



2016-2017

**HANDBOOK FOR
INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETICS**

Dear Student-Athletes and Families,

Congratulations on your participation in athletics here at Craftsbury Academy! By becoming a member of the Craftsbury Academy Athletic program, you are continuing a great tradition of excellence!

Our program strives to represent the very best in personal effort, competition, coaching, equipment, schedules, and organization. Participation in a sport is a wonderful complement to your education. We hope that it will foster your growth, not only in your particular sport, but in your personal development as well. Lifelong lessons learned through sport involvement will benefit you well beyond your years here at Craftsbury Academy. However, interscholastic competition demands a serious commitment. It will require long hours of dedication and perseverance, but it will enable you as an individual to learn and work within a group to achieve a common goal.

This handbook has been compiled specifically for student-athletes and their families, who will be competing on our middle or high school athletic teams. The contents of this handbook should assist you in acquiring a strong understanding of our program, policies, procedures, and expectations for athletes and parents.

We appreciate the effort you put in to help make Craftsbury Athletics a beneficial experience for everyone involved. Best of luck in your academic and athletic pursuits!

GO CHARGERS!

Derek Cipriano
Director of Athletics

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Craftsbury Athletic Department Mission & Vision Statement

The *mission* of the Craftsbury Athletic Department is to create opportunity for athletes to learn and grow as individuals and as a team through a variety of meaningful experiences.

The Athletic Department *envisions* a dynamic and innovative athletic program, focused on the development of the “whole student-athlete,” to include character virtues, cognitive function, and physical skill.

Craftsbury Athletics Operational Principles

The following shall describe the athletic programs at Craftsbury Academy:

Student-Driven: Program offerings and designs will be based upon the expressed interests of the student body. Surveys will be used to determine student interest in a specific athletic program.

Student First: The academic standing and performance of all athletes will take priority over their participation in interscholastic athletics.

Virtue-Oriented: The development and consistent display of character virtues such as respect, responsibility, cooperation, and perseverance will of chief importance throughout the seasons.

Excellence: The standard is set high for players, coaches, school employees, and community members. All parties are expected to display **excellence** in their respective duties.

General Requirements for Participation in Craftsbury Athletic Program

1. Student must be under 19 years of age.
2. Student must have private/public health insurance on file with the Athletic Department.
3. Student must have a current physical on file with the Athletic Department.
4. Student must return a complete medical risk acknowledgement form and signed athletic handbook.
5. Student must be in good standing in regards to the behavioral eligibility policy.

Please see individual sections for more information about the general expectations for each athlete.

Note: No student-athlete will be allowed to tryout, practice, or participate in any way without satisfying all of the above requirements.

Responsibilities of a Charger Athlete

Responsibilities to your school: Craftsbury Academy cannot maintain its position as an outstanding school unless you hold yourself to a high standard of effort, behavior, and excellence. You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic team. You are a

representative of Craftsbury Academy when you travel to other schools, and your conduct should reflect the respect and good character that Craftsbury Academy believes in.

Responsibilities to your team: Team chemistry is widely regarded as one of the most critical factors to success in athletics, from interscholastic athletics all the way up to professional sports. You have made a commitment to be a part of this team during this season. It is your responsibility to pick your teammates up when they are down, to push your teammates when they feel like giving up, and to do everything in your power to help the team be successful.

Responsibilities to yourself: Interscholastic athletics is truly an amazing opportunity for you to learn and grow from a variety of experiences. Learning how to win and lose with class, learning how to be a member of a team, and learning how to persevere under very trying circumstances are all valuable experiences that you have as a member of an athletic team. You owe it to yourself to give your best effort in everything you do this season so that you can get the most out of this opportunity.

Responsibilities of Parents & Guardians of Charger Athletes

1. Be positive with your child. Let him/her know that he/she is accomplishing something simply by being a part of the team.
2. Encourage your child to work hard to reach his/her potential and contribute to the team's efforts.
3. Be openly supportive of the coaches rather than openly critical of them. By openly criticizing coaches, your child will be trapped between the coach's authority and the parent's criticism. This situation minimizes what your child can learn from the experience and hurts their ability to contribute to the team's common goals.
4. Encourage and support your child's efforts to follow the Craftsbury Academy Athletic Policies, as well as school and team rules. Your positive modeling and respect of the rules is critical to your child's ability to succeed.
5. Emphasize the importance of academics and understanding school and VPA guidelines. With few exceptions, most student-athletes do not receive collegiate athletic scholarships. Your child's future as an active, contributing citizen is determined by their academic path, not their athletic ability.
6. Sports are games, which are organized and played for fun. Realize that most children on our teams and other teams are trying their hardest on any given day and that they deserve respect for the effort they put in.
7. Focus your energy toward being a supporter of the team. Every team is composed of four groups: athletes, coaches, parents, and community members. Be a positive part of the team.
8. Emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship with your child. Win or lose, your child must show respect for his/her opponents, teammates, and coaches. Remember that self-respect begins with self-control.

9. Remember that officials are professionals who occasionally make errors. When a coach, player, or spectator criticizes an official, they are effectively turning the game in the favor of the opposing team. Respect and self-control will go a long way.

10. Emphasize that the “team” must take precedence over the individual. While an individual’s contributions to a team may be recognized by third-parties such as the media, it is important to maintain a “team first” mentality.

11. The lessons learned through athletic competition are lessons for life. Keep sports in perspective; it is not life and death.

**Reminder that attending your child’s games is a privilege and not a right. Unacceptable behavior can result in dismissal from a game and lead to subsequent suspension from further attendance.*

Attendance & Participation Policy

1. To participate in athletics for a given day (includes practices and games), students **must attend a full day of school or school-sanctioned activities. Student attendance must be accounted for no later than 8:00 AM.** If a student has a legitimate reason for being absent, such as a college interview, service physical, etc., he/she will be allowed to practice or play that day, provided he/she has obtained principals permission in advance.

2. **If a student is absent or tardy the day of a game or practice, they will not be allowed to practice or play on that day.** If a student is absent or tardy to school and does participate in a practice or game, they will be ineligible to participate in the next two events of the same designation (i.e. if a student participates in a game on a day they were absent, they are ineligible to play for the next two games). This ineligibility will carry over to following seasons that the student participates in if there are not two events remaining in the season for the student to be ineligible for.

3. Students who are **absent on a Friday must have permission from the Athletic Director to participate in practices or games on the following Saturday.** Inquiries for permission must be made by Friday at 2:00 pm at the latest.

4. If a student receives ISS (in-school suspension), **even for ½ day**, they are not eligible to participate in practices or games on the day that the ISS is being served.

4. Students who are present in school but **fail to attend (cut) one or more classes will not be eligible to participate in their next practice or game (whichever comes first).**

5. If a student is **unable to participate in a physical education class because of an injury or ill health**, they will not be permitted to participate in a practice or game on that day.

6. If a student **leaves school early due to illness, they are not eligible to participate in athletics for that day.**

Academic Eligibility Policy

1. The grade point average used as the eligibility threshold is a **70**.
2. Academic eligibility checks will be performed **every week on Tuesday morning. Letters for probation or temporary ineligibility will be delivered to the student by the end of the day on Tuesday.**
3. For the first time a student has **a grade in one or more classes below the eligibility threshold (70), they will be put on probationary eligibility. The student can continue to practice and play in games as normal.** However, the student must **attend at least four study sessions (either after-school or during tutorial) with the teacher(s) of the courses they are below the threshold in.** Teachers must sign off that the student attended these sessions. The probationary eligibility notice, complete with parent signature, student signature, and teacher signature denoting four study sessions were attended **must be returned to the Athletic Director's box in the main office no later than 8:30 AM on the Tuesday 2 weeks following the notice. Probationary eligibility will only be granted once per athletic season.**
4. After a student has been placed on probationary eligibility once in a specific season, the student will be **temporarily ineligible to participate in athletics (including practices and games) if their grade in one or more classes is below the eligibility threshold on the eligibility check date. Students may not participate in practices or games until all grades are above a 70. Students will remain ineligible until they are notified by the Athletic Director of their ability to return to practices and games.**
5. Eighth grade students who are participating at the varsity level are held to the above academic eligibility policy.
6. Middle school student's academic performance will be monitored by the Athletic Director. Interventions will be made at the Athletic Director's discretion and could include temporary ineligibility until grades are at an acceptable point. These interventions will be coordinated with middle school faculty.

Behavioral Eligibility Policy

Student-athletes are leaders and role models in the school, and as such are held to a high standard of behavior. Participation in the interscholastic athletic program is a privilege, not a right. The following policy is intended to encourage positive behavior on the part of athletes throughout the school day.

1. If a student-athlete receives one (1) office referral, they will receive a **behavioral warning**. The student may continue to practice and play as normal. This is the athlete's one and only warning for the current season.
2. If a student-athlete who has already received a behavioral warning receives their second (2) office referral, the student-athlete is placed on **behavioral probation** (for the remainder of the season) and may continue to practice and play as normal, but will be subject to the following consequences:

- a) Meeting with Athletic Director and/or Principal regarding behavior issues
 - b) Community and/or school service assigned by administration
3. If a student-athlete who is on behavioral probation receives their third (3) office referral, the student will be placed on **behavioral ineligibility** and **may not continue to participate in games or practices for one week from the date of the third referral**.
4. If a student-athlete who has been placed on behavioral ineligibility at any point during the season (even if their one week ineligible period is over) receives a fourth (4) office referral, the student will be placed under **permanent behavioral ineligibility** and **will not be allowed to participate in practices or games for the remainder of the current season**.
5. A student may appeal eligibility status at any time. A committee composed of the principal, a teacher, and the athletic director will make the final decision on a discretionary basis for individual students.

VPA Eligibility

VPA eligibility guidelines apply to all students in grades 7-12 and apply to all athletic activities which are sanctioned or sponsored by the VPA. Home study students should reference the separate section on participation guidelines.

1. Contestants/participants must be bona fide students in their schools. Students may only compete on school teams sponsored by their own school during the season, and may only compete for the one school in which they are officially enrolled. Students may participate in meets as an individual, but may not participate as a member of another team.
2. In an activity season, players who have participated in practice or competition as a member of a school group shall not practice or compete as members of a non-school organized group in the same activity.
3. Transfer students are eligible at once, provided that they were bona fide student in the school from which they transferred according to the definition in #1 above. If the transfer is the result of any coercion, recruiting or inducement to move in order to participate in interscholastic activities, students will be ineligible for 365 calendar days from the date of the infraction.
4. A student who competes in any VPA sanctioned activity must be under nineteen (19) years of age, except that a student whose nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs on or after August 1st is eligible for all activities in the succeeding school year. Students who have reached the age of nineteen (19) prior to August 1st shall be ineligible for all VPA sanctioned activities.
5. Students are ineligible if they have graduated from any course of study in a secondary school comparable to a Vermont system.
6. Students have four (4) consecutive years or eight (8) semesters of eligibility for participation in school activities. Attendance of thirty (30) school days of any semester shall be regarded as a semester.
7. No student may participate in the same sport for more than four (4) seasons.

Home Study Eligibility

Home study students who wish to participate in a Craftsbury Academy athletic program must be an “eligible student,” according to VPA bylaws:

1. The participating student must be enrolled in a home-study program in compliance with Title 16, Section 166(b).
2. The participating student must be a legal resident of the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union.
3. Participation in a school’s co-curricular activities program shall not commence until a copy of the Vermont State Department of Education Enrollment Letter and a letter notifying the Principal that he or she wishes to participate in a school’s co-curricular activities program.
4. The participating student’s academic program, as referenced in the Vermont State Department of Education Letter of Enrollment, will be reviewed by the student’s parent or guardian on a quarter basis as determined by the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union calendar. This review and determination must be verified in writing from the parent/guardian to the Principal.
5. The student may participate in athletics at Craftsbury Academy, provided the student complies with the same physical examination, insurance, and any other requirements for participation as required of all students.
6. The home study student must adhere to the same standards of behavior responsibilities and performance as other students.

Health & Injury Policy

1. Student-athletes must have on file, with the Athletic Department, a physical examination form, which must be current (within the last 18 months). The physical must be current through the full duration of the sport season.
2. The Vermont Principals’ Association requires that each student demonstrate that he/she has private or public health insurance for medical care of injuries that may result from participation in the Craftsbury interscholastic athletic programs. The name of the carrier and the number of the policy should be indicated on the medical risk acknowledgement form.
3. All injuries that occur while participating in athletics **must be reported** to the coach and Athletic Director.
4. **If an athlete is seen by a physician to assess or treat an injury, he/she must obtain a doctor’s signed permission** that they are cleared to return to the activity.
5. When a student receives a concussion they must receive clearance from a health care professional before returning to play. Once a student has been cleared to return to play they must follow the return to play guidelines set forth by the NFHS. The following steps need to take place prior to returning to game action.

Step 1: Light aerobic exercise- 5-10 minutes on an exercise bike or a light jog

Step 2: Moderate aerobic exercise- 15-20 minutes or running at a moderate intensity. May also begin on field drills without contact.

Step 3: May begin any resistance training or other exercises without contact.

Step 4: Full return to all practice activities

Step 5: Full game play

*If systems re-occur during any step, all exercise must be de-continued and the athlete needs to be re-evaluated by the health care professional before restarting the return to play guidelines.

*Per new guidelines all students must resume all normal academic functions successfully before returning to athletics

Club Sport Policy

We understand and acknowledge that student frequently participate in sports that are not school-sanctioned, such as AAU basketball. However, Craftsbury Academy expects the commitment to Craftsbury teams to be the students' first priority should a conflict arise. Students choosing to participate in a non-school team event in favor of a Craftsbury team event should expect to face consequences as decided upon by the coach – including potential suspension and/or dismissal if it becomes habitual. The coach must be informed of any such conflicts well in advance, but it is the general expectation that participants are expected to honor their commitment to our teams for the duration of the season.

Equipment & Uniform Policy

1. Student-athletes are responsible for returning uniforms and equipment within one (1) week of the end of the season or they will be obligated to pay the cost of replacing the uniform/equipment. Future participation on athletic teams will not be permitted until all outstanding obligations are fulfilled.

A special note about “souvenirs”:

Equipment and uniforms are very costly. It is also very hard to replace one or two items each year. Some uniforms cannot be replaced and others might cost upwards of two times the original cost. Students who decide to keep their uniform “for the memories” are creating an unfair situation for other students. Please be respectful and courteous towards your current and future teammates – return all issued uniforms and equipment promptly.

Hazing & Harassment Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of 16 VSA §565 regarding the prohibition by school boards of unlawful harassment of students, it is the policy of Craftsbury Academy to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from unlawful harassment. Any form of unlawful harassment on the basis of disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, age, sex, or sexual orientation is strictly prohibited.
2. Hazing in any form or level of severity is strictly prohibited and against Vermont State Law. Hazing is any action directed from one person to another person that is meant to persecute or harass with meaningless, difficult, or humiliating tasks. Actions that hinder the development of a cooperative community in which we foster respect for others and ourselves will receive the appropriate disciplinary action, as carried out by school policy.
3. Taunting is prohibited at Craftsbury Academy. Taunting is considered any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators that are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others. Included is language that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens (based on race, gender, national origin, or background), and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs, or personal matters.
4. Bullying is treated with a zero tolerance policy. For more information on the bullying policy at Craftsbury see the student handbook. Any student who is found bullying may be subject to discipline in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the student handbook.

Playing Time Policy

Varsity Level: Participation in varsity-level sports is the culmination of an experience that begins as early as elementary school. Being on a varsity level team is in itself a major accomplishment. It does not happen without hard work and dedication. It is also a time when individual desires need to take a back seat to team accomplishments. Those with the most skill, leadership ability, and who can help the team succeed at the time will undoubtedly receive the most playing time. Others, who may not receive as much playing time, still have a key role to play in team development. It is during practice that team success is nurtured and the concept of a team player is realized. All successful teams and coaches know the importance of those who contribute at every level of preparation and play. When it is beneficial for the team, participants should have a reasonable expectation to compete. **Coaches have the ultimate authority to decide what level of participation benefits the team. They have no obligation to provide a set amount of playing time at the varsity level.** However, coaches are obligated to instruct all participants so they can reach their maximum potential both at practice and in competition. They have the additional obligation to clearly communicate to all participants the role that they will be expected to play relative to practice, preparation, and competition in order to maximize team potential.

Middle School/Elementary School: The goal of athletics at the middle/elementary school levels is to prepare participants for a higher level of competition by emphasizing individual skill

development, sportsmanship, fundamental understanding of team play, strategies, and rules. Though coaches are not expected to guarantee a set amount of playing time in each competition, a fairly equitable amount of playing time under differing competitive situations should be expected. Attendance, proper behavior, a willingness to learn, and individual skill development are the factors that influence how much playing time a participant receives.

Student Grievances

If a participant feels they are not being treated fairly or do not understand what is expected of them they should, at an appropriate time, approach their coach. If they have difficulty doing so, or are not satisfied with the results, they should look for assistance from a captain or the Athletic Director. Some participants may not find the role they are asked to play as a team member acceptable relative to playing time. If that is the case, a student should consider alternative programs that may be oriented more towards individual participation or recreation than team competition.

Parent Grievances

Again, remember your child has successfully made a varsity team and that in itself is an accomplishment. Realize your expectations are not always the same as your child's. Before involving yourself in any issue, be sure such intervention is welcome and understood by your child. For the well-being of all involved, be sure such an intervention will solve a problem, not create one. Whenever you interact with a coach, it is expected to be at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner. Parents are given an opportunity to meet with coaches at the beginning of each season through a coaches/parents/participants meeting. It is your opportunity to question a coach on their expectations, procedures, and goals.

If a parent feels the need to talk to a coach on an issue or concern during the season they should do so only with their child's knowledge and after it is clear the participant has been unable to resolve the issue to their own satisfaction. No coach should be approached immediately before, during, or after a competition. Confrontation or verbal abuse from a parent is not acceptable. If you do not feel you can communicate effectively with the coach, talk to the Athletic Director. The importance of positive parental support in team sports cannot be over emphasized. This means putting your child's expectations above your own. Those that do little more than criticize and critique coaches can raise havoc with an entire program. It can make for a terrible experience for everyone, especially the child of the parent(s) involved.

Parent/Coach Communication Plan

Communication that you can expect from your child's coach:

- a) Philosophy of the coach
- b) Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad
- c) Locations and times of all practices and contests
- d) Team requirements - practices, special equipment, out of season responsibilities
- e) Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation
- f) Discipline that may result in the suspension/removal of your child from the squad

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- a) Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- b) Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- c) Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coach:

- a) The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- b) Nutritional needs
- c) Ways you can help your child improve
- d) Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coach:

- a) Playing time
- b) Team strategy
- c) Play calling
- d) Other student-athletes

**All concerns with coaches must be brought up to the coach at least 12 hours after the completion of the team event. It is never acceptable to approach a coach directly before or following a game. Tempers are high on both ends and nothing positive is ever accomplished during this period of time.*

It is very difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you or he/she may hope. Coaches are professionals; they make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. They also observe your child in many different situations, and therefore are in the best position to make tough decisions.

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, please follow the procedure listed below:

- a) Encourage your son or daughter to approach the coach to discuss the issue.
- b) If not resolved, call the coach to set up an appointment.
- c) If you cannot reach the coach directly, call the Athletic Director. The message will be forwarded to the coach.
- d) Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature rarely promote resolution.
- e) If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, please call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director (586-2541 ext. 233) to discuss the situation.

Sportsmanship Policy

"The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship should be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and concern for others. Good sportsmanship is a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity."

- National Federation Sportsmanship Committee

The goal of interscholastic athletics is to give young men and women the opportunity to expand their educational horizons by experiencing fair and friendly competition with peers. Ingrained in that competition is fairness, respect for rules, regulations, opponents and officials. Craftsbury Academy subscribes to this goal and will strive in all co-curricular programs to achieve that objective.

Craftsbury Academy believes:

- The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity are the essence of interscholastic activities.
- The concept of "sportsmanship" must be taught, modeled, expected and reinforced by all those involved in competitive activities.
- Interscholastic activities provide an arena for participants to grow, excel, understand and value the concepts of sportsmanship and teamwork.
- Good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by unselfishness and genuine concerns for others.
- All administrators, coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators should demonstrate and promote good sportsmanship as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

Student-athletes that engage in acts of poor sportsmanship that require the coach or official to suspend that person from further practice or play shall be held accountable for those acts in the following manner:

1. Acts of poor sportsmanship:

The offending student will be declared ineligible by the individual coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director, for the next regularly scheduled contest or post-season contest.

2. Fighting, taunting, sudden ejection and gross unsportsmanlike conduct as determined by the coach OR official:

First offense: The student shall be declared ineligible for the next two contests or post-season contests (with the exception of football, skiing and gymnastics, for which the suspension shall be one contest) in the sport in which the student was ejected.

Second offense: The student shall be declared ineligible for interscholastic competition for the remainder of that sport season. The student remains eligible for practices and possible credit. The coach and the Athletic Director will meet with the student to define his/her status during this period.

Additional school consequences may be deemed necessary if the student-athlete has been found in violation of the school's policy on fighting.

Substance Abuse Policy

Substance Abuse: The use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or performance enhancers by student athletes is prohibited. If a student athlete is found to be using any of these substances, they will be faced with the following consequences:

First offense: Players will be suspended from participating in games for 2 weeks from the date of the infraction. If the student is found using any of these substances in between seasons, they will be suspended for the first two weeks of the next season of play. During this time they are expected to attend all practices and will be subject to the general school rules regarding substance abuse as written in the student handbook. Athletes who fail to attend practices will be removed from the team.

Second offense: If a student is found to have violated the substance abuse policy for a second time they will become ineligible to participate in one month after the infraction. The student will be removed from all games and practices for this month, but may participate in practices once the month long suspension is completed.

* A student may appeal a suspension at any time. A committee composed of the principal, a teacher, and the athletic director will make the final decision on a discretionary basis for individual students.

Informed Consent – Risk of Injury

By its nature, participation in interscholastic athletics includes the risk of injury that may range in severity from minor to disabling, and even death. Although serious injuries are not common in supervised school athletic programs, it is impossible to eliminate the risk. Participants can, and have the responsibility to help reduce the risk of injury. Participants must obey all safety rules, report all physical problems to their coach and athletic director, follow a proper conditioning program, and wear all necessary protective equipment.

Contact Information

Merri Greenia, Principal: 802-586-2541 ext. 223 : mgreenia@ossu.org
Derek Cipriano, Athletic Director: 802-586-2541 ext. 233 : dcipriano@ossu.org

Please and return this form to the Athletic Director

Player Name:

Sport:

My signature below acknowledges that I have read, understand, and agree to follow the rules set forth in the Craftsbury Schools Athletic Handbook.

Player Signature:

Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: