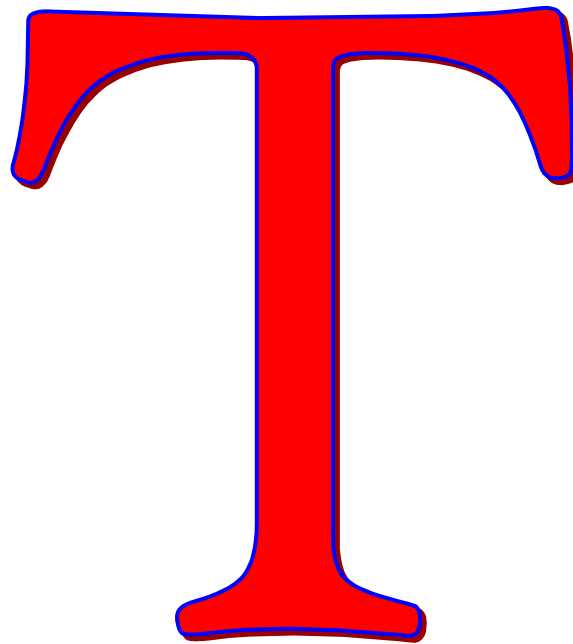


**TEWKSBURY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

*A guide for students and parents.*



**Presented by the TMHS Department of  
Interscholastic Athletics**

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	4
Tewksbury School Committee	4
Administration	4
TMHS Mission Statement	5
Athletic Philosophy	5
Athletic Program Objectives	5
TMHS Athletic Program Offerings	6
MIAA Statement	7
Merrimack Valley Conference	7
TMHS Student Handbook	7
Administrative Chain of Command	8
Communication and Conflict Resolution	9
Administrative Flowchart	10
Playing Time	11
Team Captains	11
Student/Family Vacations	12
Daily Commitment	12
Tryouts	12
The Athletic Trainer and Training Room	12
Nutritional Needs of Athletes	13
Rules and Regulations	13
Parental Permission/Town Waiver	13
Physical Examination	14
Health Insurance	14
Eligibility	14
Academic Responsibility	15
User Fees	15
School Discipline-Detention	15
School Attendance Requirement	15
School Suspensions	15
Transportation	16
Equipment	16

Chemical Health Policy	16
MIAA Rule 62.1	17
First Violation	17
Second and Subsequent Violations	17
Chemical Health Policy Violation Chart	18
Hazing (Massachusetts General Laws)	19
College and Career Guidance	20
Taunting MIAA Rule 48.1	20
Sportsmanship	21
Summary	21

### **Athletic Department Contact Information**

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For up to date schedules and directions:  
[www.highschoolsports.net](http://www.highschoolsports.net)

# ***Athletic Handbook***

## **Introduction**

*Welcome to the Tewksbury Memorial High School athletic program. The material presented in this booklet has been compiled to inform you of the guidelines and policies that govern interscholastic athletics at Tewksbury Memorial High School.*

*Student participation in interscholastic competition is a vital part of the total educational experience, and should be used as a means for developing positive attitudes and human relations, as well as knowledge and skills.*

*Please familiarize yourself with the contents and refer to this booklet when questions or concerns about your athletic experience arise. If you have any questions or concerns that are not answered within this booklet, feel free to call the Athletic Director's office. Thank you.*

## **Tewksbury School Committee**

Richard O'Neill, Esq., Chair  
Michael Kelley, Co. Chair  
Jayne Miller, Clerk  
Dennis Francis  
Dennis Peterson

## **Administration**

Dr. Christine L. McGrath , Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Patricia Lally, Principal  
Ms. Eileen Osborne, Assistant Principal  
Mr. Jason Stamp, Interim Assistant Principal  
Mr. Brian Hickey CAA, Athletic Director

## **Tewksbury Memorial High School Mission Statement**

Tewksbury Memorial High School provides students with an experience that promotes academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, respect for others and self-confidence. We foster the development of communication and problem-solving skills necessary to become successful, contributing members of society

### **Athletic Philosophy**

The athletic program at Tewksbury Memorial High School is an integral part of one's total educational experience. Athletics offer students the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities that can teach important life skills. The program is committed to the physical, emotional, social and mental development of all who participate. Our mission is to inspire, develop and support student-athletes in their pursuit of academic and athletic excellence.

Participation in athletics is an honor and all athletes are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct in all areas. Student-athletes not only represent their team, but their school, their community and their families as well.

Athletics at Tewksbury Memorial High School are open to all students who meet and maintain the standards of academic eligibility as set forth in the student handbook, meet basic physical health qualifications and are good citizens in the Tewksbury Memorial High School Community.

### **Athletic Program Objectives**

- To provide opportunities for physical, mental and emotional growth.
- To develop confidence and self-esteem
- To develop and improve time management skills
- To develop and understand the concepts of individual and team play.
- To develop a sense of commitment, loyalty, cooperation and fairness.
- To learn that good sportsmanship means winning and losing with grace and dignity.
- To learn to make decisions under pressure.
- To foster pride in the school community and the town of Tewksbury.
- To proudly represent Tewksbury Memorial High School and The Merrimack Valley Conference.
- To maintain a high level of enthusiasm throughout each sports season.

**Tewksbury Memorial High School**  
**Athletic Program Offerings**

**Fall Season**

Football	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman
Field Hockey	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Boys Soccer	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Soccer	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Boys Cross Country	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Cross Country	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Golf	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Volleyball	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Cheering	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity

**Winter Season**

Boys Basketball	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman
Girls Basketball	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman
Boys Ice Hockey	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Gymnastics	-	Varsity
Boys Indoor Track	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Indoor Track	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Wrestling	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Cheering	-	Varsity

**Spring Season**

Baseball	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman
Softball	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman
Boys Lacrosse	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Lacrosse	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Tennis	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Boys Outdoor Track	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity
Girls Outdoor Track	-	Varsity, Junior Varsity

## **The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association**

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) is the governing body of high school athletics within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Board of Directors is made up of a cross section of school officials from various districts throughout the state. The Board of Directors and its various sub-committees establish policy for all member schools.

Tewksbury Memorial High School is a member of the MIAA and is therefore governed by Association rules and regulations. The Tewksbury School Committee sets additional policies, rules and regulations. The MIAA organizes and establishes the guidelines for all post-season tournaments. All schools throughout the Commonwealth are responsible to govern themselves under the rules set forth in the MIAA *Blue Book*.

## **The Merrimack Valley Conference**

Tewksbury Memorial High School is proud to be a member of the eleven schools which make up the Merrimack Valley Conference. The league is governed by the MIAA and its own league constitution. The league sets most games played by Tewksbury Memorial High School, at all levels of competition. Some non-league games against schools from surrounding communities are also added to fill schedules. The Merrimack Valley Conference is made up of the following schools:

- Andover
- Billerica
- Chelmsford
- Dracut
- Haverhill
- Lawrence
- Lawrence Central Catholic
- Lowell
- Methuen
- Notre Dame Academy
- Tewksbury

## **Tewksbury Memorial High School**

A full set of all rules governing all students at Tewksbury Memorial High School can be found in the TMHS Student Handbook.

## **Administrative Chain of Command**

1. **Tewksbury School Committee:** The governing body for Tewksbury Memorial High School. It sets all policy within the school district relative to athletics.
2. **Superintendent of Schools:** Administers school policy established by the school committee. She or he is responsible for the actual establishment of athletic policy.
3. **Principal:** The official representative of the school, and is directly responsible for the total conduct of all athletic activities. The principal is the official representative in matters dealing with the MIAA and the Merrimack Valley Conference. He or she ensures that all MIAA guidelines and policies are followed. The principal is responsible for any action taken by the school.
4. **Athletic Director:** The athletic director is directly responsible to the principal. They are responsible for the supervision and administration of the entire interscholastic athletic program. The athletic director provides the leadership necessary for the daily operation of the athletic department. The athletic director is responsible for carrying out and enforcing all Tewksbury Memorial High School, Merrimack Valley Conference, and MIAA rules and guidelines. They are responsible for the direct supervision and evaluation of all coaches.
5. **Head Coach:** The head coach is responsible to the athletic director, and he or she is responsible for the total operation of their program.
6. **Assistant Coach:** The assistant coach is directly responsible to the head coach.
7. **Volunteer Coach:** The volunteer coach may assume the same responsibilities as paid assistants, especially in the areas of athlete/coach relationships as directed by the head coach. The volunteer coach is directly responsible to the head coach and operates under the volunteer coach policy of the School Committee.

## **Communication and Conflict Resolution**

In order for our teams to be afforded the opportunity to achieve success at all levels, the relationship between student-athletes and their coaches must be fostered in such a way as to create an environment of trust and confidence. A key element in the maturation process of young adults is their ability to work within a team environment and deal with issues related to team play. With this in mind, it is critical that the following chain of communication be followed when dealing with any issues that arise.

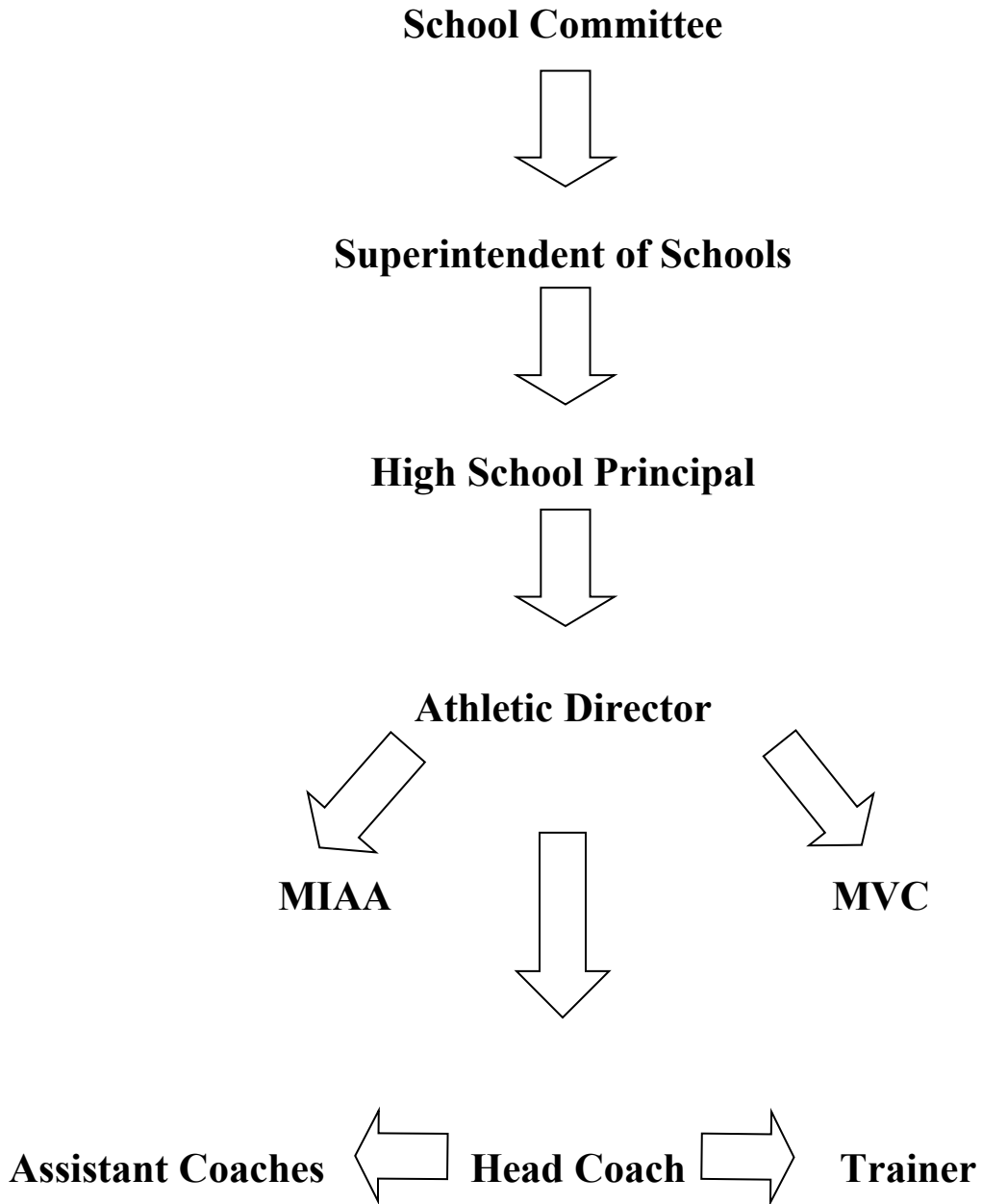
- **Student-athletes should first speak directly with their coach.**  
**In almost every instance, the situation can be resolved at this level.**  
**If this does not result in a resolution then:**
- **The student-athlete's parents may contact the head coach directly\*.**  
**If this does not result in a resolution then:**
- **The student-athlete's parent/guardian may request a meeting with the head coach and or assistant coaches, and the Director of Athletics.**  
**If this does not result in a resolution then:**
- **The student-athlete or his/her parent/guardian may contact the Principal.**  
**If this does not result in a resolution then:**
- **The student-athlete or his/her parent/guardian may contact the Superintendent of Schools.**

\*In order for the discussion between student or parent and coach to be productive the following times to approach a coach should be avoided:

- Either prior to or immediately following a game.
- During a practice session.
- During a time when other teammates are present.
- A time when it is apparent that there will not be sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion.

As this can be a time sensitive matter, completion of the above mentioned process should not exceed two weeks.

**Administrative Flowchart**



## **Playing Time**

There are many benefits to be gained by participation in athletics at the high school level. Student-athletes learn, among other things, the importance of hard work, discipline, goal setting, selflessness, commitment, accountability, sportsmanship, confidence, and leadership. There are many different ways to define success as it relates to a team sport; and individual playing time should not be one of them. If an athlete has a question about the amount of playing time he/she is getting, he/she should discuss it with the head coach at a proper time and in a proper environment. Every student-athlete should keep in mind that they are a part of a team and everyone's role in a team sport is important regardless of how much someone plays in any particular game. Being a member of a team at Tewksbury Memorial High School does not guarantee a certain amount of playing time but there are some guidelines:

### **A. Freshmen and Junior Varsity Teams:**

This is the developmental level where athletes learn individual and team skills and strategies to prepare them for varsity competition. The coaching staff will play all team members for as much time as is practical. There are many factors that govern playing time. Some of the most important are: attendance at practice, effort, attitude, commitment and athletic skill.

### **B. Varsity Teams:**

This level of competition has the same factors and guidelines as the sub-varsity teams. However, there is one additional major factor. The varsity teams compete against opponents at the highest possible level. There is a greater emphasis on winning. To reach this goal, the most competitive, skilled team members, as it relates to the each individual teams philosophy, will get the most playing time. There are many ways to help a team be successful and it's each team member's responsibility to find a way to help the team reach its potential. There are many decisions made by the coaching staff during the course of a season. These include which athletes should be starters, who should play what position, and how long each athlete should play. These decisions are made only by the coaching staff and are approached with the best interest of the team as the top priority.

## **Team Captains**

Team captains are chosen by the coach. They may be elected by the team or appointed by the coach. Captains may also be appointed on a game-by-game basis.

Developing and demonstrating positive leadership skills should be the goal of all student-athletes's and coaches. It is expected that team captains are exemplary in that area. Captains are expected to assist the coaching staff by promoting team rules and communicating with the coaches of problems that could affect the team as they arise.

## **Student/Family Vacations**

Tewksbury Memorial High School has no control over varsity athletic events being scheduled during regularly scheduled school vacations. These events are controlled by the dates of the MIAA State Tournaments and games per week allowed by MIAA rules.

An athlete playing on the VARSITY level must make a commitment to the team. Games that are lost because of the absence of players can have severe negative consequences, which include the loss of a League Championship or the failure of the team qualifying for State Championship Tournament play.

## **Daily Commitment**

Athletes should plan to make a full daily commitment for the entire season. At the sub-varsity level, some teams might not practice or play on weekends. The preparation times before and after practice and games bring the usual total daily time to three hours. It is important that a coach be notified if an athlete is not going to be present at a practice or game. All coaches expect their athletes to be present at all team related activities, including those during the December, February and April vacation periods. A coach may suspend an athlete from practice or games for unexcused absences. All athletes are excused from team activities for illness, injury, academic obligations, family emergencies or religious reasons. Prior notification is expected when possible.

## **Tryouts**

There are some teams that athletes must try out for and may risk being cut. During the tryout period, the coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is then the athlete's responsibility to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can meet them. Athletes cut from one team are encouraged to try out for another team if there is space on that team. Students who are cut will be informed as to the reason for being cut.

## **The Athletic Trainer and Training Room**

Because of the nature of athletics, physical problems do arise; problems ranging from minor bump and bruise to major injuries. The athletic training room serves to help athletes receive the best possible care. Tewksbury Memorial High School is fortunate to have a highly qualified and skilled athletic trainer as a member of the athletic staff.

On school days, the athletic training room will open after school until the conclusion of the last practice session or home game. During weekends, holidays and school vacations, the athletic trainer will be on duty only for games, practices or scrimmages.

At certain times of day and during different seasons the training room gets crowded, and the trainer is extremely busy. During these times, only athletes who need treatment or taping should be present. Training services will be granted on a first come, first served

basis on practice days. On game days, athletes will be treated in an order that will allow bus or game commitments to be met.

In the event of an injury at a home game, the athletic trainer is in immediate care. At an away game, the host school's medical personnel are responsible if the Tewksbury Memorial High School trainer is not present. All injuries, during practice or games should be communicated to the trainer at the first possible chance.

After an injury, a student may not return to competition without clearance by the athletic trainer. In some instances, this may also include written documentation from a doctor.

### **Nutritional Needs of Athletes**

It is essential that all athletes are educated regarding their nutritional needs and the consequences that may result from poor nutrition and eating disorders. If you are concerned about your eating behaviors, it is essential that you seek professional medical assistance. Talk to your coach, the athletic trainer, guidance counselor, school psychologist, clinical counselor, or nurse. They are there to help you. Take advantage of their expertise.

An athlete who practices or plays in a high school game during the day should spend the evening eating a nutritional dinner, studying to maintain good grades and going to bed at a reasonable hour. Proper diet and rest are essential for maintaining good academic and athletic performance.

### **Rules and Regulations**

Tewksbury Memorial High School athletes are bound by MIAA and Tewksbury Memorial High School rules for interscholastic athletics. Although a coach may have additional rules for his or her athletes playing on their team, the following rules are to apply to all athletes participating in the athletic program at Tewksbury Memorial High School.

### **Parental Permission/Town Waiver**

An athlete must submit a signed and completed parental permission form and a town waiver form prior to the first practice session. Parental Permission must be completed for each season (fall, winter, spring) of participation, and is part of the sports packet that is distributed by the AD or coach at the start of the Season. Town Waiver form must be completed annually.

## **Physical Examination**

Athletes must pass a physical examination each year before participation on any sport. This must be done prior to the first practice session. No athlete will be issued equipment or be able to participate in an organized practice or scheduled game until he/she has given the athletic trainer a current physical examination form from a physician and the athletic trainer processes the form and authorizes medical clearance. A student can choose to have a physical performed by his or her own physician or health care provider.

In order for an exam to be considered current and valid, it must be dated within thirteen months of the date of any athletic involvement. It is strongly recommended that an annual examination be scheduled before June 15 to be prepared for August sports tryouts or after September 1 to be prepared for winter or Spring Sports programs.

## **Health Insurance**

All athletes must be enrolled in an HMO or similar insurance plan. It is possible for a family to purchase an insurance policy through the school system at a nominal yearly fee. Applications for this coverage are given to each student on the first day of school. This policy covers the cost of all treatment for injuries sustained in all school sponsored activities. All athletes are covered under a supplemental insurance plan purchased by the Town of Tewksbury. It is the responsibility of the athlete and the families to file all claims under its own plan. Town forms are available from the Athletic Trainer.

## **Eligibility**

In order to compete in any sport, at any level, at Tewksbury Memorial High School, each athlete must conform to the following rules, which are also found in the TMHS Student Handbook:

1. A student must secure during the previous marking period a passing equivalent of three out of four courses.
2. All grades will be based on the previous quarter, and not on the cumulative grade. (Exception – Only fall eligibility will be based on a cumulative grade from the previous school year.)
3. Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered official only on the date when report cards have been issued to all students.
4. Incomplete grades will not count toward eligibility.
5. Students who are 19 years old prior to September 1 are not eligible for high school athletics.
6. Students are eligible for 12 consecutive seasons beginning with their entry into the ninth grade.
7. Transfer students to TMHS are considered ineligible until cleared by the Athletic Director.

## **Academic Responsibility**

Tewksbury Memorial High School athletes are expected and encouraged to maintain the highest level of academic achievement possible. Make up work and help sessions are expected to be complete as soon as possible. Athletes should notify their coach ahead of time, if they will be late for academic reasons.

## **User Fees**

The Tewksbury School Committee voted to establish a user fee for all students participating in the Tewksbury Memorial High School athletic program. A fee of \$150.00 per sport / no cap should be paid to the coach before the first game.

No student will be denied the opportunity to play due to financial hardship. Students on Federal Free or Reduced Lunch programs receive an automatic user fee waiver. Any other extenuating circumstances with regard to paying the user fee should be communicated to the Head Coach and Athletic Director.

## **School Discipline – Detention**

An athlete with a school disciplinary obligation or detention is expected to fulfill the disciplinary obligation before reporting to practice or a game. Students cannot expect to have disciplinary action postponed for any athletic reason. An athlete may be removed from a team for excessive disciplinary problems. It is expected that athletes at Tewksbury Memorial High School be model citizens both in and out of school.

## **School Attendance Requirements**

Regular attendance at school is the cornerstone of a successful education. All athletes must be in school in order to participate in a practice or game. Excessive tardiness or dismissals without proper documentation will count as an unexcused absence. In certain situations, permission to participate may be given by the Principal and/or Athletic Director.

## **School Suspensions**

Any athlete suspended from school may not practice or play on the days on which they are suspended.

## **Transportation**

Tewksbury Memorial High School provides transportation to all away games. All team members are required to travel to and from away events on transportation provided by the athletic department. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to transport themselves or ride with other students to or from away games. If cleared through the head coach, an athlete may return from a game with his/her parents.

Athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a proper manner on all bus trips. Inappropriate behavior and unruly conduct will not be tolerated.

## **Equipment**

All athletes are responsible for the equipment issued to them during the course of the season. Equipment must be returned at the end of each season. Athletes failing to turn in all issued equipment or returning equipment damaged through misuse are responsible for meeting the current replacement cost.

The Athletic Director for collection or payment for equipment not returned will notify parents. An athlete will be denied participation on any Tewksbury Memorial High School athletic team until equipment has been returned or paid for.

## **Chemical Health Policy**

The Tewksbury Memorial High School Athletic Department is committed to providing for the general fitness, health and wellness of all students in the Tewksbury Public Schools. The primary objective of this policy statement is to address the challenge of substance abuse by student-athletes. It seeks to furnish student-athletes with a well-defined code of conduct that is soundly based on the MIAA Rules and Regulations. The resultant policy strives to set a high yet realistic standard of conduct for Tewksbury Memorial High School athletes; one that will be fair, firm and consistent in its application. It must be recognized that no policy can or will be effective without the combined efforts and support of all members of the Tewksbury Memorial High School Community (students, parents, coaches, faculty and administration).

## **MIAA Rule: 62.1**

“From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”. 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.”

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

### **First Violation**

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contest totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs. 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. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

### **Second and Subsequent Violations**

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contest totaling 60% of all interscholastic contest in that sport. For the student, these penalties will be determined by the season the violation occurs. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

If the second or subsequent violations the student of his/her own volition becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such certification. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season.

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.

### First Offense

# of Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1-7	1
8-11	2
12-15	3
16-19	4
20 or over	5

### Second Offense

# of Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1-3	1
4	2
5-6	3
7-8	4
9	5
10-11	6
12-13	7
14	8
15-16	9
17-18	10
19	11
20 or over	12

### Second Offense w/Dependency Program

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

## Hazing

### **Massachusetts General Laws**

The term “hazing” as used in sections eighteen and nineteen of Chapter 269 of *Massachusetts General Laws*, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical, or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which subject the student to or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

**Section 17:** Whoever is principle organized or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars \$1,000.00 or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 100 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

**Section 18:** Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as identified in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

**Section 19:** Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each group or organization and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgement stating that such group, organization, or individual has received a copy of said sections.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education, certifying that such institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, shall promulgate regulation governing the content and frequency of such reports and shall forthwith report to the Attorney General any such institutions which fail to make such report.

Any student found involved as an organizer or as a participant in a hazing action will be inundated, suspended from school for a period of ten (10) days and/or recommended for exclusion from Tewksbury Memorial High School.

## **College and Career Guidance**

One of the most important decisions facing high school athletes is what to do after high school. The Tewksbury Memorial High School coaches can assist their players with this extremely important decision. Coaches can answer questions, contact schools and coaches, send videotapes/DVD's, and write letters of recommendation. If an athlete has the desire to compete at the collegiate level, it is very important to be knowledgeable of the various eligibility regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the NCAA Clearinghouse. Copies of the latest regulations can be obtained at the athletic director's office or from the guidance department.

### **Taunting MIAA Rule 48.1**

“Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech family, special needs or personal characteristics.

Examples of taunting include but are not limited to: “trash talk”, defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/her skills, efforts, sexual orientation or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or physical response; and physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, including “in the face” confrontation by one player to another and standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player, etc.”

“In all sports, officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike offense that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest/day of competition. In addition, the offender shall be subject to existing MIAA Disqualification Rules. A review of the MIAA taunting policy and a warning shall be given to both teams by game officials prior to each contest.”

## **Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship is the number one priority for all coaches and athletes representing the Tewksbury Memorial High School athletic program. It is expected that all parties present at an event display the highest level of sportsmanship. Players, coaches and spectators should treat opponents, game officials and visiting spectators with respect.

All athletic events are conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the MIAA. Any form of taunting of officials or players will not be tolerated at any Tewksbury Memorial High School athletic event. Likewise, profanity, objectionable cheers or gestures have no place at an athletic event, be it at Tewksbury Memorial High School or at another venue.

The MIAA reserves the right to “warn, censure, place on probation or suspend up to one calendar year any player, coach, team, game or school official or school determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship.” Tewksbury Memorial High School, in turn, reserves the right to impose the same penalties on spectators displaying poor sportsmanship at any athletic event, home or away. Sportsmanship is living, feeling and interacting with others on a daily basis with mutual respect.

## **Summary**

The positive benefits of participation in interscholastic athletics are numerous. Athletics support the academic mission of schools, are inherently educational and foster success in later life. Athletics fulfill students’ basic needs and help students’ attitudes toward self and school. Athletes achieve better grades, have better attendance, have lower drop out rates, have less discipline referrals and are much less likely to engage in risky behavior.

Highly competitive situations can evoke many emotions. It is the responsibility of all involved to respect boundaries and maintain proper perspective. An old adage; “Players play, coaches coach, officials officiate, fans cheer” is applicable here. Errors and mistakes are part of any contest. Also, there may be times when things do not go the way an individual wishes. Difficult decisions and judgments should be based on what is believed to be best for all students involved.

The best way for all of us to enhance an athlete’s experience is to encourage and model good sportsmanship, understand league rules and regulations for the particular sport, support and respect the athletic program and above all, honor fair play.