

LITTLETON MIDDLE SCHOOL



2020-2021 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES AND PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the athletic program at Littleton Middle School. The information contained in this handbook will help to answer many of your questions about interscholastic athletics at Littleton Middle School. This handbook contains information regarding the rules and regulations that govern the athletic program at Littleton Middle School.

For student-athletes, this guide will help you understand what you can expect as well as what is expected of you while participating in interscholastic athletics at Littleton Middle School. For parents, this guide will help you understand the school's athletic policies. If your questions and concerns are not answered within this handbook, please feel free to contact the Athletic Director for a more specific answer.

PHILOSOPHY

Littleton Middle School considers participation in athletics to be an integral part of the overall educational experience. Athletics provides opportunities for physical, mental, emotional, and social development. The purpose of the athletic program at Littleton Middle School is to develop and enhance teamwork skills and good sportsmanship, to encourage life-long fitness and physical well-being, and to provide additional opportunities for students to develop their self-esteem (School Committee Policy JJIB).

MISSION

The athletic program at Littleton Middle School dynamically supports the academic mission of the school. Littleton Middle School sets high expectations for its coaches and student-athletes. The athletic program at Littleton Middle School will promote interscholastic athletics that provide lifelong learning experiences to student-athletes while enhancing their achievement of educational goals.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide the opportunity for student-athletes to develop wholeness through learning experiences that contributes to their physical, mental, emotional, and social growth.
- To provide each student-athlete with the opportunity to develop their individual skill and potential.
- To provide the opportunity for each student-athlete to learn how to function as a member of a team.
- To develop the qualities of good sportsmanship, respect, responsibility, and moral integrity within each student-athlete.
- To develop an appreciation of the value of physical fitness and conditioning within each student-athlete.
- To teach the student-athlete to accept victory or defeat in a gracious manner.
- To teach the student-athlete the value of hard work and commitment.
- To provide opportunities for growth and development through athletic competition that will contribute to a successful adult life for each student-athlete.
- To develop school spirit within each student-athlete.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Academic Achievement

At Littleton Middle School, student-athletes are expected and encouraged to maintain the highest level of academic achievement possible. Academic extra help sessions and make-up work are expected to be completed as soon as possible. Student-athletes arriving late for practice due to extra help sessions or make-up work will not suffer any athletic team penalty. Coaches should be

informed by student-athletes, in advance, when practice time will be missed due to academic obligations. Coaches may place student-athletes on an academic progress report plan when it becomes known that a student-athlete is performing poorly in the classroom.

Academic Eligibility

Students must remain in good academic standing (average must be above a 69%) in all classes during the duration of the activity. If this is not the case, a student will be placed on academic probation for up to two weeks at a time. The academic probation contract will outline the restrictions and requirements that the student must adhere to in order to regain full eligibility for said activity. This contract will be written by an administrator and will be signed by the student and his/her parent/guardian. The contract will then be distributed to each of the students' teachers, activity advisor(s) and/or coach(es).

Attendance Part A: School

Student-athletes will not be allowed to participate in co-curricular activities on the day of an absence or when in attendance for less than half the day.

Attendance Part B: Team

Student-athletes are expected to be present at all team related activities. The coach should be notified in advance if a student-athlete is going to be absent or tardy for a practice or game. Student-athletes are excused from team activities for illness, injury, academic help sessions, family emergencies, or religious reasons.

Baseline Eligibility

For a student to practice with, or to represent Littleton Middle School in athletic competition, the student must be duly enrolled in that school. Additionally, the student must be subject to the jurisdiction of that school's Principal and under the supervision of that school Principal.

Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

During the entire school year, on and off school grounds, weekdays and weekends, twenty-four hours per day, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use/consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol or any controlled substance including but not limited to prescription, non-prescription drugs, cigarettes, marijuana and steroids.

First Violation: The student shall lose eligibility for the next twelve consecutive interscholastic events or twelve consecutive weeks, whichever encompasses the greater number of contests, and will receive a form of suspension. The penalty period may extend into the next academic year.

Cleats

At no time should cleats be worn in the building. Injury can occur from slipping on the tiled surface, as well as causing damage to the flooring.

Communication

Communication between coaches, student-athletes, and parents is critical to the overall success of the athletic program at Littleton Middle School. The following outline should help to facilitate effective communication between everyone involved with the athletic program.

Communication Student-Athletes and Parents Should Expect from the Coach

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for his/her student-athletes
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements, i.e., practices, equipment, conditioning, etc.
5. Injury procedures
6. Disciplinary decisions

Communication Coaches Should Expect from Student-Athletes and Parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Warning of any schedule conflicts in advance
3. Notification of any injury or illness

Issues that are Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

1. The treatment of your child
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues that are NOT Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy and play calling
3. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach, student-athlete, and parent(s). When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the situation.

Conference Procedure

1. E-mail the coach to schedule an appointment
2. If the coach cannot be reached, e-mail or call the Athletic Director for assistance
3. Do not call a coach at home
4. Do not confront a coach before, during, or after a practice or game

If the conference does not yield a satisfactory resolution, e-mail or call the Athletic Director to schedule an appointment. The Athletic Director will listen to the concerns of both parties and then attempt to mediate a resolution. Student-athletes and parents must be confident that the voicing of a concern, using the proper forum and procedure, is not only free from penalty or retribution, but is strongly encouraged.

Concussion and Sports Injury Part A: School Committee Policy JJIF

Sports-related head injuries and concussions can have serious consequences for students, including long term health and educational issues if they are not properly managed. Early recognition of a concussion is essential to maximize safe management. The Littleton Public Schools are committed to promote the safety and well-being of our students. As part of this commitment, we fully support the Massachusetts General Law and the Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations regarding procedures pertaining to sports-related head injuries occurring in extracurricular athletic activities.

All persons as specified in DPH 105 CMR 201.008 shall be required to annually participate in a mandatory prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury training program approved by DPH. Participation requirements for athletes and parent/guardians are as stated in DPH 105 CMR 201.009 and must be met.

The Superintendent shall designate the Athletic Director and Nurse Leader as the persons responsible for the implementation of these policies and protocols. Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular activities should be considered.

Concussion and Sports Injury Part B: Athletic Department Protocol

To ensure full compliance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 111 – Section 222, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Regulation 105 CMR 201.000, and Littleton School Committee Policy JJIF, the following protocols must be followed by all individuals as stated.

1. On an annual basis, all coaches and athletic personnel are required to complete the NFHS online course entitled *Concussion in Sports – What You Need To Know*. Certificates are to be submitted to the Athletic Director upon completion.
2. Prior to each season, all student-athletes and their parents/guardians are required to read/review the *Heads-Up – Concussion in High School Sports* document. This document is available in pdf format on the main page of the athletics website and in hard copy format in the Athletic Director's office.
3. Prior to each season, all student-athletes and their parents/guardians are required to complete the *Head Injury / Concussion Disclosure* form. This document is available in pdf format on the main page of the athletics website and in hard copy format in the Athletic Director's office. This form is one of four required pre-participation forms.
4. In the event of a head injury or concussion, the coach is required to submit an *Injury Report* form to the Athletic Director within 24 hours of the incident. This document is made available to all coaches by the Athletic Director in both pdf and hard copy formats.
5. Prior to returning to any participation following a head injury or concussion, the student-athlete must receive medical clearance from a licensed physician. It is recommended that the DPH's *Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization* form be utilized by the physician. This form is available in hard copy format in the Athletic Director's office. This form or physician's office equivalent must be submitted to the Athletic Director for preliminary clearance.
6. Prior to returning to full participation following a head injury or concussion, the coach and student-athlete must complete the *Post-Concussion Return-To-Play Protocol* form over a period of at least five days. This form is available in hard copy format in the Athletic Director's office. This form must be submitted to the Athletic Director for final clearance.

Equipment/Uniform Responsibility

Student-athletes have an obligation and responsibility for all athletic equipment issued to them. The student-athlete is responsible for the proper care of equipment from the date of issue to the date of return. Equipment and uniforms should be stored in a locked locker at all times when not in use. If a student-athlete loses school equipment or fails to return the assigned equipment in satisfactory condition, then he/she is responsible to meet the current replacement cost of the equipment. Payment for lost equipment is required at time of the loss, and prior to the next season of athletic participation, whichever comes first. If a student-athlete leaves a team during the season, for any reason, it is his/her responsibility to return all school equipment immediately. No student-athlete will be allowed to tryout for another sport until all outstanding equipment has been returned or payment to replace lost equipment has been made to the athletic department.

Facilities

Student-athletes are expected to respect the gymnasium and locker rooms. We expect all student-athletes to take pride in the athletic facilities by using trash receptacles and keeping the facilities in good condition.

Student-athletes will not be granted access to any athletic facilities without supervision by a school staff member. Student-athletes may not use the gymnasium or locker rooms at any time unless there is a staff member present.

At the conclusion of the school day, student-athletes should bring all items that they will need the next day into the athletic area of the school. Student-athletes will not have access to the main school building after practices, games, or on non-school days.

Forms

Prior to participation in athletics for each new season, student-athletes must complete and submit all forms required by Littleton Middle School. All forms are available on the athletic website.

Injuries

All injuries must be reported to the student-athlete's coach. After an injury, an injury report form must be completed by the coach and placed on file with school personnel. The student-athlete may resume practice/play after being evaluated and cleared to return by a qualified health care professional.

Physical Examination

All students must pass a physical examination prior to participation in school athletics. A physical exam covers the student for 13 months from the exam date. A student's eligibility will terminate once a physical has reached the 13-month limit. Physical examinations must be performed by a duly registered Physician, Physician's Assistant, or Nurse Practitioner.

Playing Time

Perhaps the most emotional part of a student-athlete's involvement in athletics centers around playing time. It is the responsibility of the coach to decide starting line-ups, position assignments, and playing time distribution. These coaching decisions are made only by the coach and are approached very seriously after having observed the student-athletes in practice sessions, scrimmages, and games.

Practice Time

On school days, practice sessions may not start before 2:30pm. Total practice time will average one to two hours in length. In general, practice sessions will not be held on the weekend or during school vacation periods. Fall athletic teams may elect to have a pre-season period during the week preceding the start of the school year.

Profanity

Student-athletes will refrain from the use of profanity at all times while participating in athletics at Littleton Middle School.

School Discipline Obligations

Disciplinary action will apply to any student who has, on a weekly basis: served retention, demonstrated poor academic standing, or shown disrespect toward an adult or peer. This disciplinary action will be determined by the coach or teacher involved.

Any student-athlete who receives a referral for disrespect will automatically be ineligible for athletics or any school related activity for five consecutive school days or two games/meets or performances, whichever occurs first. The student-athlete will be mandated to report to their team and watch from the sidelines.

A student-athlete with a school disciplinary obligation is expected to fulfill the disciplinary obligation before reporting to an athletic practice or game. Student-athletes cannot expect nor request, disciplinary action to be postponed or cancelled for any athletic related reason. Littleton Middle School reserves the right to remove a student-athlete from a team for excessive disciplinary issues and may reinstate the student-athlete upon sufficient evidence of improvement.

Security of Personal Belongings

All personal belongings should be locked in a locker during athletic participation. Littleton Middle School cannot be responsible for the personal belongings of student-athletes.

Sports Study Hall

The middle school provides an after school sports study from 1:45 – 2:30 on all practice or game days with the exception of half days. Student-athletes have the following options when school is dismissed:

- They may go home and then return for their scheduled practice or game.
- They may stay after school for extra help with a staff member or to attend a club until 2:30. Then they should proceed to their scheduled practice or game.
- They may attend sports study hall until 2:30 and then proceed to their scheduled practice or game.

In the event that a particular team has the second game time, members of that team have the following options:

- They may go home and then return for their scheduled game.
- They may stay after school for extra help, to attend a club, or to attend sports study. At 2:30, these students will be expected to attend the early game as spectators. Please be aware that there is no supervision at the games.

In the event that a particular team has the second practice time, members of that team have the following options:

- They may go home and then return for their scheduled practice.
- They may stay after school for extra help, to attend a club, or to attend sports study. At 2:30, these students should take the late bus home or be picked up. They should return to school for their scheduled practice.

Students attending sports study will be expected to report to the cafeteria immediately following dismissal. They will sign in on an attendance roster so that we will have an accurate account of who is staying after school each day.

Sportsmanship

Littleton Middle School expects all parties at a contest to display an exemplary level of sportsmanship before, during, and after a competition. Coaches, student-athletes, and spectators are expected to treat opponents, game officials, and visiting spectators with total respect. Littleton Middle School reserves the right to warn, censure, place on probation, or suspend any coach, student-athlete, or spectator determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship.

Suspension from Team

Any student-athlete who violates athletic rules and regulations is subject to suspension from the team. The coach shall determine if a violation of the athletic rules and regulations has occurred. In all cases, infractions should be reported to the Athletic Director. The length of suspension, will be left to the discretion of the coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director and the Principal.

If disciplinary action is taken, a student-athlete has the right to have his/her case reviewed upon request. The review committee will consist of the coach, the Athletic Director, and the Principal or his/her designee. The final decision on these matters rests with the Principal.

Team Size (School Committee Policy JJIB)

School administrators will encourage maximum participation in middle school athletics and will create roster sizes that are optimal for maximizing player development, exercise, fitness, instruction, competition, safety, and proper oversight. Determining factors for creating and maintaining rosters will include academic achievement, sportsmanship, teamwork, ability, commitment, and experience.

Team Rules and Regulations

At the start of each season, coaches may issue a set of team rules and regulations to their team. It is required that these rules and regulations be in written form and distributed to all team members prior to the start of the season.

Transportation

All student-athletes are required to travel to and from all events in school provided transportation. Any exceptions must be approved in writing by the Principal and the coach before the event.

User Fee

The Littleton School Committee has authorized the Athletic Department to collect a user fee from each student-athlete who chooses to participate in athletics during the fall, winter, or spring seasons. Payment of the user fee allows the student-athlete the opportunity to participate as a member of an athletic team. Payment of the user fee does not guarantee that the student-athlete will play in each contest.

User fees are **non-refundable** once a student-athlete has participated in a contest. The user fee for the 2020-2021 school year is \$200 per sport, per season with a \$550 family maximum inclusive of both middle school and high school students. In cases of financial hardship, waivers will be granted based on Federal Free and Reduced Meals Program income guidelines and will allow for 50% fee waiver if eligible for reduced meals, and 100% fee waiver if eligible for free meals. Please make all checks payable to: **Town of Littleton – Athletic Fee.**

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS

Chapter 71, Section 370: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

“Bullying”, the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying...

“Cyber-bullying”, bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying...

Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

Chapter 269, Sections 17-19: Hazing Prevention and Intervention

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 sections 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.

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen 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.

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.