



Lawrence Jr.-Sr. High Athletic Handbook 2026-27

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Lawrence Athletic Mission Statement

The Lawrence High School Athletic Department delivers athletic excellence by empowering, inspiring, and challenging students outside of the classroom. Through participation in sport, students will gain confidence to face adverse situations which will prepare them for obstacles they will face for the rest of their lives.

Lawrence Athletic Philosophy Statement

Interscholastic athletic programs at Lawrence High School offer students an opportunity to extend their educational experience to a realm outside of the classroom. Through countless hours of hard work, community service, and working through adverse situations, students will gain skills they simply can't develop inside a classroom. Students will learn how to win and lose with dignity, develop work habits that lead to progressive results, and develop positive mental and physical health habits.

Lawrence High School offers many athletic opportunities for our student body to choose from. At Lawrence High, we encourage students to participate in as many athletic programs as possible, even if that means stepping outside of their comfort zone. By doing so, students will have the opportunity to experience high school through a different lens.

By joining an athletic program and becoming a Tiger, students are not only gaining a positive life experience through educational athletics, but are also sharing their experiences with students, coaches, and fans. Lawrence High has strong community ties and when athletes don the purple and white, they represent something greater than themselves and become Tigers for the rest of their lives.

To The Parents

If your son or daughter elects to participate in interscholastic athletics this year for Lawrence, you as the parent or guardian are responsible for setting a positive example for your student.

When your child elects to participate in athletics, you must do the following:

Respect your child's coach. Our coaches work tirelessly to provide your child with an experience that they will cherish for the rest of their lives. Let the coaches coach.

Respect the officials. Most officials work five to six nights a week. Lawrence Public Schools has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to abuse of officials. You will be asked to leave if you violate this policy and may not be allowed to attend games in the future.

Praise your child. Participation on a sports team is challenging and not always easy. The best thing you can do as a parent of a student-athlete is to praise them during times of triumph and console them during times of adversity. Lessons learned from athletics do not end when the buzzer sounds.

Parental Communication

When issues arise, proper communication is a must within athletic departments. Coaches are required to **NOT** respond to a parents request for communication within **24 hours** of an incident, practice, or competition if the issue stems from one of them.

When the coach and the parent communicate, the coach **WILL NOT** talk about the following:

- Playing Time
- Other Students
- Game Strategy

When the coach and parent do communicate, the coach may talk about the following:

- Philosophy
- Expectations
- Locations of practice and games
- Individual team rules
- Your child's injury
- Your role as a parent

To The Student

By participating in athletics, you are giving yourself a chance to continue learning and developing skills that will directly translate to life after high school. It is a privilege to participate for Lawrence and in doing so you will be held to a higher standard compared to the rest of the student body. By participating, you are representing your town, your school, your family, and most importantly yourself. Hold yourself to a higher standard both on and off the field and your educational athletic experience will be one you hold onto for the rest of your life. Student athletes are expected to adhere to the Lawrence Jr/Sr HS Student Handbook.

The Lawrence Athletic Department utilizes a chain of command policy regarding student issues or complaints. If the proper chain of command is not followed, the athletic director or principal may not comply with requests for communications. Below is the flow for proper conflict resolution:

- 1) The student must talk to the coach.
- 2) The parent must then talk with coach **WITH** the student
- 3) The athletic director must meet with the coach, parent, and student
- 4) The principal, athletic director, coach, parent, and student must meet

Students who participate in athletics at Lawrence have a responsibility to themselves, their school, and to others. Regardless of your spot on a team, when you participate in athletics you assume a leadership role and will be held to a higher standard.

Governances

The Lawrence Public Schools Board of Education

The Michigan High School Athletic Association

The National Federation of State High School Associations

The Southwest 10 Conference

Student Requirements

Attendance Policy:

- In order to participate in a contest, a student must be present for at least 51% of the school day.
- If a student must miss part of the school day on the day of a contest due to a legitimate reason, the parent or guardian must communicate directly with the Athletic Director or Principal prior to participation.
- Non-illness-related absences must be verified with documentation. For example, a student attending an orthodontist appointment must check in or out through the office and provide an official appointment card that includes the date and time.
- Absences from practices or contests are considered excused only at the discretion of the coach and/or the athletic department.
- Students with chronic absenteeism may be ruled ineligible to participate unless a formal plan of action is developed and followed with fidelity.

Attendance Guidelines: The athletic season starts with the first day for practice allowed by the MHSAA for that specific sport. It ends on the day of the last competition for that specific sport.

1) All athletes are expected to start practice the first day allowed by the MHSAA. Expectations should be communicated in writing by the coach and athletic director to the individual student. An athlete who starts practice later than the first day must make up all missing work as prescribed by the coach.

- 2) Athletes are expected to join a team by our established cut-off dates. Students will have until the date of the first competition, or the third day of school, whichever comes later. a) If a student joins at the last possible minute, they will still have to adhere to the MHSAA/NFHS practice minimum before they are allowed to compete.

- b) If a student joins after the established cutoff date, they will be allowed to practice but will not be able to play until they participate in a number of practices that is equal to the number of practices that had occurred prior to them joining the team and the student must sit 25% of the originally scheduled competitions.
 - c) If a student transfers in from another school after the deadline and pass all MHSAA requirements they will be allowed to participate without any restrictions.
- 3) Other than written exceptions, all student-athletes are expected to be at all practices and competitions unless excused by the coach, athletic director, or principal prior to the practice or contest. Each coach will share their team attendance policy at the preseason meeting.
- 4) It is expected that once an athlete commits to a sport, the responsibility will not be interrupted by going on vacation. Practices and competitions for some sports may be held on holidays or during vacations. We attempt to minimize these conflicts, but it is not always possible. All athletes are expected to practice and compete during these times deemed necessary by a coach. However, practices may be excused with a written request by the parents/guardian to the coach and athletic director at least one week prior to the vacation/holiday break explaining why the student will miss practice.

Coach Evaluation Policy:

At any time during the season should a student(s) feel the need to bring up an issue that needs to be addressed immediately, the athletic director, principal, or school counselor should be notified.

Discipline of Student Athletes: Student-Athletes are expected to conduct themselves, both in and out of school, in ways that will reflect favorably upon themselves, their teams, and their school. It is recognized that those students choosing to represent Lawrence Jr/Sr High School as athletes will be held to a higher code of conduct than that required of other students. Student athletes must adhere to the Student Handbook. These expectations are in effect from the time that a student has established themselves as a student-athlete in the Lawrence Public School's system until graduation, including summers, between athletic seasons, and during holidays, both on and off school property. Behavior expectations also apply to practices, transportation to events, and athletic contests.

- 1) Behavior Unbecoming of a Lawrence Athlete
 - a) Unbecoming behavior shall include but not be limited to poor citizenship, game misconduct, absences from practice, abuses of school equipment and property, etc. Improper conduct will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate discipline by the coach and/or athletic director.
 - b) Students who inappropriately use social media to harass, intimidate, or threaten teammates, opponents, coaches, other students, upon a preponderance of evidence will be subject to the following disciplinary actions
 - i) 25% suspension from all regularly scheduled contests
 - ii) 50% suspension from all regularly scheduled contests
 - iii) Suspension from all athletic contests for one calendar year.
- 2) All violations of rules and regulations outlined in the Student Handbook that result in a student-athlete being assigned to an in-school suspension will result in the athlete missing the next scheduled contest. Or the Athlete must complete 5 hours of community service determined by the Athletic Director. All determinations will be made by the administration. Recurring violations may result in further suspension or expulsion from the team. This regulation also applies to suspension issued by Van Buren Tech.
- 3) All violations of rules and regulations outlined in the Student Handbook that result in a student-athlete being assigned to an out-of-school suspension will result in the student's loss of athletic privileges (practices and competitions) scheduled during the suspension period. If no contests are scheduled during the suspension period. The Athlete will miss

the next scheduled contest. Or the Athlete must complete 5 hours of community service determined by the Athletic Director. All determinations will be made by the administration. This regulation also applies to suspensions issued by Van Buren Tech.

- 4) Involvement in any of the activities listed as “Criminal Offenses in our discipline rubric/handbook, including conviction of a felony, misdemeanor, or determination by a probate court that a student has violated laws, will result in a long-term suspension of athletic privileges.

Disciplinary Suspension (Long Term): Each penalty will carry a two calendar year probationary period. If the athlete has no other violations during the probationary period, the violation will be expunged from their athletic record. If the athlete fails to finish the season in which a suspension was issued, the suspension will not count and be carried over into the next season of participation. Athletes suspended under rules violations may not join a sport season already in progress in order to serve a penalty. A sports season is defined as beginning on the first day of organized team practice and concluding after the team’s final game. Athletes suspended for a portion of a season, with games remaining upon their return, must practice during the suspension period to be eligible to continue in that sport. At the coach’s discretion, the suspended athlete may sit on the bench at games, however, he/she is not allowed to wear the team uniform.

1. Penalty for First Offense: First offense violation of rules will result in a loss of 20% of the season. If there is less than 20% of the scheduled season remaining, the suspension is carried over into the next season in which that student participates.
2. Penalty for Second Offense: A second violation of rules will result in a loss of athletic privileges for the remainder of the season and 50% of the next season.
3. Penalty for Third Offense: A third violation of rules will result in a loss of athletic privileges for one calendar year (365 days).
4. Penalty for Fourth Offense: Fourth offense violation of rules will result in the permanent suspension of athletic privileges at Lawrence Jr./Sr. High School
5. Extreme Violations – Extreme violations of the student code, such as assaulting faculty or staff, assaulting officials, or other flagrant acts of disobedience, may result in the second, third, or fourth penalty applied.

Dual Sport Student-Athletes: Lawrence student-athletes are encouraged to consider dual-sporting. This allows students to experience different sports, as well as keep our teams fully manned. In order to dual-sport, a Dual-Sport contract must be signed by both coaches of the teams that the student is interested in participating in, a parent of the student, and the athletic director. The student is subject to adhering to the contract.

Equipment: All student-athletes are financially responsible for equipment issued to them throughout the school year. Equipment issued to athletes is to be worn only for practice or competition. Locks and lockers will be provided to the athlete upon request and will be used to store seasonal equipment. A student will not be allowed to begin a sport until all school fees are paid and equipment from the previous sport is returned. A senior will not be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony if equipment obligations are not met.

Facilities: Only athletes and coaches in season shall use the facilities designated for their particular sport. The coaches’ offices are off limits for all athletes except under direct supervision and permission from the athletic director or coach. Students should be under direct supervision whenever they are on school grounds. Waiting in the hallways until practices or games is not permissible.

Individual Team Rules: Each head coach may choose to establish additional training rules and regulations that may apply to the specific team. These additions may be more stringent than this policy calls for, provided that they are reasonable, lawful, and not in conflict with the policies and regulations of the school. Student athletes must observe these rules as well as those listed here. The head coach will provide a copy of the rules to the student-athletes and parents at the pre-season meeting.

Playing Time: Is determined and is the responsibility of the coach. A fan or parents' displeasure about playing time can cause problems and uncomfortable feelings between the player and the coach, as well as internally on a team. All players, parents, and coaches should understand the following:

1. It shall be the policy of the Lawrence athletic department for coaches not to be “second-guessed” on players playing time, and any concerns that take place should be done between the player and the coach first.
2. Sub-varsity teams shall permit each member that has attended all practices and who has conformed to all team and school policies to have game playing time each week.
3. Freshman and sophomores that are moved to the varsity level should receive at least 50% playing time, provided a JV team is in place as well.
4. Jr High Players with an equal amount of practice time will play for at least a few minutes in every game, regardless of the potential impact on the outcome of the game.
5. Cutting players from a team is highly discouraged. If numbers are high enough to warrant cuts, the athletic director must approve each cut. A personal contact between the coach and the candidate who did not make the team will take place.

Should a parent have concern with a coach over playing time, that parent should first ensure the student-athlete has contact with the coach. Next, the parent should contact the coach. Should no resolution be attainable, the parent is then to contact the athletic director and a meeting time will be set up that is suitable for all parties, including the student.

Scholastic Standards:

These standards are in addition to any MHSAA academic requirements.

Athletic Eligibility:

To maximize student participation in our athletic programs. While maintaining a high standard of excellence in academics

Purpose of Eligibility Check:

To reinforce the importance of academic success by ensuring that students prioritize their learning and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Important Factors Regarding Eligibility:

A student's eligibility status will reset at the beginning of each new sports season. Coaches, the Athletic Director, or district administrators have the authority to withhold a student from practices and competitions at any time due to poor behavior, including single incidents of misconduct.

STUDENT ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY POLICY:

MHSAA POLICY:

To participate in contests or scrimmages, a high school student must achieve the MHSAA minimum standard of receiving credit in 66% of full credit load potential for a full-time student: Passing 4 or 5 or 6 classes or 5 of 7 classes.

For junior high/middle school students the standard is 50%; credit in 3 of 5 or 6 classes or 4 of 7 or 8 classes. These rules become active once a student begins the 9th grade for high school, or 6th grade for middle school.

There are two MHSAA rules involving Academic Eligibility (the school may have others): The Previous Academic Credit Record and the Current Academic Credit Record. The minimum standard of passing 66% (HS) or 50% (MS/JH) is the same under both rules and applies the same to schools that are semester or trimester schools.

Lawrence Jr/Sr High School Athletic Eligibility Procedures:

Pre-Grade Check:

A preliminary grade check will be conducted on the 4th and 5th Fridays of each new semester. This process allows the athletic coaching staff and athletic administration to identify student-athletes who may be at risk of academic ineligibility.

Weekly Grade Checks:

On the 6th bFriday of the semester. The Athletic Director will conduct weekly grade checks. These checks ensure that academic achievement remains a priority for all student-athletes at Lawrence Public Schools.

Eligibility Requirements and Procedures:

If a student-athlete's cumulative grade average falls below the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) eligibility requirement, the following steps will be taken:

- The student will be placed on academic probation for one week.
- During this probation period, the student is required to attend study tables (if available).
- Grades will be re-evaluated on the following Friday afternoon.
 - If the student meets the eligibility requirements, they will be cleared to participate in competitions the following week.
 - If the student fails to attend the required study table session, they will be suspended from the next scheduled competition.

Communication Procedures:

- The Athletic Director will notify the student, parent/guardian, and coaching staff of any eligibility concerns via email.
- If a student remains ineligible after the probation week, they will be considered ineligible from Monday through Sunday of the following week.
- The Athletic Director will follow up with additional communication via phone or email.

Grade Disputes and Updates:

- A teacher's designation of ineligibility may only be overturned by the Principal, or Athletic Director.
- Students must notify the Athletic Director of any grade changes by 3:00 PM on Friday. Failure to do so will result in continued ineligibility for the following week.

End-of-Semester Eligibility:

- At the conclusion of each semester, student-athletes must pass at least 66% of their classes (e.g., 4 out of 6 classes) to be eligible for the next semester.
- Students who do not meet this standard will be ineligible for the first 60 school days of the new semester.
- Students may recover credits to regain eligibility, but the credit must be applied to the previous semester as per MHSAA Scholastic Standards.

Suspension Recovery Plan: Student Athletes who must serve a suspension have the option of reducing the percentage of their suspension by obtaining community service hours, up to 100% of their suspension.

This option is only available to students who have received their first athletic suspension per the LHS student handbook. This option is not available on a student's second career athletic suspension, thus a student who has received multiple athletic suspensions must sit out competition to serve their suspension.

In order for a suspension to be eligible for this recovery option, the original suspension must be at least 10% of the entire season. (Students who are suspended for one game are not eligible for this option unless one game is at least 10% of the season.)

Community Service Hour = 1% off of the total suspension and will only be broken up into 25% of the total suspension-increments.

- a. A combination of community service hours and games sat out will make up the total percentage of the suspension.
- b. The athletic director is responsible for tracking community service hours.
- c. A student must sit on the team's bench and must be in school on game day for the game to count toward their suspension.
- d. The student must continue to practice with the team for every scheduled practice.
- e. The student must sign a contract that declares their intention of completion of community service hours.
- f. Contract must be signed by parent
- g. Community service hours must be completed 1 week prior to the scheduled return to competition date

If a student fails to complete their recovery plan, the student will receive zero credit in terms of community service hours toward their suspension. The student will receive credit for games in which they were suspended and for which they successfully followed the athletic code of conduct.

If a student-athlete fails to abide by all rules stated above, the student athlete's suspension stands as originally imposed.

Transportation for Contests: All student-athletes must travel to and from all events with the team. No students will be allowed to travel with anyone other than a parent or guardian unless 24 hour notice has been given to the athletic director or unless transportation other than a bus is utilized. All waivers must be completed and submitted to the office before transportation other than a bus is utilized. A coach may release a student to parents/ legal guardians at a game.

Transportation for Practice: LPS is not responsible or liable for transportation arrangements made between students and parents, including instances where students choose to drive themselves or ride with peers to athletic practices.

Quitting a Team: Any student who goes out for a sport at the beginning of the season, and then quits or is suspended before the first scheduled game is played, will not be considered a member of that sports team. A student who quits a team after the first game has been played will not be allowed to compete in any sport, including off-season conditioning, until the season of the sport is concluded .

Varsity/Junior Varsity Status: Freshman and sophomores will play on the junior varsity level unless the varsity coach wishes to move a player to the varsity level. In such cases, the varsity coach must secure written permission from the athlete's parents and the athletic director, as well

as guarantee at least 50% playing time during athletic contests. Juniors and seniors will generally play on the varsity level. In some cases, at the discretion of the varsity coach, a junior may play on the junior varsity level. In this situation, the coach will inform the parents or guardians, the athletic director, and the athlete of the decision being made.

In the event that a sport has low participation numbers at the high school level, 8th graders may be used to help field JV or Varsity teams. In the event that 8th graders are needed at the high school level, the "Out of Level Playing Form" must be signed by parents allowing this to occur. 8th graders will be asked to participate at the discretion of the athletic director. Per MHSAA rules, 8th graders will not be allowed to participate at the high school level in football or wrestling.