



**Needham High School**  
**Student-Athlete Handbook**

Revised August 2010

**NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL**  
**STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK**

Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>	<b>pg. 3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Program Description</b>	<b>pg. 3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>NHS Athletic Offerings and Seasonal Start Dates</b>	<b>pg. 4</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Important Information to Remember</b>	<b>pg. 5</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Governing Bodies</b>	<b>pg. 6</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>The Bay State Conference (BSC)</b>	<b>pg. 6</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Select Rules, Regulations, Policies and Practices</b>	<b>pg. 6</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drug Policy Violations</b>	<b>pg. 7</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Attendance and Absence Policies and Requirements</b>	<b>pg. 8</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Academic Requirements</b>	<b>pg. 9</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Age Limits</b>	<b>pg. 9</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>pg. 10</b>
<b>XIII.</b>	<b>Trainer and Training Room</b>	<b>pg. 10</b>
<b>XIV.</b>	<b>Hazing and Bullying</b>	<b>pg. 10</b>
<b>XV.</b>	<b>Role of Coach</b>	<b>pg. 10</b>
<b>XVI.</b>	<b>Athlete Coach Relationships</b>	<b>pg. 11</b>
<b>XVII.</b>	<b>Communication Policy</b>	<b>pg. 11</b>
<b>XVIII.</b>	<b>Spectator Conduct at Athletic Contests</b>	<b>pg. 12</b>

# NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

## I. PHILOSOPHY

The Interscholastic Athletic Program at Needham High School is an integral component of the comprehensive educational environment and is committed to the total physical, social, emotional and mental development of all students who participate. Aligning with the Mission of the Needham Public Schools to develop a “partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, and fosters integrity,” the Athletic Program also supports District Goal 2.0 which ensures that students have the social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware, to have social and relationship skills, to self manage, and to make responsible decisions.

The Program also encourages all student-athletes to take pride in themselves, their teams, their school and their community. In order to do this, they need to learn what it means to cooperate with others, to set individual and team goals, to manage their time balancing all areas of their lives, and to learn the physical and technical skills demanded by their sports.

As members of the Needham Program, student-athletes are expected to demonstrate proper respect for all coaches, teammates, officials, spectators and equipment. All student-athletes are also expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct and sportsmanship both on and off the playing field, as they are at all times representatives of their teams, their school and their community.

## II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Needham High School Athletic Program maintains teams at the Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity levels. Each year, more than 1250 overall student-athlete spots are available in 33 different sports during the three seasons of competition. At the Freshman and JV levels, participation and skill development are stressed as younger athletes learn the rules of the sports and are introduced to interscholastic competition. Playing time at these levels is based upon practice attendance, work ethic, attitude, commitment to the team, and athletic skill. Varsity athletes work to develop their skills and knowledge to highest degree, while competition levels and expectations are raised. Varsity teams also allow talented athletes the chance to excel and prepare for future competition and to compete for League, Sectional and State Championships.

Tryouts for programs are open to all students providing they meet the standards of academic eligibility, school citizenship and basic physical/health qualifications. Participation in the Program is granted to students who meet and maintain these standards.

It is important to remember participation in athletics is a privilege and that students try out voluntarily and, for some teams, risk being cut. During the try out period, the coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is the responsibility of each student to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can meet expectations set forth. Students cut from one team are encouraged to try out for another team if there is space on that team. Students who are cut from a team will be informed individually by the head coach and when appropriate, other members of the coaching staff as well. After tryouts begin, no athlete may voluntarily leave one team and try out for another without the consent of both coaches involved and the Athletic Director.

***PLEASE NOTE:*** *When a freshman has demonstrated an advanced level of ability, he or she may be placed on a varsity level team after consultation with the athlete, his or her parents, the Coach and the Athletic Director.*

### III. 2010-2011 NHS ATHLETIC OFFERINGS & SEASONAL START DATES

*Sport / Level(s) / Tryout & Cut Information*

#### FALL 2010

*Var/JV Football Start 8/23/10; Freshman Football & all other sports start 8/26/10*

- **CHEERLEADING** - Var (cuts typically needed) – *Tryouts held in spring of 2010*
- **BOY'S & GIRL'S CROSS COUNTRY**- Var / JV (no cuts)
- **DANCE** - Var (cuts typically needed) – *Tryouts held in spring 2010*
- **FIELD HOCKEY** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **FOOTBALL** - Var / JV / 9th (no cuts)
- **GOLF** - Var (cuts typically needed)
- **BOY'S SOCCER** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **GIRL'S SOCCER** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **GIRL'S** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **GIRL'S VOLLEYBALL** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts may be needed)

#### WINTER 2010-2011

*Practices/Tryouts for all winter sports start on November 29, 2010*

- **BOY'S BASKETBALL** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts typically needed)
- **GIRL'S BASKETBALL** - Var / JV / 9th (cuts typically needed)
- **CHEERLEADING** - Var (cuts typically needed)
- **DANCE** - Var (cuts typically needed)
- **GIRL'S GYMNASTICS** Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S ICE HOCKEY** - Var / JV (cuts typically needed)
- **GIRL'S ICE HOCKEY** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S & GIRL'S ALPINE SKIING** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S SWIMMING & DIVING** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **BOY'S & GIRL'S INDOOR TRACK** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **WRESTLING** - Var / JV (no cuts)

#### SPRING 2011

*Practices/Tryouts for all spring sports start on March 21, 2010*

- **BASEBALL** - Var / JV/ 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S LACROSSE** - Var / JV/ 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **GIRL'S LACROSSE** - Var / JV/ 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **SOFTBALL** - Var / JV/ 9th (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S TENNIS** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **GIRL'S TENNIS** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)
- **BOY'S & GIRL'S OUTDOOR TRACK** - Var / JV (no cuts)
- **BOY'S VOLLEYBALL** - Var / JV (cuts may be needed)

#### SPRING CLUB OPTIONS

- **BOY'S & GIRL'S RUGBY** (no cuts)
- **BOY'S & GIRL'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE** (no cuts)

*Due to roster and space limitations for some teams, along with fluctuations in interest and numbers of students coming out for given programs each season, policies around cuts being made for the sports listed above may have the potential to change from year to year. An indication of the likelihood of cuts being made is listed above.*

## IV. IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

### AN ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENT MAY ONLY BECOME ELIGIBLE TO TRYOUT/PARTICIPATE IF THE FOLLOWING 3 REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:

- 1) **Parental Permission Form Completed, Signed and Approved;**
- 2) **Current Doctor's Physical (Good for 13 Months) On File;**
- 3) **Once a student makes a roster: Athletic User Fees & Surcharges (if necessary) are Paid**

#### a) PARENTAL PERMISSION FORMS AND PHYSICALS

A signed and completed **NHS Interscholastic Athletic Registration & Permission Form** along with an up-to-date **Doctor's Physical** (*good for 13 months from the date of the physical*) must be submitted to the Athletic Office at least one (1) week prior to the start of try-outs/first day of practice for an athlete to be eligible to participate. Permission Forms will only be accepted when they are submitted with a copy of the student's most recent Physical Exam. *It is strongly recommended that annual physicals be scheduled between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> as exams administered during this period of time cover students for the complete school year (if the 13 months of the physical gets a student through the first day of any season, then the student will remain eligible through the end of the given season, regardless of when the 13 month timeframe is up).*

**No athletes will be allowed to practice or compete until both forms have been submitted and the Athletic Director has signed off on the eligibility of the athlete.** Permission Forms are available at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics> and in the Athletic Office and once completed can be faxed or mailed into the Athletic Office. Up-to-date eligibility information is also posted prior to each season outside of the Athletic Office.

#### b) ATHLETIC USER FEES, SURCHARGES & FAMILY CAP INFORMATION

Once team rosters are set, each athlete must pay the NHS Athletic User Fee of \$285.00 per season before the first regularly scheduled interscholastic contest in order to receive a uniform and to be eligible to compete.

*Ice Hockey and Alpine Ski families should also be advised that a \$250.00 surcharge per player has been implemented for all students who make one of the NHS teams (Varsity/JV Boys or Girls Ice Hockey, Varsity/JV Boys or Girls Alpine Ski Hockey). All Swimmers and Divers (Varsity/JV Boys or Girls) will be charged a \$50.00 surcharge.*

User Fee/Surcharge checks should be made out to: **NHS Athletics** and should include the name of the student-athlete and which sport the fee is covering. Checks should be brought or mailed into the Athletic Office. **If you choose to mail in the User Fee, please be aware that until the check is received and processed, the athlete will not be eligible to participate in any sport.** *Please note that there is a 4-sport Family Cap per school year (surcharges do not count towards the Family Cap).*

#### c) REQUEST FOR REDUCTION OF ATHLETIC USER FEE FORM

If a student qualifies for the Free and Reduced Lunch Plan, the student is also eligible to receive a reduced Athletic User Fee, but must fill out a Request for Reduction of Athletic User Fee Form to receive the discount. All families also have the ability to submit a Request for Reduction Form, which will be reviewed and either accepted/declined on a case-by-case basis. Request for Reduction Forms are available in the Athletic Office and if accepted, reduce the User Fee for the given season to \$50.00 per athlete (Reduction of Fee Request Forms must be submitted for each season of participation).

#### d) SEASON SCHEDULES, PROGRAM UPDATES, LINKS TO FORMS, ATHLETE & TEAM INFO

Please visit the NHS Athletics Website at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/athletics> for program updates, athlete and team information, links to all forms, and complete season schedules. **For Schedules:** Please use the "Schedule" link on the Athletics Website or check [www.highschoolsports.net](http://www.highschoolsports.net) for complete up-to-date schedules for all fall teams. When using the "Schedule" link, click on the word **CHANGE**, found in the

right-center of the page with the small green triangle in front of it, to open up the search feature for all sports and all levels. When going directly to [www.highschoolsports.net](http://www.highschoolsports.net), type in "Needham High School" in the search area and then use the **CHANGE** link to search for specific teams and levels.

## V. GOVERNING BODIES

Needham High School is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and is therefore governed by Association "Rules and Regulations." Under MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set their own policies, rules and/or regulations as long as they are more restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA. Rules governing individual sports vary depending upon the sport. One of the primary functions of the MIAA is to sponsor and conduct post-season tournaments leading to the determination of geographical district and state champions. The MIAA Handbook is available for review at [www.miaa.net](http://www.miaa.net) as well as in the Principal's Office and the Athletic Office.

The MIAA is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations and is bound by Federation's set of rules, policies and regulations.

## VI. THE BAY STATE CONFERENCE (BSC)

Needham High School is a member of the twelve (12) school Bay State Conference (BSC). The BSC is governed by the MIAA and its own Constitution. A copy of the Constitution is available for review in the Athletic Office. Most game schedules at all levels of competition are set by the BSC. Schedules at the varsity level are divided into two (2) divisions for championship play, while at the junior varsity and freshman levels, schedules are divided into seasonal play.

The "Carey Division" includes the following high schools:

**Braintree, Brookline, Framingham, NEEDHAM, Newton North, Weymouth**

The "Herget Division" includes:

**Dedham, Milton, Natick, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley**

Interdivisional scheduled play is common for most teams and non-conference contests are often also scheduled against schools from other surrounding communities. The Bay State Conference has its own website at [www.baystateconference.com](http://www.baystateconference.com).

## VII. SELECT RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**The following rules and regulations shall be adhered to by all student-athletes at Needham High School:**

- All NHS student-athletes must abide by current MIAA, BSC, and NHS Rules and Regulations.
- All team members are responsible for equipment issued to them and will be assessed for the replacement cost of any items lost or vandalized. Student-athletes not accounting for such replacement costs will be prohibited from further athletic participation until such assessments are paid. Any items lost, stolen, or vandalized must be reported to the supervising coach immediately.
- Inappropriate behavior and actions unbecoming to NHS students will result in action taken at the discretion of the coaches, the Athletic Director, and in some cases, the NHS Administration. This action may range from a warning, to immediate suspension from the team, depending on the severity of the offense. *(Please refer to Handbook Section IX "Code of Discipline: Disciplinary Policies, Procedures and Regulations" for additional information and details.)*
- If a participant is expelled from a team due to disciplinary reasons or because of an infringement of any local, league or state rules, the participant forfeits his/her claim to any awards earned for a sport that season. The participant also forfeits his/her privilege of attending any postseason team activities or events.
- Any student in any sport who willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an

opponent shall be removed from that contest immediately and shall not participate in any sports for one year from the date of the incident.

## **VIII. CHEMICAL HEALTH/ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY VIOLATIONS**

Needham High School enforces a Chemical Health Violation Policy for student-athletes who are in or out of season. The policy states:

*“During the school year, from the 2nd Monday preceding Labor Day (start of Fall practices in August) through the last day of school or MIAA tournament play, whichever ends latest, a NHS student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy-sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol, marijuana or any controlled substance.”*

If a violation occurs during the enforceable timeframe, but out of a season of participation, the penalty will be enforced the next season of participation. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her doctor. Use of tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and steroids is also prohibited.

### **a) First Violation:**

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred:

- The student shall become ineligible and lose eligibility for the next consecutive regular season interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all regular season contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs. For a complete list by sport, please review the MIAA Handbook at [www.miaa.net](http://www.miaa.net).
- The ineligible student will also not be permitted to participate in any non-regular season contests during the violation period, including but not limited to preseason scrimmages, jamborees and play days. *The non-regular season contests missed do not count towards the 25% rule for regular season contests.*
- 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 mandatory meeting will be arranged for the student-athlete, his or her parents, the Athletic Director, the appropriate Assistant Principal, and when possible, the Principal (*this meeting will also be arranged and required for all violations that take place over the summer, from the end of school to the beginning of fall practices*).

### **b) 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 regular season interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs.
- The ineligible student will also not be permitted to participate in any non-regular season contests during the violation period, including but not limited to preseason scrimmages, jamborees and play days. *The non-regular season contests missed do not count towards the 25% rule for regular season contests.*
- 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 penalty of 40% of consecutive regular season interscholastic contests. 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.
- A mandatory meeting will be arranged for the student-athlete, his or her parents, the Athletic Director, the appropriate Assistant Principal, and when possible, the Principal.

## **IX. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

Below are the attendance and absence policies and procedures for all student-athletes at Needham High School. *Please refer back to Handbook Section VIII, Subsection I “Student Attendance Policy” for additional information and for the ‘Special Note’ listing from below\*).*

- Students absent from school may not participate in any extra-curricular activities that day.
- Any student being excused for medical reasons from physical education classes may not participate in any athletic activities that day.
- Students who are dismissed from school by the school nurse due to illness or injury may not participate in extra-curricular activities for that day, including athletic events and practices/activities, student performances, school-sponsored trips, etc.
- A student must attend school from the opening of the school day until 11:20 a.m. or enter school prior to 9:35 a.m. and remain until the end of the school day to be considered as attending for the day. Regarding athletics and extra-curricular activities; students who leave school early or who enter school late without an approved excuse (*\*see “Special Note 1” in Handbook Section VIII for approved excuses*) cannot participate in any games, practices, or extra-curricular activities that day.
- Students who are absent from school on Friday, or the last day of the week, are ineligible to play on the next calendar day after the absence.
- The only exception to these rules is the student who has submitted in writing an excuse for a “planned” absence to the assistant principal and who has received written permission to participate in specific co-curricular activities.

### **a) Varsity Teams:**

Families of student-athletes on varsity teams should understand that all three regularly scheduled school vacations (December, February, April) occur during athletic seasons and that the athletic program continues to operate. Although extended absences from team functions, either during school vacation periods or while school is in session, are discouraged, the Athletic Department recognizes the fact that certain circumstances do require them. Students who are planning to be absent from team activities for an extended period of time due to family trips, religious obligations, or college visitations (as examples) are expected to inform their coach regarding the absence as soon as plans are made and at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. Policies are set at the specific team level for how each case is handled, however, for example, if an athlete misses one game or more than one practice, under such circumstances, he/she may miss the first scheduled contest after his or her return. Although prior notification of a planned absence is mandatory, such notification does not eliminate the consequence. An athlete is required to earn his or her position back upon return.

### **b) Junior Varsity and Freshman Teams:**

During school vacation periods Junior Varsity and Freshman teams will not be scheduled for contests against other schools. Practices may (coaching decision) be held for students who are not on extended absences as defined in the Varsity Section above. All available team members are expected to attend team practices. All efforts will be made by the Athletic Department not to schedule any contests against other schools until sufficient practice time has been allowed upon school reopening at the conclusion of the vacation period. Once contests resume, all team members are eligible to compete.

Students who are absent from school on Friday or the last day of the week are ineligible to play on the next calendar day after the absence. The only exception to this rule is the student who has submitted in



writing an excuse for a “planned” absence to the appropriate assistant principal and who has received written permission to participate.

### **c) Daily Team Attendance**

It is extremely important that a coach be notified if a student is not going to be present at a practice or game if the student is not absent from school that day. The coaches in our program expect their athletes to be present at all team related activities and may suspend a team member from contests for absences. While students can be “excused” from team activities for illness, injury, academic, family or religious reasons, prior notification is expected. Please remember students who leave school early or who enter school late without an approved excuse cannot participate in any games, practices, or extra-curricular activities that day.

## **X. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

A student must have passed five subjects at the end of the most recent term and must be presently taking at least five subjects (four of which must be majors) to be eligible to participate. Prepared work is defined as any subject of course, in which credit is allowed toward the high school diploma. To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have final passing grades for the year in the required number of periods of prepared work. The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determining only the date when the report cards for the marking period have been issued to the parents of all students.

- A student who repeats work upon which he/she has once received credit cannot count that subject a second time for eligibility.
- A student cannot count for eligibility any subject taken during the summer vacation unless that subject has been previously pursued and failed.
- Students receiving services under Chapter 766 whose individualized education plan is a 502.4 or more restrictive prototype may be declared academically eligible by their principal provided that all other eligibility requirements are met.
- When a student is determined to be academically ineligible by the Athletic Director, the student’s guidance counselor and coach will be notified about the situation and asked to touch base with the student directly.

## **XI. AGE LIMITS**

A student must be an undergraduate under nineteen years of age, which has not yet accumulated the credits required for a diploma, with the following exceptions:

- A graduate of a high school in February or June may represent his/her school in athletics until the close of the school semester if otherwise eligible.
- A student who earns the credits required for a diploma prior to attending eight semesters in a four-year high school and who is not granted a diploma may continue to represent his/her school if he/she continues to take at least twenty credits of prepared work or its equivalent if otherwise eligible.
- A student may compete during the remainder of the school year, provided that his/her nineteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1 of that year.

## **XII. TRANSPORTATION**

The school provides bus transportation or a suitable substitute to most "away" contests. All team members are expected to travel to these contests using the school-provided transportation. Exceptions to this policy must be requested in writing to the Athletic Director by a student's parent prior to the

contest. Parents may pick up their child at the conclusion of an away game if they make their presence known to the coach. Parents may only drive a student, who is not their child, home from an away contest if a written note or email is submitted by the parents of the student who will be traveling home with another family to the coach at least 24 hours in advance. In most instances, students will not be allowed to drive themselves to and from away contests.

### **XIII. TRAINER AND TRAINING ROOM**

Needham High School is extremely fortunate to have a highly qualified and skilled ATC Athletic Trainer and a well equipped training center. On school days, the Trainer's hours are usually 2 pm until the conclusion of the last practice session or home contest. During weekends or on days when school is not in session, the Trainer is required to be on site only for contests and for some scheduled scrimmages. Occasionally, the Trainer will be on site for "non-school" day practice sessions.

At certain times, the Trainer and facility are extremely busy. Because of this, access to the training room and its services is limited to athletes who are there for care only; it should not be used as a student lounge. Training services will be granted on a first come, first served basis on practice days. On game days, students will be treated in an order that will allow bus and/or game commitments to be met. The Training program exists to help athletes receive the best possible care.

In the event of an athletic injury, the Trainer and/or Physician is/are in immediate control. At away contests, if a Trainer or Physician is not present, the host school medical personnel are in control. If no medical personnel are present, members of the coaching staff are instructed to "take charge" of the situation and, if warranted, call for emergency care. After an injury, a student may not return to competition without clearance by the Trainer. ***If a student-athlete is referred to the outside care of a Physician, the student-athlete may not, under any circumstances, return to participation until a written note from the Physician is submitted to the Trainer, Athletic Director and/or NHS Nurses clearing the student-athlete for participation.***

### **XIV. HAZING AND BULLYING**

Hazing and Bullying in any form is unacceptable. If you have any concern that you son or daughter is, or has been, involved in a hazing or bullying incident, we strongly encourage you to call the Coach, the Athletic Director, or the Principal immediately.

***Please refer to Handbook Section IX "Code of Discipline: Disciplinary Policies, Procedures and Regulations" for specific NHS Hazing and Bullying policies and procedures.***

### **XV. ROLE OF THE COACH**

Needham High School acknowledges the substantial amount of time coaches and teammates spend with each other. We know how important the relationships that develop between teammates and between a coach and an athlete can be. We see coaches as teachers, mentors, and role models. In addition to teaching the skills and strategies of athletics, coaches must model and encourage positive citizenship, integrity, commitment, and strong work ethic. While keeping the entire team in mind, one of a coach's top priorities must be to assist in the healthy physical, social and emotional development of each student-athlete.

### **XVI. ATHLETE/COACH RELATIONSHIPS**

Participation in athletics should be an enjoyable experience for all parties involved; student, coach and parent. There is no doubt that participation tends to be emotionally charged and dealing constructively with these emotions can be an excellent learning experience. In most cases, athletic competition is extremely positive and complements the educational experience enjoyed by students at Needham High School. Occasionally conflicts between coaches and students arise. These conflicts must be addressed and resolved immediately so that the many benefits of athletic involvement may continue to contribute to the emotional and physical growth of Needham High School students.

## **XVII. COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Athletic involvement is highly emotional and very time consuming. Because of this, conflicts and issues between a student and his/her coach may arise. It is imperative that any conflict and/or issue be addressed immediately and as directly as possible so that it can be resolved promptly.

**FIRST STEP: Personal Student-Coach Contact** - The athlete should discuss the issue with his/her coach as soon as possible. Sometimes a parent of an athlete may wish to contact the coach. In order for the contact to be productive, it is suggested that athletes and/or parents avoid contacting a coach at the following times:

- **Either prior to or immediately following a contest**
- **During an active practice session**
- **During a time when other students are present or when it would be obvious to others that the discussion is taking place**
- **When there is not sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion**

The best solution is to ask the coach, either over the phone or in person, if an appointment could be made to discuss the issue. A parent or student may also leave a note for the coach in the Athletic Office.

**SECOND STEP: Student-Athletic Director Contact** - If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student and/or parent should contact the Athletic Director. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory conclusion then a meeting will be scheduled involving all concerned parties in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. Since athletic seasons are relatively short, issues should be addressed immediately. While there can be no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful discussion of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

**THIRD STEP: Student-Administration Contact** - If there is still not a satisfactory resolution, the student or parent should contact the High School Principal. The Athletic Director should be informed that this contact is going to be made.

The Athletic Department strives to hire the best possible coaches who are committed to ensuring a positive environment for all athletes. As a department we strive to build player/coach relationships and recognize that all interactions provide a healthy learning opportunity. While we realize that at times an athlete and his or her parents may have a concern with a particular coach and may not want to speak directly with the coach, we feel it is essential that athletes and parents do speak with coaches directly to resolve any concerns. An issue cannot possibly be resolved unless those directly involved have a candid, open conversation regarding the problem. The coach is the person most familiar with the student athlete in the context of the team environment. Coaches and players interact daily at practice and games and have the mutual information necessary to discuss any situation that may arise. This

positive communication is of utmost importance.

## **XVIII. SPECTATOR CONDUCT AT ATHLETIC CONTESTS**

Overzealous fans can create peril to interscholastic athletics. A pass or ticket into an interscholastic athletic event entitles spectators to one thing: the privilege of watching and supporting the talented student-athletes of two schools as they exhibit what they have learned on the athletic field, court, pool, diamond, etc., as an extension of the classroom.

While attending an athletic contest, you are a representative of Needham High School and the Needham community. Unsportsmanlike actions by spectators are a reflection on the school, and especially, on the young men and women comprising the teams representing Needham High School. Students attending interscholastic athletic contests, conducted either in schools or at private facilities, are subject to all school regulations and are expected to adhere to proper rules of behavior as established by the administration.

*A few distinctive guidelines have been established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA "Sportsmanship Manual"):*

- 1) Show interest in the contest by enthusiastically cheering and applauding the performance of both teams.
- 2) Show proper respect for opening ceremonies by standing at attention and remaining silent when the National Anthem is played.
- 3) Understand that a ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally attack others, or to be obnoxious. Maintain self-control.
- 4) Do not "boo", stamp feet, or make disrespectful remarks toward players or officials.
- 5) Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- 6) Know that noisemakers of any kind are not proper for indoor events.
- 7) Obey and respect officials and faculty supervisors who are responsible for keeping order. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- 8) Stay off the playing area at all times.
- 9) Do not disturb others by throwing material onto the playing area.
- 10) Show respect for officials, coaches, cheerleaders, and student-athletes.
- 11) Pay attention to the half-time program and do not disturb those who are watching or participating.
- 12) Respect public property by not damaging the equipment or the facilities.
- 13) Know that school officials reserve the right to refuse attendance of individuals whose conduct is not proper.
- 14) Refrain from the use of alcohol or drugs on the site of the contest or off of it.