

JJI - STUDENT ATHLETICS AND ELIGIBILITY

A. **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY** - The primary goal of the Epping Athletic Program is to develop individuals who understand and appreciate the importance of athletics in one's educational experience and life experience. This will require the provision of as many venues as possible to accommodate elementary, middle school, junior varsity, and varsity athletes with interscholastic and intramural sports programs.

The school community shall promote an athletic climate in which every athletic win is framed by modesty and athletic loss is framed with grace and dignity. Coaches will work vigorously with all student athletes regardless of individual talents to instill a desire for personal excellence while encouraging sportsmanship, integrity, and character. Our athletes will also exhibit friendship, respect, and trust for their teammates as well as their opponents. The end result will be students who exhibit sound values from their participation in the Epping Athletic Program and who develop into respectful, involved, and knowledgeable citizens in their school and community.

B. **ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL ATHLETES, PARENTS, SPECTATORS, COACHES, OFFICIALS, ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (REFERENCE: NHIAA)** - It is the duty of all athletes, parents, spectators, coaches, officials, athletic directors, and school administrators to:

1. Cultivate awareness that athletic participation is part of the total educational experience.
2. Emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, teamwork, ethical conduct, and fair play as they relate to the lifetime experience as participants and spectators.
3. Model appropriate game behavior in which positive encouragement is offered for all athletes and encourage respect for all athletes, coaches, and officials as all participants have dedicated much time and effort to their sport.
4. Develop an understanding of all rules and guidelines governing athletic competition, both in letter and intent, and to comply with them in all athletic activities.
5. Recognize that the purpose of athletics in school programs is to develop and promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well being of individual participants.
6. Avoid any practice or technique, which would endanger the present or future welfare or safety of a participant or spectator.
7. Avoid practices that force students to specialize or which restrict students from participation in a variety of athletics.
8. Refrain from making disparaging remarks, gestures, and comments to athletes, officials, coaches, or spectators in any aspect of school athletics, including Epping and opposing teams, in order to reprimand, disgrace, or offend.
9. Encourage the development of proper health habits and vigorously discourage the use of chemicals, including alcohol and tobacco.
10. Exemplify proper self-control at all times and accept adverse decisions without public display of emotion or dissatisfaction.
11. Encourage everyone to evaluate the true success of the athletic program on the basis of the attitude of the participants and spectators, rather than on the basis of a win or loss as valuable skills are obtained in both cases.

12. Treat opposing team members, coaches, spectators, and officials respectfully and encourage behavior, which will create positive relationships between schools.

C. ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL - Elementary and middle school students shall be eligible to participate in school-sponsored athletics based upon age-appropriate criteria approved by the School Principal. Students/parents will be provided copies of such criteria prior to student participation. Any league or outside agency requirements shall also apply.

D. HIGH SCHOOL - High school students shall be eligible for participation in school-sponsored athletics under the following guidelines:

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY - In order to participate in interscholastic sports, the students must meet these eligibility requirements.

1. Student must have a health information form, physical examination form, and emergency medical information form completed and returned to the school prior to athletic participation per School Board Policy JLCA.
2. Students must pass a physical to be eligible for athletics. It is recommended that a physical examination be performed within 12 months of starting grade 6 and grade 9. In cases where the previous procedure was not followed, a physical examination must be performed within 12 months of the athletic sport start date.
3. Student athletes continuing to participate in the athletic program must be re-examined within two years of the previous physical examination on file. For example if an exam was performed September 2009, another exam would be required by September 2011 to continue athletic eligibility.
4. Student athletes significantly injured or ill since the last examination are also required to be re-examined in order to be eligible for athletic participation.
5. Students must have proof of insurance coverage provided by the family or purchased through the school accident insurance program provided by the school district.
6. Student must have signed an agreement to abide by the athletic code of conduct.
7. Parent must have signed, completed, and returned consent agreement for student's participation in athletics.
8. Student must be in good academic standing per the guidelines contained herein. (Reference Academics and Suspension)
9. Student must exhibit habits and conduct in and out of school worthy to represent the standards of the Epping School District in athletic events.
10. Students and parents are encouraged to attend one sports information night per school year regarding handbook policies.

PARTICIPATION – The District allows students who are residents of the school district but who are enrolled in other schools – including charter schools, non-public schools, and home schools – to participate on an equal basis in any athletic sport offered by the District that is not offered at a student's school of attendance, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for participation. Home school students may participate provided they comply with all laws governing non-public

home-based education. Non-enrolled students participating in District athletic programs are subject to the same fees charged enrolled students for the activity.

ACADEMICS – The following academic requirements apply to athletic eligibility.

1. The primary academic requirement is that students must pass all classes with exceptions granted for one F per guidelines contained herein. The secondary academic requirement is that students must meet the NH Interscholastic Athletic Association criteria as a minimum.
2. Students receiving an F in the first, second, or third quarter and in some cases fourth quarter are to be placed on a probationary period for the first 20% of scheduled games. The objective of the probationary period is for students to do what is necessary to achieve good academic standing for the course/class that was failed. In order for a student to remain eligible following the probationary period, passing grades must be maintained for the entire athletic season. School administration will provide a bi-weekly calculated progress report to communicate a student's academic standing and for a student to monitor their academic standing.
3. Students subject to the 20% game probationary period may practice, but not be able to wear their athletic uniform or participate in games. Students may sit on the bench in appropriate street clothes during athletic contest. Eligibility to continue after the first 20% in full capacity is subject to the student being in good academic standing (passing all classes) for the remainder of the athletic season.
4. Students receiving one F in the fourth quarter are eligible for athletic participation if the student passes the class in summer school. If the class is not offered in summer school, eligibility will be permitted by taking a similar course where appropriate and subject to the 20% probationary period and associated procedure stated above.
5. Students receiving one F in the second or fourth quarter, but overall pass the semester course, are still subject to the probationary period at the beginning of the next quarter and the associated procedure stated above at the beginning of the next quarter.
6. The School Principal may grant academic waivers where appropriate.

USE OF ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES – Students who participate in athletic activities shall not use, have in their possession, or be in the presence of underage/illegal substances including, but not limited to, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and medications contrary to the manner for which they were prescribed. This policy applies to all participants and applies on or off school grounds, 24 hours a day. The following behaviors would constitute serious violations of this policy.

1. Drinking of alcoholic beverages.
2. Smoking or using tobacco in any form (under the age of 18).
3. Use of illegal drugs.
4. Being at a party where alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs are present and being used by minors.

Upon the School Principal's determination that there is reasonable evidence of a violation of this policy, the following actions will be taken. Such action is subject to the district's due process for discipline violations.

1. First Violation – Parents shall be notified. Student will be removed from participation for part or all of the season based upon the offense. Student may be allowed to practice for competitive events following all rules for the duration of the suspension. Student will not be allowed to participate, however, in competitive events during their suspension. NHIAA rules may also apply. Student may be required to attend counseling, perform community service, and/or write a paper on the effects of committing the offense. The student may request a reduced penalty by submitting a rehabilitation plan incorporating counseling, community service, and/or paper. The student is responsible for following through with his/her plan and documenting such with the School Principal. The School Principal shall oversee the disciplinary process and determine the disciplinary action.
2. Second Violation – Parents shall be notified. If a student commits a second violation within twelve (12) months of the first violation, the student will no longer be allowed to participate for the season in any capacity. The student will be removed from associating in any way with any sports or extracurricular activities in any season for a full year (12 months) from the date of the second violation. The student must attend counseling, perform community service, and/or write a paper on the effects of committing the offense before making a petition for reinstatement to any sports team or extracurricular activity.

SUPPORT - Students are to receive calculated progress reports on a biweekly basis to monitor their academic success for athletic eligibility. A support system shall also be offered to provide assistance to students with academic difficulty. The school administration shall be responsible for putting a system in place that involves the students, parents, teachers, and athletic coaches, and promotes academic success with undue administrative complexity and hardship.

SUSPENSION - Any athlete who receives a one-day suspension for disciplinary reasons will be ineligible to play for a minimum of two games. In cases where a school suspension lasts longer, the student will be ineligible to play for all games until the suspension is completed. For example, if an athlete receives a five-day suspension and there are four games scheduled, the student is ineligible for all four games. Second suspensions during the season will result in the student's immediate dismissal from the team.

MONITORING – The monitoring of this process is the primary responsibility of the Athletic Director.

Statutory/Regulatory/Policy/Handbook Cross References

NH Interscholastic Athletic Association Rules and Regulations
Policy JJIA-Form (Parent Consent Agreement for Student Athletic Participation)
Policy JJIB-Form (Coach - Epping Athletics Coaching Responsibilities)
Policy JJIC-Form (Athletic Contract)

Handbook (Referenced in Handbooks)

APPROVED/REVISED: September 22, 2005, March 22, 2007, August 20, 2009, January 21, 2010

PREVIOUS POLICY: August 14, 2003 - Athletics

September 25, 1986 – Eligibility for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

July 13, 1989 – Sports Participation Policy