

## RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE

### I. DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY REGARDING ATHLETICS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

It is the view of the River Valley School District and its Athletic Program that participation in athletics by the student is a *privilege*, not a right. Student-athletes at River Valley Middle School would be looked upon as highly respectful citizens both in the classroom and on the playing field. When a student is performing below expectations, then his or her continued participation in athletics will be regarded as being in jeopardy. Student-athletes at RVMS are expected to be high academic achievers and positive leaders of the school.

### II. THE GOAL OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Student-athletes are required at all times to: **1)** Maintain academic eligibility (see academic eligibility requirements); **2)** Exhibit good sportsmanship and fair play in both practice and competition; **3)** Conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times, both on and off the playing field; **4)** Accept victory or defeat in a mature and emotionally balanced manner; **5)** Understand that participation in athletics is a privilege that involves a great deal of personal responsibility; **6)** Follow all school rules throughout the entire school day. Detentions and suspensions will not be tolerated! **7)** Understand that their conduct and performance in the athletic arena cannot be viewed separately or in isolation from their conduct and performance in the classroom.

### III. RULES AND REGULATIONS

**A.** The student-athlete must follow his/her school's code of conduct on a year-round basis. (See Code of Conduct section.)

**B.** Every student must have a record of a medical examination filed in the school office before he or she can participate in a practice or a contest in any sport. The exam must be completed on an every-other-year basis, starting with the first year of participation in sports. In those years when a physical is not required, the student must complete and return an alternate card, signed by the student's parents or guardian, stating that the student has not been hospitalized or suffered serious injury or illness since the most recent physical exam. This card is provided by the W.I.A.A. and can be picked up in the middle school office.

### IV. RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**A. Academic Eligibility** - To maintain athletic eligibility in the River Valley School District a student in grades 6-8 must meet all of the following criteria. Eligibility will be determined at the end of each quarter grading period. The quarter grading period preceding a sport season will determine initial eligibility. Conversely, the quarter grading period ending during a sport season determines ongoing eligibility for the season. Note: The last quarter of grade 6, and 7 will determine eligibility for the upcoming fall season of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade sports. The last quarter of grade 8 will determine eligibility for the upcoming fall season of 9<sup>th</sup> grade sports, using the high school handbook for eligibility. **1)** The student must not receive more than one failing grade (F) in the current grading period; **2)** The student must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average; and any student who does not meet all of the above criteria will be automatically ineligible for five school days, including any games scheduled during that time. If no games fall within this five day period, the student-athlete will be ineligible for one game immediately following the suspension period. All ineligible students will be allowed to practice at the discretion of their coach during this time, but they will not be allowed to participate in scheduled events or contest.

**B. At-Risk Contract** - All ineligible students who seek eligibility will be put on a week-to-week At-Risk Contract at the time of their ineligibility for the remainder of the season or grading period. If at the end of the ineligibility period, a student secures teacher verification that they have improved their grades to meet the above stated criteria, the student will then become eligible for participation. The At-Risk Contract (teacher verification) that determines eligibility will be monitored by the office on a weekly basis. The office will inform coaches of player eligibility. Athletic eligibility for At-Risk/Special Education students will be determined by their academic capabilities as identified in their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) or Building Intervention Plans (BIP).

**C. Other Eligibility Requirements** - To be eligible for practice or competition in a sport, the student-athlete must:

1. Have on file in the middle school office: **a)** proper W.I.A.A. card; **b)** insurance waiver; and **c)** emergency medical card.
2. Be cleared from any equipment responsibility incurred from participation in a previous sport. Each student-athlete is responsible for the proper care and safekeeping of the equipment issued to him or her. School athletic equipment is not to be worn for physical education class or outside of scheduled practices and contest.
3. Have a signed statement on file in the middle school office stating that the student-athlete and his or her parents or guardian understand and agree to abide by all of the provisions contained in the Athletic Code.
4. Have paid the athletic participation fee by the day of the first scheduled contest.
5. ALL required concussion testing and documentation completed AND on file (per STATE Law).

### V. CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETE - GRADES 6 THROUGH 8

Student-athletes in the River Valley School District are expected to set an example of excellence of both conduct and sportsmanship for their fellow students, athletes and non-athletes alike. This behavior, as well as all matters of conduct described below, is expected of the student-athlete *year-round*, not only during the school year or sport season. All student-athletes are strongly advised to avoid any activities or circumstances that may result in an accusation against them or that may otherwise endanger their athletic eligibility.

**A. Carry Over of Suspension Terms and Conditions/Violations are Cumulative** - All of the terms and conditions of an individual's suspension will carry over from one sport season to the next in which he or she is a participant, even if this involves a change of school or school year. All violations are cumulative, that is they carry over in sum from one season or year to the next. Middle school violations will not carry over into the high school. Violations that occur during the summer immediately following an 8<sup>th</sup> grader's school promotion will become subject to all provisions for 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### **B. Category One Violations**

**1. Violations** - When a student-athlete is judged to have committed an unlawful, illegal, or specifically prohibited act, including but not limited to the following, the violation will constitute a Category One Violation: **a)** Theft, **b)** Vandalism, **c)** Assault, **d)** Battery, **e)** Sexual assault of any degree, **f)** The possession, use, or selling of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances (drugs), **g)** The possession or use of tobacco in any form, **h)** the possession or use of electronic smoking devices, defined as any electronic device containing or delivering nicotine or any other substance intended for human consumption that an individual may use to simulate smoking by inhaling vapor or aerosol from the device, regardless of whether the device is manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold as an "e-cigarette," "e-cigar," "e-pipe," "e-hookah," or "vape pen" or under any other product name or descriptor. **i)** Disorderly conduct. NOTE: "Holding" an alcoholic drink, tobacco product, electronic smoking device or illegal drugs shall also be considered a violation of the Athletic Code.

#### **2. Disciplinary Action**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense** - **1)** Immediate suspension from competition for 1/3 of the current season (or for 1/3 of the upcoming season if the infraction occurs in the off-season); **2)** Mandatory attendance at practice for the duration of the suspension; **3)** The student will then be enrolled in the school's Student Assistance Program and required to successfully complete the assigned number of classes based on the recommendations made by the principal/designee. Successful completion of an outside program may be required if deemed necessary; **4)** In the event that the first offense is an act that maliciously injures or directly and immediately endangers the life of another person (e.g. assault and battery or driving while intoxicated), the student-athlete will be disciplined as if it were a second offense.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Suspension from competition for 2/3 of the season;**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** Suspension for one full season;**4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Suspension for one full year. In all offenses listed above, an athlete must start and successfully complete a season during which a suspension is being served before becoming eligible for a subsequent sports season.

### C. Category Two Violations

1. **Violations** - Violation of any of the following will constitute a Category Two Violation: **a)** The student-athlete will abide by all the rules of conduct and behavior as set forth in the school handbook, including but not limited to: receiving one school disciplinary report for disrespectful act to an adult or another student, fighting\*, inappropriate language or gestures, non-compliance, two unexcused tardies, or three refocuses; **b)** The student-athlete will respectfully accept the judgment and decision of all officials and referees. Ejection or removal from an athletic contest, either as a participant or a spectator, will incur the appropriate disciplinary action described below; **c)** The student-athlete will not engage in negative conduct—including, but not limited to fighting, and verbal or physical intimidation—at any time within or outside of the athletic arena; **d)** The student-athlete will commit no act of insubordination or show any disrespect to any school staff member or coach; **e)** The student-athlete will not engage in harassment of any kind or degree.
2. **Disciplinary Action** - The athletic director/principal and/or the Athletic Council reserve the right to impose harsher penalties for **severe offenses and/or** repeat offenders. Individual coaches may impose harsher rules. These rules must be submitted in writing and approved by the athletic director/principal before the season. The rules must be presented in writing and signed by the student-athlete. **a)** 1<sup>st</sup> discipline referral – verbal warning, documented on discipline referral form. Mandatory practice; **b)** 2<sup>nd</sup> discipline referral – suspension for ½ regularly scheduled athletic event. Mandatory practice; **c)** 3<sup>rd</sup> discipline referral - suspension for at least one regularly scheduled athletic event. Mandatory practice; **d)** 4<sup>th</sup> discipline referral - suspension for at least two regularly scheduled athletic events, and parent meeting. Mandatory practice.

\*Fighting results in automatic one game suspension.

**Subsequent referrals or suspensions based on the severity of the offense may result in:** 1) Suspension for at least one regularly scheduled athletic event; 2) Mandatory practice. All terms and conditions of an individual's suspension will carry over from one sport season to the next in which he or she is a participant. It will be the responsibility of the principal to contact parent(s) regarding notification of suspension.

### D. Procedure of Due Process Relating to the Athletic Code

1. After a ruling of ineligibility due to code of conduct violations has been approved by the athletic director/principal, the athletic director/principal will notify in writing and in a timely manner the parents or guardian of the student-athlete. This written notification must be sent by certified mail. The student and/or parents may formally appeal the decision in writing **if they feel they have been falsely accused of the offense** to the athletic director/principal. This appeal must be received within seven calendar days from the date of notification. **It is not the job of the council to debate on reducing the suspension, but to determine if there was a false accusation.**
2. After an appeal has been received, the athletic director/principal will set a hearing date and will notify the student-athlete, the parents, and the Athletic Council. The hearing shall be set at the earliest possible date and not to exceed 7 calendar days following receipt of the appeal. **Every effort will be made not to exceed the five school days.**
3. The Athletic Council will be assigned by the athletic director or building principal and will comprise: **a)** The building principal or **designee**, **b)** Two head coaches (not including the involved coach); **c)** Two non-coaching staff members; **d)** A student council representative; and **e)** One School Board member. (In the event that a School Board member is unavailable, that place will be filled by a member of the community.) The Athletic Council proceedings will be chaired by the athletic director/principal. The decision of the proceedings will be reached by each member of the Athletic Council casting one vote by secret ballot. Proceedings of the hearing, including the decision, will be put in writing and mailed to concerned parties.
4. The student-athlete will be provided the opportunity to testify and present evidence on his/her own behalf at the hearing.
5. If the student-athlete and/or the parents of the student-athlete are not satisfied with the ruling of the Athletic Council, they may request a second hearing to be held with the district administrator or a party designated by the district administrator. This request must be made in writing within seven days of the ruling of the Athletic Council. This second hearing shall be set at the earliest possible date and not to exceed five school days following receipt of such request.

## VI. RULES & REGULATIONS OF THE RIVER VALLEY ATHLETIC PROGRAM

- A. **Attendance at School** - To be eligible to participate in either a contest or practice, the student-athlete must be in school for that entire day unless given prior permission by the Principal or athletic director. The student-athlete must also be in attendance all of the day following an event. (To be disciplined by the coach as they see fit.)
- B. **Attendance at Practice and Games** - The student-athlete is expected to attend all practices. He or she may be excused in cases of illness or unexpected family emergencies
- C. **Transportation Policy** - Members of athletic teams are required to travel to and from out-of-town games in vehicles hired by the school district. A student-athlete may return with his or her parents if a written request is given to their coach, and if the parents personally pick up the student in the presence of the coach and in a timely manner following the conclusion of the contest. Please be aware that although circumstances may make it necessary in some cases, in general this practice is discouraged. A student-athlete will not be allowed to return from a contest with anyone other than his or her parents or legal guardian, unless special circumstances exist and prior arrangements have been made, including a signed, handwritten note from parent(s).
- D. **Equipment** - Each student-athlete is responsible for the proper care and safekeeping of the equipment issued to him or her. No student-athlete will be allowed to participate in another sport until equipment obligations for the previous sport have been met. Lost items must be paid for through the school office. School athletic equipment is not to be worn outside of scheduled practices and contest.
- E. **Gymnasium and Weight Room** - No one will be allowed in the gymnasium or weight room unless a coach or designated supervisor is present and able to supervise.
- F. **Injuries** - All injuries must be reported to the supervising coach and principal immediately.

**A FULL FORMATTED VERSION OF THE RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE IS AVAILABLE IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE AND FROM THE COACH. THIS CONDENSED VERSION IS FOR REFERENCE OF THE SIGNATURE PAGE.**

**ATHLETE / PARENT AGREEMENT  
TO ABIDE BY RIVER VALLEY ATHLETIC CODE**

**ATHLETE**

I agree to abide by the River Valley Middle School Athletic Code and realize that any violation on my part will result in the restrictions set forth in the Code. I will also have the integrity to inform my coach and athletic director/principal if I ever violate this Code in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT**

As a parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student participating in the River Valley Middle School Athletic Program, I/we support our child's agreement to abide by all of the rules as stated in the River Valley Middle School Athletic Code.

To demonstrate my/our support, I/we pledge to:

1. Be aware of our child's academic status, behavior, and social habits.
2. Not cover up or provide alibis if rules are broken. We will hold our child responsible and accountable for his/her actions and will inform the athletic director/principal if he/she violates the River Valley Middle School Athletic Code. We will communicate our intentions to our son/daughter at the beginning of the season so he/she will be aware of what the consequences will be should a violation occur.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date