

# **SKOWHEGAN AREA HIGH SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY, ATHLETIC CODE AND CONTRACT**

## **Philosophy:**

The Skowhegan Area High School Athletic Department views interscholastic athletics as a vital component of the educational process. Athletics will be a positive learning experience for our student-athletes if they recognize that they will only achieve their highest personal and athletic potential by embracing a lifestyle dedicated to personal excellence, determination, integrity and self-discipline. Selection to a team is both an honor and a privilege, so all athletes are expected to be responsible and respectful role models in our school. As team members, leaders, and very visible representatives of Skowhegan Area High School, athletes have the obligation to conduct and represent themselves in an exemplary manner. All athletes must know and realize that the decisions they make and the consequences, which result, are part of learning responsibility, self-discipline and respect. Dishonesty, unsportsmanlike behavior, substance use, or conduct unbecoming of a student-athlete cannot and will not be tolerated from any Skowhegan Area High School athlete. This written policy will be administered firmly, fairly, consistently and strictly.

## **SECTION 1 – SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES**

### **A. Members of a team recognize that they have the following responsibilities:**

1. They are official representatives of Skowhegan Area High School and the local community.
2. They represent their families, friends, teammates, coaches and the entire RSU/MSAD #54 district.
3. They are expected to be leaders in promoting good school citizenship and good sportsmanship.
4. Their actions in and out of school build student respect and contribute to school spirit. This responsibility expressly states that proper respect will be given to the administration, teachers, coaches, officials, fellow athletes and the student body. Evidence to the contrary will result in disciplinary action.

### **The following steps will be taken in disciplinary referrals:**

1. Students and other parties involved will be interviewed by the Athletic Director.
2. AD will conference with the Principal.
3. Parents, athlete(s), & any other involved parties who may be interviewed will be notified of suspected athletic code infractions.
4. After consulting with all necessary parties and gathering all relevant facts and information, the Athletic Director will notify the athlete and parents of the final decision.
6. Decisions may be appealed to the Principal.

### **B. ATTENDANCE:**

In order to participate in a contest or a practice, athletes must be in attendance at school for the entire day (or the last day preceding the contest or practice if it is scheduled on a non-school day). Being in attendance is defined as being present and appropriately participating in all assigned classes and study halls. A doctor's/dentist appointment, funeral, family emergency, or other emergency situations would be exempt from this provision if okayed by the Athletic Director and/or proper documentation is provided to the school. Athletes who are habitually tardy during the season may be subject to further disciplinary action.

### **C. PRACTICE ATTENDANCE:**

Athletes must notify the coach prior to practice if lateness or absence is anticipated for a practice session. Academic assistance from a teacher is an acceptable reason for being late to practice. Athletes who miss practice the day before a contest shall not compete in the contest unless excused/okayed by the coach. Coaches may excuse athletes from practice with specific requests.

### **D. EQUIPMENT:**

Athletes will be issued the best possible equipment. Each athlete will assume responsibility for this equipment and will be billed for any lost, not returned or damaged items. Equipment issued shall be worn only when participating in any athletic contest, practice, or when authorized by a coach. No equipment shall be taken without the consent of the coach or Athletic Director. Athletes who owe money or equipment from a previous sport may not receive uniforms or equipment for a new sport until the equipment is paid for or returned.

### **E. CHANGING SPORTS:**

An athlete may be allowed to change from one sport to another during the same sports season by mutual consent of the coaches involved. The Athletic Director will administer special cases.

### **F. TRANSPORTATION:**

All athletes are required to travel to and from all away contests or practices with the team in the school provided transportation. The following is a list of exceptions to this provision:

1. Permission to return home with **parents** after an away contest may be granted provided that the parent(s) present a note to the coach or signs the athlete out after the contest.
2. Permission to return home with **adults other than the student's parents** may be granted if a note from the athlete's parents is pre-approved by the athletic director, given to the coach, and provided that the adult(s) responsible for taking the athlete speaks to the coach after the contest.
3. Further exceptions may be made in emergency cases with the approval of both the parents and school administration.

### **G. DRESS:**

For all school sponsored trips, athletes should wear appropriate clothing as designated by the coach.

### **H. LANGUAGE:**

Vulgar language used by student-athletes will not be tolerated and is just cause for disciplinary action.

### **I. SCHOOL SUSPENSION:**

Athletes suspended from school (OSS or ISS) will not be allowed to practice or participate in contests while on suspension and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the athletic department.

### **J. CONDUCT:**

Since we expect good role modeling by our athletes, any conduct unbecoming of a student-athlete, including any illegal activity, may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **K. TIMELINE:**

These rules will be in effect from the day of the sport's first team meeting until after the awards banquet. This policy will continue to be in effect between seasons for athletes participating in two or more consecutive sports.

### **L. ADDITIONAL RULES:**

All team members will abide by any additional training rules and regulations established by the coach. **Each athlete will be given a written copy of any additional team rules.**

## **SECTION 2 – SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The RSU/MSAD 54 School District recognizes the value of athletic participation as a positive alternative to substance use. It is, therefore, the policy of the District that students participating on all athletic teams sign and abide by rules, which prohibit violations of the District's substance abuse policy at any time or place during the season. The season is defined as that period of time from the first team meeting/practice to the end of season banquet.

**A. Students may not possess, use, be under the influence of, buy, or furnish to others the following substances: alcohol, tobacco (all forms), e-cigarettes, hookas, vaporizers, medical marijuana, illegal drugs, look-a-like drugs or devices and/or prescription drugs.**

**B. Violations during the athlete's high school career shall result in the following consequences:**

### **First Offense**

1. Meeting with the assigned administrator(s) and student to verify incident.
2. Inform parent or guardian of the incident.
3. Suspend student from athletics/co-curricular activities for 20% of the season.
  - **For athletes**, the 20% suspension will be defined as 20% of MPA countable games. Students will not be allowed to participate in pre-season scrimmages or other non-countable games during the suspension. Athletes will be required to practice and travel with the team during the suspension but shall not be in uniform. This suspension will begin immediately after the ineligibility is determined.
  - **For co-curricular participants**, the 20% suspension will be defined/interpreted by administration based on the time that the co-curricular activity meets. During this time, the student will attend meetings/activities but will not be able to participate/perform.
4. The student is required to participate in a school approved and school provided diversion program. Failure to comply with the required diversion program will result in further suspension from all athletics and co-curricular activities until successful completion.
5. The season ending banquet will be considered a countable event for serving the 20% suspension.
6. If all conditions are satisfactorily met, the student may return to his/her athletic and/or co-curricular participation on the day following the suspension.
7. If the suspension occurs at the end of the season, the student will need to fulfill the above requirements before being allowed to participate in another athletic and/or co-curricular contest - The balance of the countable contest suspension will be applied to the next season and/or activity.

### **Second Offense (This is cumulative throughout the high school career)**

1. Meeting with the assigned administrator(s) and student to verify incident.
2. Inform parent or guardian of the incident.
3. Suspend student from athletics/co-curricular activities for 50% of the season.
  - **For athletes**, the 50% suspension will be defined as 50% of MPA countable games. Students will not be allowed to participate in pre-season scrimmages or other non-countable games during the suspension. Athletes will be required to practice and travel with the team during this suspension but shall be out of uniform. This suspension will begin immediately after the ineligibility is determined.
  - **For co-curricular participants**, the 50% suspension will be defined/interpreted by administration based on the time that the co-curricular activity meets. During this time, the student will attend meetings/activities but will not be able to participate/perform.
4. It will be the responsibility of the student and his or her legal guardian/guardians to obtain an evaluation from a licensed substance abuse counselor. Based in part on the counselor's evaluation, the school will determine whether or not the student will be able to return to his/her athletic or co-curricular participation following the suspension. The student will be suspended from all athletic

and/or co-curricular activities for one calendar year from date of the offense unless the student and a legal guardian agree to an evaluation from a licensed substance abuse counselor.

5. The season ending banquet will be considered a countable event for serving the 50% suspension.
6. If the suspension occurs at the end of the season, the student will need to fulfill the above requirements before being allowed to participate in contests during another athletic and/or co-curricular season. The balance of countable contest suspension will be applied to the next season and/or activity).
7. **If a second offense occurs in the same school year, that student will be suspended from athletics for one calendar year. Proof of evaluation/treatment must be provided in order to be considered to return to athletic and/or co-curricular participation.**

### **Third Offense (This is cumulative throughout the high school career)**

1. Meeting with assigned administrator/s to verify incident.
2. Inform parent or guardian of the incident.
3. Suspension of student from athletics and co-curricular activities for one calendar year from date of offense.
4. It will be the responsibility of the student and his or her legal guardian/guardians to obtain an evaluation from a licensed substance abuse counselor. Based in part on the counselor's evaluation, the school will determine whether or not the student will be able to return to his/her athletic or co-curricular participation after serving the year-long suspension.

## **Section 3 – GENERAL RULES**

### **A. PHYSICAL:**

Students who are candidates for interscholastic sports teams must provide proof of a 'current' physical examination done by a licensed physician prior to the tryout or first practice for the sport. When athletes obtain physicals from their physician, a dated statement of health clearing the athlete for participation **must** be forwarded to the nurse or AD at the school to be included in the health record. **All physicals are good for three years, unless a physician specifies a shorter time period.** All new students to the district will be expected to provide a 'current' proof of physical clearing them before they will be allowed to participate in sports at the high school.

### **B. INJURY AND ILLNESS:**

1. Each athlete needs to report all injuries to their coach and/or trainer ASAP. Athletes should always try to see the trainer about an injury and let him recommend a physician visit, if he feels it is necessary. Whenever possible, the trainer will work to get athletes back from an injury without the need to see a physician.
2. An athlete with an illness or injury requiring care by a medical facility needs to bring a copy of the signed physician's findings note to the coach, AD or nurse ASAP. In this instance, the athlete will need to present a signed clearance from the physician to the coach, AD or nurse before they can return to participation.
3. By signing this form, **parents** are acknowledging that an RFGH athletic trainer or certified coach may provide direct emergency care and initial treatment to the student-athlete should they become injured during practice, a game, or school sanctioned sporting event.

### **C. INSURANCE:**

Students who are candidates for high school sports teams **must** provide proof of medical insurance prior to the tryouts or first practice for that sport. RSU 54/MSAD 54 does not carry comprehensive student accident insurance. If you cannot provide proof of medical insurance for your prospective athlete(s), then please contact the high school to request information on specific sport insurance plans or school year insurance plans that you can purchase.

#### **D. CONCUSSIONS:**

Annually and/or prior to the beginning of each sports season, student-athletes and parents of students will be provided with information about the following:

1. The risk of concussion or head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected.
2. The signs and symptoms of a concussion and other head injuries.
3. The RSU/MSAD #54 concussion protocol for 1) removal from the activity when a student has a concussion or head injury, 2) evaluation, 3) return to participation in the activity ("return to play").

#### **E. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:**

1. Students are eligible to participate in athletics/co-curricular activities for eight consecutive semesters after enrolling in high school as freshmen.
2. Students become ineligible on their twentieth birthday or upon graduation from high school.
3. Students must be regularly enrolled in a minimum of five course credits, they must be passing a minimum of five course credits, and they must be passing all essential course credits required for graduation at the end of the applicable quarter (quarter grade) in order to be eligible for competition during the following quarter (graduation requirements are 17.5 essential credits – see SAHS student handbook for specific courses). Pass/fail courses do not count towards fulfilling this requirement.

**FALL:** \*4th quarter grades from the previous school year determine athlete eligibility for the start of the fall season (incoming freshmen are **all eligible** to start their freshmen fall).  
\*1st quarter grades determine athlete eligibility for the remainder of the fall season

**WINTER:** \*1st quarter grades determine athlete eligibility for the start of the winter season.  
\*2nd quarter grades determine athlete eligibility for the end of the winter season after these grades have been issued.

**SPRING:** \*2nd quarter grades determine athlete eligibility for pre-season and regular season games prior to 3rd quarter grades being final.  
\*3rd quarter grades determine athlete eligibility for the remainder of the spring season.

#### **F. ACADEMICALLY INELIGIBLE ATHLETES:**

Academically ineligible athletes will be required to practice and travel with the team during their suspension but shall not be in uniform for all scrimmages, other noncountable contests and 20% of regular season contests after the ineligibility is determined. The following is a breakdown of 20% of contests for all SAHS sports based on a typical regular season schedule.

**FALL SPORTS:** Football – 2 games; Soccer – 3 games; Field Hockey – 3 games;  
Cross-Country – 2 meets; Golf – 2 matches; Cheering – 2 games

**WINTER SPORTS:** Cheering (winter) – 1 competition & TBA basketball games;  
Basketball – 4 games; Alpine Skiing – 3 meets; Indoor Track – 2 meets; Wrestling – 3 meets;  
Bowling – 2 Meets; Unified Basketball – 2 games

**SPRING SPORTS:** Softball – 4 games; Baseball – 4 games; Tennis – 3 matches;  
Track – 2 meets.

#### **G. TO REGAIN ELIGIBILITY THE STUDENT-ATHLETE MUST:**

1. Have their academic progress monitored weekly by the athletic director.
2. Be passing a minimum of 5 course credits and be passing all courses required for graduation.
3. Meet with the AD at the end of the ineligibility period to be informed of their eligibility status.

#### **H. CONTINUOUSLY INELIGIBLE ATHLETES:**

1. Athletes who are ineligible at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> time period are ineligible for another 20% of contests.
2. Athletes who are not eligible at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> time period will be dismissed from the team.

**I. MPA Bona Fide Rule:** This MPA rule prevents members of a school team from missing high school team practice or competition to compete or practice elsewhere. **Two waivers per student-athlete per sport season may be granted by the principal on a case-by-case basis for extraordinary circumstances.** For example, if a student-athlete were invited to participate in a prestigious weekend event or in a nationally recognized tournament over a school vacation then a waiver may be granted. However, if a student-athlete requests to miss practice every Friday because he/she is receiving specialized coaching from an outside team/coach, then a waiver would not be granted. Violations of this rule after the allowable waivers have been used and/or when waivers are not granted will be penalized as follows:

**Penalty for violation of the MPA Bona Fide Rule:**

1. **First Violation** - Report violation to MPA and the athlete is suspended for one game/contest.
2. **Second Violation** - Report violation to MPA & the athlete is removed from team for the remainder of season.

**J. Social Media:**

Social media can be a useful tool to communicate with teammates, fans, friends, coaches and more. Social media can also be dangerous if you are not extremely careful. Every picture, link, quote, tweet, status or post that you put online is forever part of your digital footprint. You really never know when your digital footprint will come back to hurt or help your reputation during the recruiting process, a job interview or other important areas in your life. Recognizing all of this, athletes need to follow the following guidelines as it pertains to their online profile:

1. Athletes must take responsibility for their online profile, including their posts and any photos, videos or other recordings posted by others in which they appear.
2. Athletes will not degrade their opponents using social media before, during or after the game.
3. Athletes will only post positive things about teammates, coaches, opponents and officials on social media.
4. Athletes will use social media to promote their abilities, team, community and social values.
5. Athletes will consider "Is this the me I want people to see?" before posting anything online.
6. Athletes will ignore any comments made about them on social media and will not retaliate.
7. Athletes who see a teammate post something potentially negative online will have a conversation with that teammate. If the athlete doesn't feel comfortable talking to the teammate about this, they agree to talk to a captain or a coach.
8. Athletes need to recognize and understand that they represent their sport(s), school, team, family and community at all times as a member of a high school sports team, so they need to do this in the most positive, respectful and responsible manner possible.

**Penalties for violations of the social media policy (cumulative during high school career):**

1. **First Violation** – Meeting with the student, coach and AD to discuss and learn from the violation.
2. **Second Violation** – Suspension from athletics for up to 20% of regular season contests.
3. **Third Violation** – Suspension from athletics for up to 50% of regular season contests.
4. **Fourth Violation** – Suspension from athletics for up to 1 calendar year.

Athletes who are penalized for social media violations will be required to practice and travel with the team during their suspension but shall not be in uniform for all scrimmages, other noncountable contests and the number of regular season contests specified by the violation and the applicable consequence listed above.