a physician (or school nurse,) and/or the athletic trainer before being allowed to resume activities. In the event of any question regarding the medical fitness of a student-athlete to participate, the trainer has the final authorization.

Chemical Health & Wellness

For young adults to participate in athletics, they must be physically and mentally fit. Student-athletes at Westford Academy are required to follow the guidelines of the MIAA as defined in Part IV article 62 regarding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. If any student-athlete is found to be in the possession of, consuming, or buying /selling of such substances, they will be in violation of the rule and subject to penalty. This rule is in effect from the beginning of the interscholastic athletic year as determined by the MIAA governing body and ends with the final day of classes in the academic year. It applies to student-athletes in or out of season. Penalties for out of season violations will be in effect for the next season of participation. A student must complete the season in which the penalty

is served in order to comply with the requirements.

First Violation – when the principal or designee confirms following an opportunity for the student-athlete to be heard, that a violation has occurred, the student-athlete shall lose eligibility to participate in events totaling 25% of the season schedule including post-season. The suspension shall be served in consecutive contests.

Second and Subsequent Violations - when the principal or designee confirms following an opportunity for the student-athlete to be heard, that a repeat violation has occurred, the student-athlete shall lose eligibility to participate in events totaling 60% of the season schedule including post season. The suspension shall be served in consecutive contests.

Penalties shall be cumulative in nature and carry from one season to the next or one academic year to the next in order to fulfill the requirements.

During the suspension period, the student-athlete is required to attend all team practices. At the direction of the coach, the student-athlete may attend the games but will not be allowed to dress in game uniform. Student-athletes are also banned from attending other school activities for 14 calendar days from the date of the first suspension and 28 calendar days from the date of second and subsequent violations as described in the Student Manual. Team captains who violate the Chemical Health & Wellness regulations, will lose their captaincy for the season and for the remainder of the academic year will be ineligible to captain any other team.

Violation of the Chemical Health & Wellness regulations is very serious and we encourage student-athletes to avoid situations that may compromise their status and eligibility.

Muscle Enhancements

Unfortunately, the use of steroids or other types of muscle enhancements have become a part of the athletic landscape...most notably in professional sports. The people that we hope would set positive examples as role models, instead have disappointed.

The thinking is that by using artificial means to build up one's body, they can become faster and stronger thereby gaining an edge on the competition. Short term that may prove true, but in the long run, the medical community states that the risk for adverse health is real and dangerous.

We reject the use of enhancements and steroids and strongly discourage their use by our student-athletes. In our opinion, their use in sport is cheating.

The best and most effective way for students to improve their physical performance is to eat healthy, exercise, and get adequate rest. The real "competition" is within each student-athlete. They should measure their own success by how much they improve their own performance through hard work, effort, and teamwork.

***The unauthorized use, consumption, possession, buying/selling or distribution of steroids or growth hormones (controlled substances) is prohibited. See Chemical Health & Wellness section above.

Transportation

When Westford Academy provides transportation to and from athletic events, student-athletes are required to ride that transportation. The members of the athletic staff feel it is in the best interest of team unity that everyone travel together and share the game experience. As the "guardian" during these trips, it is also important that the athletic staff be able to account for all student-athletes and insure their safe whereabouts.

In the event that there are extenuating circumstances and the parent wishes to take responsibility for the transportation of their son or daughter, it is required that the parent provide a written 24 hour notice to the coach requesting the exception. Student-athletes may then ride with their parent or on their own. Student-athletes may not ride with other student-athletes.

It is expected that our student-athletes will conduct themselves appropriately while on bus transportation. Any misconduct will result in a penalty including and up to dismissal if warranted. Student-athletes will be responsible for any damage to bus property and subsequent costs to repair or replace.

Uniforms & Equipment

Student-athletes are responsible for the care and maintenance of equipment and uniforms provided to them as a member of an athletic team. At the end of a season, they are obligated to return all WA team property. Student-athletes who fail to return uniforms and/or equipment will be responsible for the cost to replace such including damage incurred due to abuse or misuse. Student-athletes who do not meet their obligation will not be able to participate in other athletic programs until they have resolved all outstanding issues and may be subject to further discipline as determined by the administration.

Cell phones

The use of cell phones has become commonplace among student-athletes. Students are strictly prohibited from using cellular telephones with camera or photo capability in locker rooms or restrooms. Any student-athlete found inappropriately using cell phones with camera or photo capability in a restricted area, will have their phone confiscated and face disciplinary action.

IV Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a guideline of sportsmanship for student-athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators to act while participating or attending an interscholastic event. Everyone involved has a responsibility to behave appropriately.

Pre-Event Announcement

"In the spirit of interscholastic athletics, we welcome you to today's contest.

As an MIAA sponsored event, we ask everyone to conduct themselves appropriately and provide a positive environment for spirited competition between these two teams. Please cheer enthusiastically for your team and refrain from negative or disparaging remarks toward the players, coaches, or officials.

We hope you enjoy the game."

Student-athletes

Always treat coaches and teammates with respect and honesty; follow the team, athletic department, and school rules; follow the rules of fair play and never taunt, demean, or ridicule teammates, opponents, coaches, or officials; never use profanity or obscene gestures.

All student-athletes are responsible for all policies and guidelines in the WA Student Manual.

Hazing* of any sort is strictly prohibited. All student-athletes are required to treat their fellow teammates with respect and dignity. Students who violate this policy will be subject to discipline** up to and including dismissal from the team.

*Mass. General Law, chapter 269 and Mass. General Laws 76, 119, 151, and 622.

** WA Student Manual – see sections on Student Suspensions and Hazing

Coaches

Always treat the student-athlete with respect and honesty; never allow the fervor of competition to display anger towards student-athletes or officials; never use profanity; provide positive encouragement and support to the student-athlete; set a positive example of leadership and fair play for all participants.

Parents

Always provide continuing support and encouragement for your son or daughter; emphasize the positive aspects of their play or that of the team; treat coaches with respect and honesty and accept their role and responsibility as decision makers; never ridicule or disparage the coaches or other team members; follow the guidelines for issue or problem resolution with your son or daughter.

Spectators

While at an interscholastic event, never ridicule, taunt, or demean the opposing players, coaches, officials, or opposing spectators. Cheer enthusiastically for your team and demonstrate your support for our student-athletes. Spectators who fail to conduct themselves appropriately at athletic events will be asked to leave the site and may be banned from future events at the discretion of the athletic department and school administration. Spectators must remain in the

area reserved for fans and not enter the field of play including the player bench area.

General

The Westford Academy Athletic department reserves the right to address any issues of misconduct on the part of student-athletes, coaches, parents, or spectators and take the

appropriate action consistent with our goals of fair play and sportsmanship.

It also reserves the right to address character issues of misconduct or inappropriate behavior on the part of student-athletes or coaches which may occur outside of school or school sponsored events not specifically covered in the student or athletic handbooks.

V. Issue/Problem Resolution

In the normal course of events, it is sometimes necessary to address issues or problems. All student-athletes should feel confident that they can communicate with the administration and are encouraged to address issues/problems for the purpose of resolution. It is our goal as an educational institution to help our young adults succeed and develop the skills they need to be productive citizens.

Communication is a key to issue/problem resolution. Often solutions can be identified at the earliest stage with open and honest communication among parties. The outcome may not always be to the satisfaction of everyone, however, the opportunity always

enables all concerns and opinions to be heard in the interest of fairness.

To help establish a chain of communication, we suggest the following order of contact.

- Student-athlete and coach
- Student-athlete with parent and coach
- Student-athlete with/without parent and Director of Athletics
- Student-athlete with/without parent and Principal
- Student-athlete with/without parent and Superintendent
- Student-athlete with/without parent and School Committee

Appendix

Directory

Name	Position	Telephone
Bob Conley	Dir. Of Athletics	978-692-5570 x2108
Jim Antonelli	Principal	978-692-5570 x2104
Adam Goldberg	Asst. Principal	978-692-5570 x2116
Bill Bombaci	Athletic Trainer	978-692-5570 x2133
Betsy Parke	Secretary	978-692-5570 x2121