

Nashoba Valley Technical High School

2026 - 2027

STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK



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The athletic program at Nashoba Valley Technical High School (NVTHS) is governed by the rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) as well as the rules and policies set forth by NVTHS as referenced in the student handbook. It is important for each athlete to understand these rules and also to know what is expected of them. Athletics at NVTHS is seen as a vital component of high school life, not just for the students who participate but for the families, staff and community.

NVTHS takes pride in the athletic efforts and accomplishments of its student athletes. NVTHS believes that educational athletics is an extension of the classroom. Athletics makes our athletes better physically, mentally and morally. Success, whether in the classroom or athletics does not just happen. It is the culmination of hours of dedicated work. NVTHS students are representing the school and community at practices and games and are to adhere to the NVTHS handbook at all times. NVTHS Athletics are for NVTHS and MIAA approved cooperative students only.

No Cut Policy

At NVTHS we have a no cut policy. This means everyone will be given an opportunity to play the sport of their choosing up until registration closes. If athletes are not selected for the varsity team that does not mean they were cut. We have multiple levels on most teams (Varsity, JV, JV2) Varsity teams are selected by skill level. Not grade level. Seniors may not be placed on the varsity team.

PARENT AND COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDE

Parents/Guardians entrust their children to the guidance of the coaches for many out-of-school hours, month after month and year after year. These Parents/Guardians have the right to expect that all coaches have the students' best interest at heart and that the coaches' decisions place students' welfare above any emphasis on competition or winning.

EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES' COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- ◆ Philosophy of the coach.
- ◆ Expectations the coach has for individual athletes as well as other players on the squad.
- ◆ Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- ◆ Team requirements (fundraising, community service, equipment, conditioning, etc)
- ◆ Procedure should a child be injured during participation.
- ◆ Discipline that results in the denial of a child's participation
- ◆ Unexcused absence from practice or game. Must email the parents

COMMUNICATION COACHES SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS

- ◆ Concerns about player safety expressed directly to the coach.
- ◆ Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- ◆ Specific concerns in regard to a coach's expectations.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS FOR PARENTS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

- ◆ The treatment of their child, mentally and physically.
- ◆ Ways to help their child improve.
- ◆ Concerns about their child's behavior.

It can be difficult for parents to accept when their child is not playing as much as they have hoped. It is a coach's responsibility to make decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain concerns can and should be discussed with coaches. Other matters listed below are not appropriate. If a parent insists on discussing these matters, they should contact the Athletic Director.

ISSUES PARENTS SHOULD NOT DISCUSS WITH COACHES

- ◆ Playing time / Team strategy. Play calling. / Other student-athletes.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the others' position. When these conferences are necessary, the procedure outlined below should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

STUDENT-ATHLETE PROCESS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

For the vast majority of student-athletes, participation on a team at NVTSH is a fun and rewarding experience throughout their involvement. However, students also invest significant time and emotion, and this may result in conflicts between players and their coaches. Student-Athletes are given the following guidelines for communication with their coach:

Step 1: Student athlete contacts coach

The student athlete should meet individually with the coach at an appropriate time agreed upon by both parties in order to resolve the conflict.

Inappropriate times are as follows:

- Immediately before or after a contest
- During a practice session or contest
- When others are readily able to observe the discussion

Step 2: Parent/Guardian contacts Coach

If the conflict is not resolved by a meeting between student athlete and coach, the parent/ guardian and student-athletes should schedule a meeting with the coach. The player should take part in this meeting.

Step 3: Parent/ Guardian contacts Athletic Director

If the meeting between parent/guardian and coach does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the parent/ guardian should inform the coach that he/she plans to contact the Athletic Director for a higher level meeting. The parent/ guardian should call or email the Athletic Director to schedule a meeting.

Step 4: Parent/ Guardian contacts Assistant Principal

If the parent/ guardian does not feel his/her concerns have been properly addressed after meeting with the Athletic Director, he/she should indicate this to the Athletic Director and contact the Assistant Principal via telephone or email to schedule a meeting.

Step 5: Parent/Guardian contacts Principal

If existing concerns remain following the meeting with the Assistant Principal, the student athlete and parent/ guardian should acknowledge such and initiate contact with the High School Principal.

*Please note: If a student athlete and/or parent/guardian believes that due to the seriousness and/or nature of their concerns, they are unable to follow these procedures, they may express their concerns directly to the Athletic Director and/or Principal. If the concern is playing time, a meeting may not result in any increase.

STUDENT/PARENT GAME CONDUCT EXPECTATION:

NVTHS Athletics is an extension of the classroom. All students should uphold the standards of our portrait of a graduate at all times. Parents are also expected to represent our community positively.

LOCKERROOM/VIDEO/SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

No students should be in the locker room at any time unsupervised by a coach.

Video is never allowed in the locker room at any time for any reason. Video inside a locker room can be grounds for dismissal from a team.

Social media should be used to promote NVTHS, its students and teams in a positive manner only.

CHEMICAL HEALTH POLICY

It is the policy of the Nashoba Valley Technical High School to enforce the MIAA policy regarding the use of substances that are deemed harmful to the student-athlete. It is also the policy of NVTHS to reserve the right to impose more stringent penalties in an effort to ensure the welfare of the student-athlete. Refusal to be searched is the same as “guilty/having” in your possession

At the beginning of the school year and/or orientation of new students, and/or the beginning of the sport season, all student-athletes will review with their coaches and/or Athletic Director and/or Principal, the NVTHS Chemical Health Policy.

A student who has not attended an orientation or preseason meeting and signed a contract attesting to their knowledge of this policy will not be permitted to participate in any athletic contest until it is signed and in possession of the athletic director or coach. In addition, the signature of the parent or guardian of the student-athlete and the coach must be in hand prior to participation in any athletic event. All contracts will be kept in a central location (i.e. Athletic Office).

Beginning with the first day of preseason and extending until the last calendar day of school/or last contest/competition if it goes beyond the last calendar day, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana; steroids or any other controlled substance. Controlled substances and steroids prescribed for the student-athlete for a specific documented condition will be permitted with a note from a medical practitioner and will be reviewed as requested with documentation provided to the school by the student-athlete.

This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer” and any tobacco product.

It is imperative to note that a violation constitutes any one of the substances in this policy. For example, the first violation may be a tobacco product and the second may be alcohol. All of the substances carry the same penalty.

*If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again.

*Any captain found in violation of the Chemical Health Policy shall lose their captaincy for three consecutive seasons. If he/she is caught in season, he/she will lose their captaincy for that season and the next two consecutive seasons.

PENALTIES:

First violation: *When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. A student must attend an educational session with a member of the health care team prior to reinstatement. A reinstatement slip signed by the principal or health care member must be presented to the coach prior to participation in a game.*

Second and subsequent violations: *When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport.*

If after the second or subsequent violations the student, of his/her own volition, becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such certification.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.

Chemical Health Violation Penalties

1st Offense

# Of Events / Season	#Of Events / Penalty
1-7	1
8-11	2
12-15	3

16-19	4
20 +	5

2nd Offense

# Of Events / Season	# Of Events / Penalty
1-7	3
8-11	4
12-15	7-8
16-19	9-11
20+	12+

**2nd Offense
w/Dependency Program**

# Of Events / Season	# Of Events / Penalty
1-4	1
5-7	2
8-9	3
10-12	4
13-14	5
15-17	6
18-19	7
20 +	8

The expectation of our coaching staff is that they will adhere to the chemical health policy during practice and competition. Any coach, including assistants and volunteers, that violate this policy will be subject to

disciplinary action as determined by the principal and/or athletic director. During practice or competition, a coach shall not use any tobacco product.

Good Citizen Rule

Student-athletes may not represent their school if they are on in-house or out-of-house disciplinary suspension. A suspended student is ineligible for practice or competition for at least the number of days (or partial days) equal to the number of days of the suspension. Local policies will determine the actual days of ineligibility.

Practice Schedules, Scrimmages, Bus Policy

1. Head coaches must provide practice times to the Director of Athletics before schedules are made. Where facilities are shared by different programs, the Director of Athletics will work with Head coaches to devise a fair and equitable facilities usage schedule for all programs. The Director of Athletics will have the final say on any proposed facilities schedule.
2. When school is canceled or there is an unscheduled early dismissal, no contests or practice will take place. (Unless AD, Principal, Superintendent exception)
3. It is recommended that practices not exceed 90 minutes of physical activity per session.
4. Practices should be scheduled Monday thru Friday. Saturday and Sunday practices need prior approval of the Director of Athletics and are not the norm.
5. Scrimmage information needs to be submitted to the Director of Athletics prior to the start date of each season.
6. Overnight and out of state travel requires School Committee & Superintendent approval and must be done in accordance with School District policy and the time frame outlined for such.

Crime of Hazing, Definition, Penalty

Mass General Law Chapter 269, section 17-19

The term hazing refers to 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. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 269, ss. 17 – 19 are reprinted below.

Chapter 269, Section 17 – Crime of Hazing, Definition, Penalty

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 wilfully 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, beverage, drug, liquor or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to affect adversely 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.

Chapter 269, Section 18 – Failure to Report Hazing

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.

Chapter 269, Section 19 – Hazing Statutes to be Provided, Statement of Compliance, and Discipline Policy Required

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 postsecondary 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 postsecondary 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 as 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 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.

Nashoba Valley Technical High School Policy on Hazing:

In addition to the above cited penalties, students engaged in the act of hazing will be subject to detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

***Each Head Coach needs to have their team complete the Anti-Hazing Form/Agreement within the first week of season. (see Page 30 for Form)**

MIAA Out-of-Season Coach-Athlete Contact Limitations

All out of season contact requires permission from the Athletic Director

Previous Years

Unless otherwise permitted in this rule, between seasons a coach may conduct a meeting(s) with team candidates only to elect captains, collect equipment, issue equipment, to provide for physical examinations, to conduct legitimate fundraising events, or to offer wellness workshops or activities.

40.2 A coach is defined as any paid or volunteer member of the athletic staff.

40.3 The MIAA considers the last coach of record as holding that position until replaced by the principal.

40.4 A coach may not directly or indirectly require an athlete to participate in a sport or a training program outside of the MIAA defined sport season. Voluntary conditioning sessions open equally to all students in a school which are entirely devoid of sport-specific activity may be conducted between seasons provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so.

A "candidate" is defined as:

40.4.1 A varsity or sub-varsity athlete who participated in a high school program at some interscholastic level the previous year and has eligibility remaining; or

40.4.2 A middle school student “selected” to participate in an out-of-season program.

40.4.3 A sixth grade student in a 7-12 high school or an eighth grade student in a 9-12 high school.

40.5 A high school coach may be employed by a park or recreation department or other organization or may volunteer for such a group to teach his/her sport out-of-season provided the following conditions exist:

40.5.1 No candidate may either be required to attend or be penalized for not attending.

40.5.2 school funds are not used.

40.5.3 A coach's high school candidates must constitute the minority of those taking part in any out-of-season sport's program, and competing on any team at any moment (e.g. no more than two basketball candidates could be on the court, on the same team, at any point during a game). In sports that are individual in nature, or where competition involves a series of scoring events, candidates of that high school coach must be fewer than 50% of those participating in the overall competition or program.

40.5.4 High School Coaches (paid or volunteer) of one sport may be involved in out-of-season activity of another sport during the summer only.

40.6 A program is deemed to be an intramural rather than an out-of season program provided that:

40.6.1 The program is available to all high school students on an indiscriminate basis, and a representative number of non candidates are regular participants.

40.6.2 No participants may receive any attention not offered to all other participants.

40.6.3 Candidates in that intramural sport must constitute a minority of those taking part in the program and of any team actually playing or competing at any one time. (Example: Basketball Is made up of five members; therefore two would be a minority.)

40.6.4 The program must be a direct offering of the high school involved.

40.7 Fall coaches may address eighth grade students once after June 1st during an advertised meeting for the singular purpose of providing organizational information about physicals and practice schedules for their fall season.

PENALTY: Because these standards are designed to protect young people from unfair and inequitable scenarios, any coach who violates, or does not prevent violations of these standards will be rendered ineligible to participate or be present at any MIAA approved or sponsored interscholastic competition in that sport for one year from the date of determination of a rule violation. If a violation is inadvertent or relatively minor, this penalty may be reduced by the Board of Directors, or its designee.

Subsidizing Out-of-Season Activities:

A school or a member of that school's coaching staff may not subsidize or support students who might attend any sports-related activity outside of the authorized seasonal limits for that sport. In addition, a coach may not provide transportation for candidates of his/her team to an out-of-season athletic activity/camp. Student participation in out-of-season activities may not be funded in any way by booster

clubs or organizations. Schools may issue equipment (but not uniforms) during the out-of-season period, but school districts should review any liability issues that could arise from such issuance. Students may not wear school uniforms, or be identified as a school team, out of season and/or during non-school events.

Reporting of Scores:

It is the duty of the coach to promote their athletes as much as possible. This is not only good for the student but also for the program, school & community. All results of both Home & Away should be called into the local press (Lowell Sun and Worcester Telegram).

Game reports for all levels should be submitted to the Director of Athletics no later than the following morning of each contest.

Nashoba Tech Concussion Protocol

The Nashoba Valley Technical High School District has designated its Athletic Director to oversee the implementation of policies and protocols governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. In addition, the AD will be responsible for:

- (1) Supporting and enforcing the protocols, documentation, required training and reporting
- (2) Assuring that all documentation is in place
- (3) Reviewing, updating and implementing policy every two years and including updates in annual training and student and coach's handbooks.

Annual Training Policy

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires annual safety training on sports-related concussion, including second impact syndrome, for coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers, school nurses, school and team physicians, athletic directors, directors responsible for a school marching band whether employed by a school or school district or serving as a volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a child who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity and student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity. At NVTHS, coaches are required to complete a free, online training (either the National Federation of High Schools or the CDC's Heads Up Concussion training) or attend a training event organized by the athletic department and approved by the Department of Public Health.

Concussion History Form Submission and Review

The Massachusetts concussion law requires athletes and their parents to inform coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of each sports season. This reporting is done via the **Pre-participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form** and should be completed by the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student. It must be submitted to the Athletic Director, **prior to the start of each season a student plans to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity**. This form provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. This form is designed to ensure that particular attention is paid to identifying athletes with a history of brain or spinal injuries. For example, it asks such questions as:

- Has a student ever experienced a traumatic head injury (a blow to the head)? (If yes, when?)
- Has a student ever received medical attention for a head injury? (If yes, when?)
- Was the student diagnosed with a concussion? (If yes, when?)
- Durations of symptoms for most recent concussion.

Until the pre-participation form (or school-based equivalent) is completed and signed by the parent/guardian and student and returned to the school prior to the start of every sports season, the student cannot participate in extracurricular sports activity.