

TALAWANDA



ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

**ATHLETICS IS A
PRIVILEGE NOT A
RIGHT!**

Administration

Alma Mater, Fight Song

Letter from Athletic Director

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THS Principal
THS Assistant Principal
THS Assistant Principal
District Athletic Director
Athletic Secretary**

**TMS Principal
TMS Dean of Students
TMS Athletic Director**

ALMA MATER

As the years roll on into eternity,
There are mem'ries we won't forget:
How we've learned of truth, honor and loyalty,
How we've loved the friends we've met.

Talawanda, Talawanda,
Long may your banner fly!
We will always be true
To the red, white and blue
Of Talawanda High!

FIGHT SONG

Fight! Go! Talawanda
Home of the Braves!
White, red and blue our banner
Proudly it waves!

Over all victorious
Loyal and true
Fight! Go! Win Win Win!
Talawanda, we're for you

To Talawanda Student Athletes and Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the Talawanda High School athletic community! As part of the Athletic Department and the Talawanda School District, we are thrilled to embark on another year filled with growth, competition, and unforgettable experiences.

The Talawanda School District believes that a dynamic program of student activities is vital to the educational development of our students. Our athletic program is designed to provide a variety of experiences that foster favorable habits and attitudes, preparing young people for adult life in a democratic society. Through interscholastic athletics, students learn invaluable lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, competition, overcoming adversity and the importance of winning and losing gracefully.

Participation in athletics contributes not only to physical health but also to the development of a healthy self-concept. The pride and school spirit that come from being part of a team are essential components of the Talawanda experience. Our program empowers student-athletes to work hard, build character and resilience all while enjoying the thrill of competition.

This Athletic Code of Conduct handbook has been created to familiarize you and your family with the expectations and policies of the Talawanda Athletic Department. It is essential that all student-athletes, along with their families, understand and embrace these guidelines, as they uphold the values we cherish as a community.

We encourage open communication between families and our coaching staff, as your support is crucial in creating a positive environment for our student-athletes. Together, we can ensure that this year is not only successful but also enriching for everyone involved.

Thank you for being an integral part of our Talawanda athletic family. We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year ahead!

Sincerely,

Jake Richardson

Director of Athletics
Talawanda School District

A. Athletic Department Mission Statement

The Mission of Talawanda Athletics is to prepare our student athletes to win every day in the community; in the classroom, and in athletics by promoting sportsmanship, integrity, fitness, and communication skills and encouraging athletes to make the right decisions in all they do.

B. Philosophy

The Board of Education recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics in the educational process and the values that young people develop when they have the opportunity to participate in activities outside of the traditional classroom.

Participants and responsible adults involved in board-approved extra curricular-activities are expected to demonstrate the same level of responsibility and behavior at practice and competitions as is expected in the classroom. The board further encourages the development and promotion of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in all phases of the educational process and in all segments of the community, including administrators, participants, adult supervisors, parents, spirit groups, and support/booster groups.

C. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to give all students participating in interscholastic athletics and other persons a guide to the operation of these activities in the Talawanda School District. The coaches and directors of the various teams/activities within the district's athletic program will explain specific rules, regulations, policies and procedures at the beginning of each season. Students participating in athletics will be expected to adhere not only to the specific rules, regulations, policies and procedures set forth in this code, but also any specific rules provided by coaches for each athletic activity and provided to the student as approved in accordance with Section J of this code.

D. Pre-Season Rules Meeting

Student-athletes and their parents/guardians are required to attend pre-season meetings with the athletic director and coaches. Attendance is mandatory for each sport in which the student-athlete participates. Important information will be provided during these meetings, including additional rules, regulations, and expectations of the Athletic Department. If a student-athlete and/or their parents/guardians fail to attend the pre-season meeting, they are still responsible for abiding by all rules, regulations, and expectations presented at the meetings.

E. Interscholastic Athletics

For the purpose of the Code of Conduct, interscholastic athletics shall include the following:

Girls

Cross Country
Volleyball
Soccer
Swimming/Diving

Boys

Cross Country
Football
Soccer
Swimming/Diving

Girls cont...

Basketball
Tennis
Fastpitch Softball
Track & Field
Cheerleading
Bowling
Golf

Boys cont...

Basketball
Tennis
Baseball
Track & Field
Golf
Wrestling
Bowling

F. Athletic Rules and Regulations - not agreeing with the rules of this handbook does not give you the right to break the rules.

The rules and regulations of the Athletic Department apply to all those students in grades 7-12 who elect to take part in any phase of the athletic program that falls under the jurisdiction of the athletic director. These students include, but are not limited to athletes, players, cheerleaders, managers, trainers, and statisticians.

It must be understood by all students and their parents/guardians that participation in interscholastic athletics in the Talawanda School District requires a commitment to follow the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures established by the District, the Athletic Department, and its coaches. Additionally, any student who elects to participate on an athletic team agrees to adhere to the rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and expectations set forth by the District, the Athletic Department, and its coaches.

Students who violate these rules and expectations will face disciplinary action, which may include suspension from play, suspension from the team, or removal from the team. Disciplinary action may also result in possible suspension or expulsion from school in accordance with the student code of conduct.

G. Substance Use (Alcohol, Drugs, or Other Controlled Substances)

This policy applies to all students in grades seven through twelve who are involved in extracurricular activities from the time they sign this policy until they no longer compete in extra curricular activities at Talawanda School District. This policy is in effect 365 days a year/24 hours a day. All freshmen will start their high school career with a clean record.

A student shall not possess, use, transmit alcohol, tobacco, or drugs including but not limited to narcotics, hallucinogenic drugs, intoxicants, inhalants, and/or look-alike tobacco products (electronic cigarettes/vapes) or drugs.

1. First Offense/Incident:

- a.** A student found to be in violation of the substance use policy described in this handbook suspended from the team for the remainder of the athletic season.

- b.** If the student enrolls in a school approved drug/alcohol treatment program, the student may return to the team at the discretion of the Athletic Director and Coach.

2. Second Offense/Incident:

- a. A student found to be in violation of the substance use policy in this handbook for the second time would be disqualified from any extra-curricular activity for the rest of the season as well as the following two athletic seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring are the Athletic Seasons).

3. Third Offense/Incident:

- a. A student found to be in violation of the substance use policy would be disqualified from any extra-curricular activity for the remainder of the student athlete's entire school career.

H. Self Referral

If a student seeks assistance for dealing with a drug or alcohol problem by "self-referral" to their coach/advisor or school administrator, and agrees to participate in a drug/alcohol assessment approved by the school administration and agrees to follow assessment recommendations, there shall be NO disqualification from extracurricular activities. Self-referral can only occur one time for a student. Subsequent violations will be treated as a second offense.

1. Refusal or failure to follow through with the assessment or the assessment recommendations will result in the incident being referred back to the administration for other action.
2. The self-referral must be made prior to the student being determined to have any involvement in prohibited activities.

I. Violations of Talawanda Student Code and/or Talawanda Interscholastic Athletic Code

1. Infractions: An infraction must be observed by a teacher, coach, chaperone, school administrator, school board member, or any member of a law enforcement agency. A statement of admission by the student athlete or his/her parents will be considered an infraction.
2. Financial responsibility for all professional assessment and counseling sessions lies with the parent(s) of the student athlete.

J. Academic Eligibility Requirements

1. General Eligibility

9- 12th Grade Eligibility

To participate in any sport a student must meet requirements established by the Ohio High School Athletic Association AND Talawanda High School. To be eligible a student MUST:

- A. Currently be enrolled
- B. Have been enrolled the immediately preceding grading period
- C. Have received passing grades in five full credit classes (PE courses = 1/2 credit)
- D. Have an OHSAA authorization form and current physical exam form signed by a physician on file in the athletic office or uploaded to the Student-Athletes Final Forms account.

E. Have all forms and fields completed on the Student-Athletes Final Forms Account.

****The school does not provide insurance.**

7th and 8th Grade Eligibility

To participate in any sport a student must meet requirements established by the Ohio High School Athletic Association AND Talawanda Middle School. To be eligible a student MUST:

- A. Students must currently be enrolled.
- B. Have received passing grades in a minimum of four subjects in the immediately preceding grading period.
- C. A student enrolling in the 7th grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement.

The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. **EXCEPTION:** Eligibility or ineligibility for the first grading period commences with the start of the fall sports season. For the purpose of this Bylaw, "school day" includes faculty in-service days, and regular school attendance days but not holidays or school breaks.

Summer school may not be used to substitute for failure to meet the academic standards specified in OHSAA Bylaws during the last grading period of the school year.

Tutoring or examinations to complete the preceding grading period requirements is permissible provided the inability to complete the required work on time is due to illness or accident verified by a physician and the procedure applies to all students in the school.

It is recommended that all students carry at least six classes per school year.

2. Additional Eligibility Requirements. Grades 7-12

Students are required to maintain no less than a 2.0 grade point average (gpa) in the preceding grading period in order to remain eligible. If a student has less than a 2.0 gpa in preceding grading period, but has a 2.0 (gpa) or greater accumulative during their high school career then student will remain eligible provided student is passing a minimum five (5) full credit courses in the preceding grading period (four (4) full credit courses for 7th/8th graders).

If a student fails to maintain a 2.0 gpa in the preceding grading period and does not have an accumulative 2.0 gpa a student will be ineligible. However, a student may regain his/her eligibility back at the midterm grading period of the current nine week grading period provided the student has increased his/her gpa to 2.0 and has passed five (5) one- credit courses in the preceding nine week grading period.

Students enrolling from 8th grade to 9th grade must meet all above requirements. Students enrolling in the 7th grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement.

K. Attendance

All students participating in an athletic program must be in attendance a minimum of 4 complete classes on their schedule the day of the contest or practice in order to participate in the athletic event that day or evening. Student-athletes must also be in attendance a minimum of 4 complete classes on their schedule the day prior to any weekend contests, or contests on a day school is not in session. This participation includes all practices, games, events, etc. Exceptions may be made with the consent of the Athletic Director.

L. Transportation of Athletes

Students participating in interscholastic athletic events associated with the team are required to ride district transportation to and from events and adhere to the transportation rules outlined in the District Code of Conduct. Unless otherwise excused by the coach or athletic director, all participating students must follow this policy. If district transportation is not available for an athletic event, student-athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for the student-athletes travel arrangements to and from the event.

M. Equipment

All school-issued equipment must be returned to the coach/athletic director prior to the awards program. If equipment is not returned, any and all awards earned by a student will be withheld until such equipment is returned or restitution has been made. Students participating in athletics will have replacement costs added to their student fees for any unreturned or damaged items.

N. Physical Education

PE Option: Students who successfully complete **TWO full seasons of interscholastic athletics, marching band, or cheerleading may be excused from the high school physical education requirement.** Students desiring to be excused from the PE requirement must complete a PE waiver form that can be found in the Counselor's office.

O. Physical Examinations

Those students participating in athletic activities from the Talawanda School District are required to undergo physical examinations pursuant to the regulations of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. The OHSAA requires students participating in athletic activities in grades 7 through 12 to have the athletic participation form properly signed by a physician, by the participant, and by a parent or guardian. This form must be on file with the athletic director, or uploaded on the students Final Forms account before any candidate for a team may participate in a tryout, practice, or game. This form is the physician's certification of the individual's physical fitness, and must be renewed no less than once each school year. The physical examination is the responsibility of the student-athlete. In addition, parents/guardians, and student-athletes are required to sign the OHSAA Authorization and consent forms.

NOTE: Section 3313.73 of the Ohio Revised Code reads, in part, as follows: "This section does not require any school child to receive a medical examination or receive a medical treatment whose parent or guardian objects thereof." A form certifying this objection shall be signed by the parent or guardian and attached to the parental approval for and kept on file at the athletic director's office.

P. Final Forms

All student-athletes must complete their Final Forms account, including all required information, forms, and waivers, prior to participating in any athletic activities, including tryouts, practices or games. Registration for the specific sport(s) they wish to participate in must also be completed during the registration period. Student-athletes who do not meet these requirements may not be allowed to participate. This policy will be communicated to athletes and their parents at the start of each season.

Q. Athletic Fees (Pay to Participate)

All student-athletes are required to pay athletic fees by the published due date of each athletic season. Failure to pay these fees on time may result in removal from participation. If a payment plan is necessary, a request must be submitted to the Athletic Director by the published due date for payment plan requests; payment plans will be established by the Athletic Department and are not guaranteed after the request deadline.

Refunds for athletic fees will be issued under the following conditions: a student-athlete who quits or is removed from the team after picture day but before competitions (including scrimmages) will receive a \$200 refund; if they quit or are removed after the first competition but before 20% of the regular season competitions are completed, they will receive a \$100 refund. No refunds will be given if a student-athlete quits or is removed after 20% of the regular season competitions are completed.

**Refunds due to a season-ending injury will be determined at the discretion of the Athletic Director.*

R. Injuries

When a student has an injury, which requires professional medical attention, the student will not be permitted to return to participation with the team until our trainer receives written permission from his/her physician. Students are required to report all injuries to their coaches, to include injuries that occur both on and off the playing field.

S. Two-Sport Participation

Athletes may participate in more than one sport in any one-sport season (fall, winter, or spring) if **BOTH** coaches and Athletic Director concur and cooperatively work out the details of practices, games, etc., with the student-athlete. It should be emphasized that the school can benefit from multi-sport participation, and that disciplined athletes can be successful in several sports. The same applies to simultaneous athletic and other co-curricular participation, i.e. cross-country and marching band. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved then the student will decide.

If a student has a conflict when one area requires student attendance for a grade then the coach and teacher must meet with the athletic director and building principal for a decision.

T. Quitting a Team

Once a student-athlete has officially been selected as a member of a team, the student-athlete is expected to complete the entire season. Should the student-athlete decide to quit after the team is selected, they will not be permitted to participate in another sport during that season, unless they are released to do so by the coach of the team in which they are quitting and approval is granted by the

Athletic Director. In any case the student will not be eligible for any post-season awards in the sport they quit.

U. Commitment to School Team

When participating in interscholastic athletics, we expect student-athletes to attend all practices and contests during their season. Vacations are not encouraged during a sports season. The head coach's team rules will prevail in the event of missed practices or contests.

During the sports season, high school team activities shall take precedence over all select or outside athletic programs.

Missing or being tardy to any team functions may result in adjustments to playing time. These decisions are at the discretion of the head coaches.

V. Parental Procedures for Registering a Concern

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in an athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

A. *Communication You Should Expect From Your Athlete's Coach*

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all members on the squad including all team rules.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e. fees, special equipment.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation.
5. Coaches' off-season program.
6. Teaching sportsmanship, ethics, good behavior and alcohol/drug/tobacco prevention.

B. *Communication Coaches Should Expect From Parents*

1. Concern expressed directly to the coach. Encourage your child to make this step first.
2. Notification of any schedule conflict well in advance.
3. Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

4. To be a positive role model at contests and practice.

As your child becomes involved in the programs at Talawanda High School they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wish. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

C. *Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches*

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior
4. College options and recruiting

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for the team and all student-athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those listed next, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

D. *Issues Not Appropriate To Discuss with Coach*

1. Team Strategy (including playing time)
2. Play calling
3. Other student-athletes

Communication with a coach is important. There are situations that may require a conference between coach and parent. When these conferences become necessary, please call the coach to make the necessary arrangements for an appointment.

Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

E. *What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?*

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director and coach to discuss the situation.
2. After the meeting a final decision will be determined by the Athletic Director.

W. Dress Code Policy

By choosing to join a team, student-athletes agree to abide by the dress code policies established by the coach. This includes adhering to specific attire requirements for game/competition days, travel, and competitions. Compliance with these dress code policies is essential in promoting team unity and representing the school with pride. Failure to adhere to the dress code may result in consequences as determined by the coaching staff.

X. Hazing

Hazing is not allowed and this includes any physical or mental embarrassment that may be instituted by anyone associated with an athletic team. (per 2903.3 Ohio Handbook of Criminal Law)

Y. Social Media and Communication Guidelines for Student-Athletes

As representatives of our high school athletics program, student-athletes are expected to uphold a high standard of conduct in all forms of communication, including social media, texting, and group apps. The following guidelines apply:

1. **Positive Representation:** Student-athletes should use social media and communication platforms to positively represent themselves, their teammates, and the school. Posts and messages should reflect respect, sportsmanship, and integrity.
2. **Respectful Interaction:** All communication, whether online or offline, should be respectful. Harassment, bullying, or any form of negative behavior toward teammates, opponents, coaches, or officials will not be tolerated.
3. **Privacy and Safety:** Protect your personal information and that of others. Do not share sensitive details about teammates or the program without permission. Be mindful of what you post, as it can have lasting impacts.
4. **Appropriate Content:** Avoid sharing content that is inappropriate or offensive. This includes language, images, or messages that do not align with the values of our athletics program.
5. **Team Communication:** Group apps and messaging platforms should be used for team-related communication only. Keep discussions focused on practices, games, and team events.
6. **Consequences:** Violations of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, including potential suspension from the team or other consequences as determined by the coaching staff.

By following these guidelines, student-athletes can help create a positive and supportive environment that reflects the values of our athletic program.

Z. Spectator (including Parents/Guardians) Code of Conduct for Athletic Events

At Talawanda High School, we are dedicated to fostering a positive and respectful environment during all athletic events, both home and away. This section outlines the behavior expectations for parents, guardians, and spectators attending athletic events.

Behavior Expectations:

1. **Sportsmanship:** All attendees are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship by supporting our athletes and displaying respect towards officials, opponents, and fellow spectators.

2. Respectful Conduct: Negative comments or disruptive behavior aimed at officials, opposing teams, or other fans will not be tolerated.
3. Compliance with Rules: All individuals must adhere to the rules and regulations established by the Talawanda Athletic Department and the OHSAA.

Consequences for Non-Compliance: Failure to follow these expectations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension from attending future athletic events. Our aim is to ensure a safe, respectful, and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

By attending Talawanda High School athletic events, you agree to uphold these standards and support our student-athletes in a positive manner.

Standards for Athletic Awards

To be eligible to receive an end-of-the-season award, a student participating in extracurricular activities must meet all of the following criteria:

Must have maintained their eligibility by both local and O.H.S.A.A. standards.
Must attend the year-end program unless excused by the head coach or advisor.

Must have returned all equipment/uniforms and made restitution for loss/damage to such equipment.

Each coach is responsible for establishing the criteria by which athletic awards are earned. It is highly recommended that each coach develop a written policy that is shared with their players establishing the requirements for earning awards particularly at the Varsity level. This policy should contain information referring to the number of quarters, innings, matches, etc. one must participate in to receive a particular award as well as any special circumstances players and/or their parents should be aware of. The following awards will be provided to each coach for presentation to his/her team as applicable.

FRESHMAN AWARDS: Will be presented to freshmen that participate on freshman, reserve, or varsity teams. The award will be numerals depicting the year of his or her graduation, and a freshman participation certificate. **The numerals will be awarded only once during the freshman year.**

RESERVE AWARDS: Will be awarded on the same basis as varsity awards. All athletes who participate on a reserve athletic team and qualify for an award will receive a reserve participation certificate.

VARSITY AWARDS: A 7" block letter will be awarded to any athletes who meet the requirements of a particular sport at the Varsity level. A sport pin will also be presented depicting the sport for which the varsity award was earned. **The Varsity letter and sport pin are presented only once.**

Thereafter, the athlete will be awarded a gold insert, as follows, each time another Varsity letter is earned.

2nd Varsity letter: recognized by a Gold Bar

3rd Varsity letter: recognized by a Gold Star

4th Varsity letter: recognized by a Gold Medallion

Certificates for first year, second, and third year Varsity award winners will also be presented, as applicable.

Note: An athlete, who played part of a season on a reserve team but according to the criteria established by the coaching staff has earned a Varsity award, will receive only the Varsity award.

Freshmen who earn a Varsity award will also receive their numerals if they have not already received them.

SENIOR AWARDS: Seniors who have participated in a sport may (at the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director) be presented the varsity award whether they attain the normal requirements or not.

TROPHIES/PLAQUES: May be awarded in all varsity sports for “Most Valuable Player”, “Most Improved Player”, and “Brave Award for Leadership” (Coach’s Award). The coaches shall choose the means for the selection of the athletes worthy of these awards. Coaches may also add in awards for different sports.

MANAGER, STATISTICIAN, AND STUDENT TRAINER AWARDS: Managers, statisticians, and student trainers will be awarded a varsity letter when they have completed their second season with a varsity team.

NCAA INFORMATION

Student athletes who plan to pursue athletics in college may go on-line at www.ncaa.org to get answers to many questions regarding college athletics such as eligibility, financial aid, scholarships, recruiting, along with an explanation on how to register with the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. This registration should take place at the end of the junior year in high school. The phone number for the NCAA, located in Kansas, is 913-339-1906.

Useful Websites

Talawanda Athletic Department

Link to Talawanda Athletics information

www.talawandaathletics.org

Talawanda Athletic Boosters

Talawanda Athletics main support group

www.talawandaboosters.org

Ohio High School Athletic Association

The governing body of High School Athletics in the State of Ohio

www.ohsaa.org

Southwest District Athletic Board

Get the latest information on Sectional
& District tournaments

www.swdab.org

NCAA

Websites dedicated to providing services to support prospective student-athletes including: core-course listings for high schools; online information about Division I & Division II initial eligibility requirements, FAQs and the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net or

www.ncaa.org

Southwest Ohio Conference

Get the latest conference standings, schedules, and directions

www.swocsports.com