



Milton Town School District Athletics

Student Athlete and Family Handbook

2025-2026



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1 - THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

a. Overview

The Milton Town School District's Athletic Program is managed and administered by the Athletic Department, headed by the Director of Athletics, and is responsible for the interscholastic athletic teams at both the High School and Middle School.

Contact Information

Director of Athletics: Marcel Choquette, (802) 893-5470, mchoquette@mymtsd-vt.org
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Website: <https://www.miltonyellowjacketathletics.org/>

Mission Statement

The mission of the Milton Athletic Department is to offer opportunities to students to belong in an athletic program that develops their athletic abilities to full potential in an environment that prioritizes the welfare, respect, and celebration of all student athletes while promoting high academic and civic standards.

Athletic Department Philosophy

The Milton Athletic Department recognizes the value of participation in athletic activities as an integral part of the educational program, and of placing a high priority on academic excellence, equity, and school spirit. Our athletic teams will always strive to win but never will winning be given priority over the genuine concern for the overall welfare of the individual student athletes. We place emphasis on excellence, effort, player development, equity of access, and respect for all the members of the educational and athletic community both within and beyond our premises.

Adherence to VPA Rules and Policies on Inclusivity

In abiding by all VPA oversight, policies, and guidance, the MTSD athletic program shares the VPA's belief in sports as a venue to a more inclusive and equitable educational experience for all students. In tandem with this belief, we ensured that revisions to this handbook are reflective of the VPA's "Policy on Harassment and Commitment to Racial, Gender-Fair, and Disability Awareness" in addition to our own district mission and guiding principles. We invite the public to continue to direct feedback and comments on how to make our programs ever more inclusive.

Definitions:

- **Interscholastic Athletics:** A sport played at the secondary school levels for which eligibility requirements for participation are established by the VPA and MTSD, and for which all aspects are directly managed by the district, the school principal, Director of Athletics, or designee.
- **Exhibition Teams:** Programs in an exploratory stage for student interest and sustainability such as Archery, Volleyball, Dance, Unified Sports, etc.
- **Co-Curriculars:** Student clubs taking place after the academic school day, led by a staff member, officially recognized and regulated by the VPA, and for which admission criteria or audition process is required. Oversight for co-curriculars is the responsibility of the school Principal or designee.

- **Clubs:** Co-Curriculars that are supported by a school advisor and connect a group of students around a common interest but which are not regulated by the VPA or for which admission criteria or auditions are not required. Oversight for clubs is the responsibility of the school Principal or designee.

b. Sportsmanship/Athletic Virtue

Milton Town School District is committed to the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play, and athletic virtue. Athletic virtue is an understanding of and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, advocacy for oneself and peers, integrity, and respect toward an opponent, spectators, and coaches. It is an affirmation that the student athlete, coach, and spectator exert self-discipline enough to have perspective, maintain poise, and do what it takes to represent the school district with dignity and humility. Athletic Virtue is exhibited in alignment with our district's mission and principles of scholarship, innovation, equity, collaboration, and care for the mind, heart, and body.

c. Programs

Due to annual variances in students' interests, school budgets, availability of human and other resources at Milton High/Middle School, sports program offerings are subject to change. Currently, the program offering is as follows:

	High School Grades 9-12	Middle School Grades 6-8
Fall Season	Football Soccer Cross Country Field Hockey Golf Cheerleading Bass Fishing	Soccer Cross Country Field Hockey Flag Football
Winter Season	Basketball Ice Hockey Cheerleading Indoor Track	Basketball Cheerleading
Spring Season	Lacrosse Track and Field Softball Baseball Ultimate Frisbee Unified Basketball	Track and Field Softball Baseball Ultimate Frisbee (Exhibition Team)

2 - RULES RELATED TO FAMILIES AND THE PUBLIC

Parents, guardians, and families are expected to conduct themselves according to the same high standards expected of Milton student athletes, for the important message it holds about the proper role of guardians and families in supporting their child in sports. All parents/guardians must sign the Code of Conduct for each year of their student's participation in athletics.

Parents, guardians, and families at Milton athletic events are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Treating each player, coach, official and guardians with respect and dignity, especially members of the opposite team.
- Insisting that student athletes treat other players, coaches, officials, and fans with the highest degree of respect.
- Abiding by all school and district policies including drug and alcohol use, Hazing Harassment and Bullying, and others.
- Respecting the coaching role and decisions regarding their child and following the appropriate protocols for communication.
- Respecting their own child, their feelings, and physical limitations during games.

If a parent/guardian fails to conform to the Code of Conduct while attending a Milton athletic event, they will be subject to the following procedure:

1. The violation of the Code shall be reported to the Director of Athletics or the Principal as fast as reasonably possible.
2. An Investigation will be carried out. In some instances, such as engagement in racism or intimidation, investigations will be expedited as required by specific policy or law.
3. As a result of the investigation, the following may be issued: verbal/written warning or, immediate ejection, and/or suspension of varying degrees, referral to law enforcement, and/or all other consequences enacted by the school in addition to the athletic program.

Fundraising

All team fundraising must be approved by the Director of Athletics. The department of Athletics will identify fundraising opportunities available to teams.

3 - RULES RELATED TO ATHLETES

a. Athletic Virtue: The Athlete

- Demonstrates self-control and respect for others at all times be they officials, coaches, spectators, or other student athletes.
- Deals with opponents with respect. Shakes hands after the competition (unless religious beliefs, customs, disability, or any special circumstance prevents this on an ongoing basis) and congratulates them on their performance.
- Respects the integrity and judgment of the officials.
- Complies with all rules and regulations of the game.
- Accepts victory with grace and defeat with dignity.
- Remembers that improper behavior while in uniform reflects poorly upon oneself, the school, and the Milton community.

b. Code of Conduct for Student athletes

The Milton Athletic Code of Conduct applies to behavior that takes place on or off school grounds. These violations may take place at any time during the student athlete's active season of participation at Milton Town School District. It applies to all student athletes in season, on or off school property including, but not limited to, school sponsored/sanctioned events on or off campus, and private activities or events that are reasonably deemed an extension of the social connections made through the athletic program.

In addition to the expectations presented under the "Sportsmanship/Athletic Virtue" Section, student athletes may be suspended from participation in athletic activities for misconduct by not following the expectations below.

All student athletes must:

- Abide by all athletic department, team, school, and district policies and rules.
- Remember that academic performance is the primary responsibility.
- Not possess or use tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances.
- Practice good citizenship in all environments by respecting the property and rights of others. (Poor citizenship includes actions such as stealing, vandalism, and other illegal acts).
- Not utilize social media and other websites in an inappropriate manner, such as engaging in behavior and speech that would be considered lacking Athletic Virtue.
- Policies & Procedures [D3 Responsible Computer, Internet and Network Use](#); [C10 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students](#); [C12 Prevention of Sexual Harassment as Prohibited by Title IX](#); and [C15 Student Conduct and Discipline](#).
- Reporting Complaints – The principal of each school in the Milton Town School District will annually designate a minimum of two employees (who are trained investigators) to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and/or bullying.
- Not engage in hazing, harassment, bullying, retaliation, or harmful speech.
- Not engage in, initiate, or actively endorse racist, homophobic, sexist, or otherwise prejudiced behavior, including uninvited "jokes" or comments about anyone.
- Not host a party, gathering, team dinner, or otherwise-related event, or have the participant's parent/guardian or family member host a party/gathering that is explicitly or indirectly advertised as an athletic team event without the formal permission and oversight from the Director of

Athletics. Any unauthorized and unsupervised event will be the sole liability of the hosting parent, guardian, and adults present.

- Realize the existence of and be held accountable for the individual rules, as outlined, by the coach and those outlined in this handbook.

Procedure for Violation of the Code

1. The violation of the Code shall be reported to the Director of Athletics or the Principal as fast as reasonably possible.
2. An Investigation will be carried out. In some instances, such as engagement in racism or intimidation, investigations will be expedited as required by specific policy or law.
3. Evidence of violations of the Code may be determined by but not limited to established charges filed by law enforcement officials or agencies, observations by members of the school district, compelling evidence gathered by officials through interviews of witnesses, or by the admission of the offender.
4. As a result of the investigation, the following may be issued: verbal/written warning or, immediate ejection, and/or suspension, disciplinary action beyond the athletic program and carried out by the Principal, referral for formal HHB investigation, or referral to the appropriate authorities.

c. Scholastic Eligibility

In order to participate on a Milton Town School District athletic team, students must satisfy all of the scholastic eligibility prior to participation.

- **Enrollment:** All interscholastic athletic members must be actively enrolled in at least three (3) classes per quarter. Student athletes will be flagged by the Guidance Department and referred to the Athletic Department if they consistently drop academic classes when their season ends.
- **Duration of Competition and Age:** A student who competes in any VPA sanctioned activity must be under nineteen (19) years of age, except that a student whose 19th birthday occurs on or after August 1st is eligible for all activities in the ensuing school year. Student athletes who have attained the age of nineteen (19) prior to August 1st shall be ineligible for all VPA sanctioned activities. No student athlete in grades 9-12 may participate in the same sport for more than four seasons.
- **Transfer Rules:** Student athletes entering grades 6 or 9 or transferring from another school will be eligible for their first semester or term.
- **Online Registration:** All student athletes must register online prior to being eligible for participation on an interscholastic athletic team. Students/guardians can register through the Milton Athletics Department's online registration system.
- **Sports Physical:** Each student athlete is required to have a physical examination before participation of any sort (practice or game). One physical examination will suffice for two years; however, the student's health record must be brought up to date at the beginning of each new season. At the end of that two-year period, the student athlete must have another physical examination before participation. This is an MTSD-specific requirement.
- **Insurance:** Each student athlete is required to provide proof of insurance before he/she will be allowed to participate in practice or competition.
- **Number of Sports per Season (MMS):** Students may participate in only one sport per season. Any exception may be approved by the Director of Athletics.
- **Number of Sports per Season (MHS): MHS Pilot Program for Academic Year 24-25:** Student-athletes, in certain situations, may participate in more than one school-based sport simultaneously. However, consent must be given by the Director of Athletics and both involved coaches. Due to the nature of the sports, this may not always be physically possible. If both

coaches do not agree or the Director of Athletics does not give consent, a student-athlete's request to play more than one sport may be denied. If the request is permitted, coaches will develop and enforce procedures concerning practices and games/competitions for these student athletes, which must be preapproved by the Director of Athletics. In some cases, a dual-sport athlete might be feasible when combining an individual sport with a team sport.

- **The VPA Member to Member School Program** aims to provide a temporary solution for schools experiencing low participation rates, offering students an opportunity to join teams not available at their own school. To be eligible for this inter-school agreement, certain criteria must be met:
 - The receiving school, situated in the same county, must demonstrate a clear need for the specific program.
 - Participating schools must be members of the VPA (Vermont Principals' Association).
 - There should be no displacement of student-athletes from the receiving (host) school's team. Thus, the receiving school must either implement a no-cut policy for the relevant program or have a shortage of players compared to the standard team size at the sponsoring school. Students accepted under this program can partake in any level of the team offered by the receiving school.

For a comprehensive overview of the Member-to-Member School Program, please refer to the VPA Athletic Policy.

To inquire about the Member-to-Member School Program, interested families should reach out to their sending school's Athletic Director or Principal/Designee. The designated individual will then liaise with the relevant representative at the receiving school to determine placement, ensuring that all necessary criteria are met.

Please note: Milton Middle School is currently not accepting any Member-to-Member agreements based on current program capacity.

d. Communication Plan

The goal of the athletic program is to resolve issues at the rate at which the problem occurs. Coaches must notify the Director of Athletics of any issues or situations that may arise with a player, a guardian, a fan, another coach, officials, on the bus, etc., so they can be address it appropriately and effectively.

Students wishing to raise a concern related to a coach or Athletic Department staff can direct their concern to the immediate supervisor of said employee. If unclear who the supervisor is, the concern can be brought to the Director of Athletics. If the complaint is against the Director of Athletics, it should be directed to the assigned Principal at the Milton High School, Milton Middle School, or the Superintendent. Whoever the concern is delivered to is obliged to maintain strict confidentiality to minimize the possibility of retaliation unless the student requests that their name be disclosed, and unless a specific disciplinary measure reasonably necessitates the disclosure of this information. In cases where a name is disclosed, all parties must be notified in advance and all related laws will be followed.

Communication between the coach and student athletes:

Coaches communicate their expectations to student athletes clearly and consistently. High School coaches will use the “sportsYou” App to communicate with student athletes. Middle school coaches will continue to use weekly email to update guardians and student athletes.

Coaches encourage student athletes to approach them if they have any issue about their experience on an interscholastic school team. The student athlete and coach must develop a mutual respect and understanding that allows them to discuss issues openly and honestly, while striving to gain a better

understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. Among other things, the coach is expected to communicate the following:

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for all student athletes on team
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements (practices, special equipment, out of season conditioning)
- Procedures to follow should a student athlete be injured during participation

Communication between guardians and coach:

Coaches are expected to communicate their expectations with parents/guardians of the student athlete clearly and consistently. Guardians may establish respectful communication with the coach regarding a variety of their student's experience in the program, including:

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

The guardian, parent, or caregiver will respect the coach's authority in running the training program for student athletes and may not interfere in decisions regarding playing time, team strategy, play calling, or discuss information about student athletes for whom they are not legally authorized to discuss.

Except for an emergency, caregivers or guardians will avoid requiring the attention of coaches during an active practice session, immediately prior and immediately after a contest, and during a time when other students are present that can potentially hear private information. With this in mind, the department requires that 24 hours be given before contact with the coach.

With the above considerations, there may be some instances in which it is appropriate to get in touch with the coach to discuss the following:

- The treatment of the student athlete, mentally and physically
- Ways the guardian can help the student athlete improve
- Concerns about the student athlete's behavior
- Concerns about potential discrimination, exclusion, harassment, or harmful speech.

Conferences

There may be situations that may require a conference between the coach, the student athlete, and the guardian. These are encouraged and when these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help resolve the concern:

- When appropriate, the student athlete will first talk with the coach about the concern.
- If the coach/student athlete meeting does not clear the situation, then the parent(s)/guardian(s) should call and set up an appointment with the Head Coach. The student athlete must be present with the guardian during this meeting.
- If the coach/student athlete/guardian meeting does not clear the situation, then the parent(s)/guardian(s) should call and set up an appointment with the Director of Athletics. The student athlete must be present with the guardian during this meeting.
- At the completion of each sports season, student athletes and parents will be emailed and End of Season Survey to complete. As part of the survey process, students and parents are required to provide their identity. All survey data submitted will be reviewed by the Director of Athletics. During coaches' end-of-season meetings, a summary of survey results will be provided while safeguarding the identities of student athletes and parents. These survey results will serve as one

of several data points utilized in coaches' end-of-season performance evaluations, aimed at fostering reflection and professional growth. If student athletes and or guardians have additional feedback that they would like to share, they can contact the Director of Athletics at mchoquette@mymtsd-vt.org.

e. Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for ongoing participation in interscholastic athletic activities is determined by the student athlete's attendance, grades, and adherence to the code of conduct.

School Attendance

Student athletes must be officially present in school for the entire day to participate in any activity after school. Any unexcused absence from class, study hall, or any suspendable offense verified on the day of occurrence will result in denial of participation in the after-school activity that day or more if the suspension terms specify it. If a student athlete is absent the last school day of the week and the competition is on a non-school day (Saturday or Sunday), the student athlete is not eligible for participation, unless the absence was excused by the Director of Athletics or Principals.

A parent/guardian signed note or email (or otherwise in writing with a signature), is required upon return to school explaining the absence. All absences will be unexcused if a note/email is not received. No notes will be accepted without a specifically stated reason, without necessarily stating details that may be sensitive to the family or student athlete.

Excused Absences include but are not limited to:

- Medically excused illness or documented medical appointment
- School-related absence (educational opportunity)
- College visitations
- Death in the family or family emergency
- Court appearance
- Religious Holiday
- Driver's license or permit test
- Partial attendance or special circumstances will be reviewed by the Director of Athletics and/or Principals.

Team Attendance

It is expected that all student athletes attend all scheduled practices and games. The school understands that extenuating circumstances exist, and decisions may be made by the Director of Athletics on a case-by-case basis. See 5.i. and 5.j. of this document (Procedural Rules, Loyalty Clauses).

Eligibility for Fall Sports

- For returning students, eligibility will be determined by the fourth quarter grade in the course at the end of the year.
- In June, guardians should review the report card immediately.
- Ineligible students must contact their Guidance Counselor for details for any make up schoolwork in order to regain eligibility. School Principals and The Director of Athletics will receive a copy of the plan from the Guidance department.

High School Academic Eligibility and Probation

The Athletic Department will perform grade checks every other Tuesday beginning the week prior to the season starting. If failing in any one class, the student athlete will have until Friday at 3:00 pm to secure a passing grade. If they fail to do so, they will be placed on academic probation for two weeks by agreeing to complete all of the requirements during the probationary period. "Incomplete" is considered a failing grade until the student athlete completes assignments necessary to receive a passing grade.

If found in violation of the academic probation conditions, immediate ineligibility will be declared. Eligibility will be reviewed on the last day of the two-week probation period by the Director of Athletics or designee.

Phase 1: Mandatory daily Athletic Study Halls after school for at least 30 minutes (2:30-3:00 pm). Remains an active member of the team.

Phase 2: Mandatory daily study hall after school for at least 30 minutes (2:30-3:00 pm). Remains a limited active member of the team. (Practices only)

Phase 3: Mandatory daily study hall after school at least 30 minutes (2:30-3:00 pm). Will be a non-active member of the team until grades meet eligibility. (No practices or games)

Middle School Academic Eligibility

Middle school eligibility will be completed twice per season. The Athletic Department will perform grade checks on announced dates. If the student athlete is not in good standing in one or more of their classes, they will be considered ineligible for competition until they have completed their missing work.

Eligibility and Probation for Students on Special Plans

Milton Town School District students who are on I.E.P.'s, 504 plans, EST plans, or have independent study plans are subject to the goals of their respective plans and their eligibility is based on those plans. Academic probation remains the same unless specified otherwise in the student plan.

f. Changing Sports

No student athlete may quit a team and join another team in the same season once a team roster for at least one of the two teams has been established, or the season is two weeks old, unless there have been extenuating circumstances which must be evaluated and approved by the Director of Athletics.

g. Drug and Alcohol Policy

The Athletic Department, in compliance with the school district policy, prohibits the use/abuse tobacco (or tobacco substitutes, including vape products and e-cigarettes), alcohol and drugs of any kind, including illegal performance-enhancing substances. Therefore, student athletes who violate the procedures around substances are subject to a school and athletic consequence. For the school consequence, refer to posted policies and procedures on our district website. Athletic program consequences are as follows:

Any student athlete found on or off school property (including buses) who is in violation of the student alcohol and drugs policy and/or the code of conduct will be subjected to the following consequences:

- **First Violation:** The member of the athletic team will be suspended for two weeks and shall not participate in competitions but is required to attend and participate in practice.
- **Second Violation:** The member of the athletic team will be suspended for two weeks and shall not participate in competitions but is required to attend and participate in practice. In addition, the student athlete will be required to obtain a drug assessment by a Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor. A team comprised of the counselor, the Director of Athletics, an administrator, the student athlete, the parent or guardian, and an invited staff member with the appropriate area expertise or knowledge of the student will meet to create a success plan for the student athlete to support their health.
- **Third Violation:** The member of the athletic team will be immediately suspended for the remainder of the season year from the date of last participation with the option to reduce the suspension if the student athlete and their family obtain a drug assessment by a Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor and make satisfactory progress following established recommendations. Evaluations regarding satisfactory progress will be made by the counselor, Director of Athletics, an administrator, the student athlete, the parent or guardian, and an invited staff member with the appropriate area expertise or knowledge of the student. If the school does not have an SAP counselor, the assessment should be conducted at a state approved alcohol/drug agency. Reductions in length of the suspension or co-curricular non-participation may be revoked if a student athlete does not demonstrate compliance with the expectations of or satisfactory progress with the recommendations.

5 - PROCEDURAL RULES

a. Team Rules

The Milton Athletic Department requires that all teams abide by the procedures, rules, and regulations that govern our program, in addition to the general school rules and policy. However, each team or coach may have additional team rules that must be approved by the Director of Athletics prior to issuing to ensure that existing school and district policies are respected and that the additional rules do not have an exclusionary effect on a particular population without a compelling and athletic-related justification. Student athletes in violation of any team rules (additional or different from athletic program and school rules) are subject to consequences that the coach and Director of Athletics deem appropriate if these measures comply with district and school policies and are free from potential bias.

b. Varsity Captains

- Captains are selected by team members and/or appointed by coach(es).
- Prior to the selection, coaches will inform the Director of Athletics and team members of the selection criteria and obligations of the position.
- The position of team captain is one of honor, leadership, and responsibility. As a result, students serving in that capacity are expected to model high athletic virtue both in and outside of school.
- With the Director of Athletics' guidance and leadership, all captains will participate in a captain's leadership program throughout the season.
- Captain selection is at the Varsity level. Junior Varsity and Middle School teams alternate players to represent the team at officials or coaches' meetings.
- The Milton Athletic Program does not sanction pre-season "Captain's Practice."
- Teams may not practice without an MHS Athletic Department-approved adult supervisor. Guardian volunteers are not able to supervise a practice.

c. Jewelry and Uniforms

Jewelry: For safety reasons, all student athletes are prohibited from wearing jewelry during practices or competitions unless it is worn for religious or medical reasons. All student athletes must follow VPA and NHFS policies for specific sports regarding jewelry and dress code.

Uniforms and Equipment:

The MTSD is committed to equity in all its forms, including the ability for students to wear versions of our uniforms that align with their religious beliefs and cultural identity. To avoid assumptions about our students, it is our expectation that the family or student athlete requiring a modification in uniform let the administration or Director of Athletics know and allow for a reasonable time frame to make the necessary purchases.

Student athletes and guardians are responsible for the care and security of school issued uniforms and equipment. If equipment and uniforms are returned damaged, the family will be billed for replacement cost. If equipment or uniforms are not returned at the completion of season, the student athlete will not be allowed to participate in another sport or school sponsored activity until such equipment is returned. Uniforms are not for purchase as many uniform companies have minimal order requirement.

Some high school programs will opt to have alternative game jerseys, which are purchased through team fundraised dollars (e.g., pink out game jerseys, black history awareness game jerseys). These game jerseys must be pre-approved and purchased by the Director of Athletics/Athletic Department. The alternative game jerseys may be worn for 10% of the regular season games and must be combined with a team education program or team fundraising event for a non-profit organization (e.g., American Cancer Society, Milton Food Shelf). A written proposal must be prepared by the team and head coach and approved by the Director of Athletics. Alternative game jerseys are not permitted for the VPA tournament.

d. Team Selection and Levels of Participation

Selection of team members is subject to the discretion of the coaching staff. Time, space, facilities, equipment, coaching preference, and other factors will place limitations on maximum team size. If a program exceeds the standards for a manageable level of participants, the Director of Athletics may consider any of the following:

- Request for additional staffing to accommodate numbers in excess of the standards.
- Holding try-outs to bring the number of participants within those levels recommended in the standards.
- Requests to the School Board for additional funding for additional teams or other alternative programs.

While every attempt will be made to involve as many student athletes as possible, the number of interested students may exceed our ability to accommodate them safely and effectively; therefore, a selection process may be necessary. Coaches must establish a plan for selecting team members and these plans are to be approved by the Director of Athletics and include:

- Equal opportunity for all eligible candidates
- Methods of selection
- Procedure for notifying student athletes

The Director of Athletics must approve all final team rosters and list of students not selected before such rosters or lists are announced. Similarly, the Director of Athletics will reach out to students who are not selected and offer alternative options to ensure that every student gets the opportunity to make a contribution to the Athletic programs if they wish to be a part of it.

Additional Guidelines

- Team guidelines for participation in athletic contests will be made known to the student athlete prior to the start of practice for the season.
- All team practices are closed sessions. This requires parents/guardians to remain in the parking lot areas, and student athletes are not permitted to bring friends or siblings to practice without prior administrative approval.
- Every effort will be made to operate programs in a manner that is as fair and inclusive as possible, including abiding by the district and VPA policies on transgender and gender non-conforming students. Should both entities' policies be at odds, the VPA will carry more weight.

Varsity Participation

The varsity level is highly competitive and participation at this level requires a significant amount of effort, dedication, discipline, and time. While some preference will be given to qualified student athletes from upper grades in placement, this does not mean that grade level alone determines Varsity membership. At the varsity level, the primary objective is skill development but with a greater emphasis

placed on competition. The Milton Athletic Department recognizes that participation at the varsity level is highly competitive and based on ability. Playing time is not equal and is at the discretion of the coach(es) based on the individual's ability, attitude, work ethic, and the team's specific needs or game situation.

For 9th grade students in programs where sub-varsity teams exist, additional criteria will be followed in order to ensure the health of the student athletes, team, and program in deciding varsity placement. The coach will submit a written justification form followed by discussion with the Director of Athletics considering 9th grade student athlete participation at the varsity level. Coaches are responsible for addressing specific questions pertinent to each situation. 9th grade student athletes will be considered by the varsity coaches only if they will be able to be given appropriate play time, there is a demonstrated need for younger players at the varsity level, and the coach feels the player can meet the physical demands of varsity competition. In addition to the physical demands, there are also the social and emotional factors that need to be taken into consideration when having freshmen play on the varsity level. A coach must consider what is in the best interests of the student athlete, team, and entire program presently and in the future for any decision made on eligibility for varsity participation while honoring the commitment and dedication to the program by student athletes from upper grades.

Junior Varsity Participation: At the junior varsity level, emphasis will be placed on participation and skill development. The junior varsity programs are designed to help student athletes develop skills and teamwork necessary for successful varsity competition. It is expected that members of the junior varsity level teams will be given appropriate and quality playing time that promotes player development, in each contest, as long as they comply with their coach's team policies and work hard in practice. Equal playing time is not guaranteed. Seniors may not participate on JV teams unless roster sizes are low and approved by the Director of Athletics in advance.

Middle School Participation: At the middle school level, emphasis will be placed on encouraging participation, teaching basic skills and the rules of the game, and progression without the competitive pressure. Participation is not based on athletic ability and every effort will be made for fair playing time that promotes player development. The Milton Athletic Department believes that middle school sports should be kept in perspective and hopes that student athletes will develop an appreciation for athletic competition that will support them as they move on to a higher level.

e. Practice and Games

- **Practices:** Each coach shall be responsible for planning and conducting practices on a regular, scheduled basis. Practices are 1½ to 2 hours at the Varsity/JV levels and 1 to 1 ½ hours at the Middle School level. Student athletes must be excused from practice with no penalty for religious reasons or for extra help sessions with classroom teachers. Coaches and/or the Director of Athletics have the discretion on whether to excuse student athletes from practices or games for other reasons.
- **Rest Day:** There will be at least one rest day within a week, and no more than 6 days of practices shall happen continuously; however, in instances when an additional practice can be justified, it can be scheduled with the Director of Athletics' prior approval and the assignment of an additional rest day.
- **Contests:** The Director of Athletics will be responsible for scheduling all interscholastic athletic contests. All league contests will be scheduled by the NVAC, and all non-league contests and scrimmages may be scheduled by each individual coach (with prior approval from the Director of Athletics).
- **10/7 Practice Rule:** High School participants in all interscholastic athletic activities must have a minimum of ten (10) practice sessions before competing in interscholastic contests. No more than two practice sessions in a day shall, when permissible, count toward the minimum of ten practice sessions. Middle School athletics only require 7 practices before competition.
- **Announcements:** At the beginning of every week, the Athletic Department will issue communication such as "This Week in Sports" which will include all of the interscholastic athletic events for that week.

(not including practices). The date, opponent, location, dismissal time, and time of the event will all be noted. All information will be given through email.

- **Early Dismissals:** It is the responsibility of the student athlete to inform their teacher that they will be missing class. Student athletes are expected to notify their teachers no less than 24 hours before the class which will be missed. All work shall be made up at the specification of the teacher. Practice is not an excuse for failing to complete make-up work or for failing to attend before or after school help sessions.
- **Cancellations and Postponements:** All games or practices that must be canceled or postponed due to weather or any other unforeseen circumstances will be canceled by the Director of Athletics. The Director of Athletics will attempt to reschedule all canceled contests and the coach will be responsible for notifying the student athletes of any changes in the schedule.

f. Injuries or Accidents

Remittance to Athletic Activity

- In the event a student athlete sustains an injury (sprain, concussion, laceration, bruise, etc.) serious enough to require a physician's examination and treatment, the student athlete must obtain written permission from a physician before being allowed to resume participation in practices and competitions.
- All doctors' notes regarding an athlete's fitness to resume athletic competition must be submitted to the Athletic Trainer, Director of Athletics, school nurse, and be kept on file.
- In cases where a student athlete is absent from school for more than five consecutive days due to illness, the fitness of the student athlete to resume athletic activity must be established. Written permission from the attending physician must be obtained before the student athlete is allowed to resume participation in practices and competitions.
- In the event a student athlete sustains a broken bone or an injury, which requires the application of a cast or splint, they will be automatically excluded from participation in practices or competitions, unless they have an approved medical note of clearance to participate and an approved padding. Once the injury has healed and cast/splint has been removed, written permission from the attending physician must be obtained before the student athlete is allowed to resume participation in practices and competitions.
- Guardians or student-athletes do not have the ability to override the decision of a Medical Doctor and the MTSD Athletic Trainer.

Athletic Trainer(s)

The Certified Athletic Trainer(s) on staff should be utilized and involved in ALL injuries which occur during participation in an athletic activity, whether EMS is contacted or not. The Athletic Trainer will be present at all collision sporting events, as per state requirement (football, lacrosse, ice hockey and wrestling), along with most varsity and JV sporting events as per the contract set.

Concussions

The Vermont Legislature and Department of Education have adopted legislation around the informing and management of concussions in schools. Milton Town School District will be in full compliance with all aspects of the law. Our coaches meet NFHS and VPA guidelines, our athletic equipment - including helmets - meets all NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) requirements, our athletic training staff receives the latest information and training, we provide coaches, guardians and student athletes with the necessary information, and we follow the University of Vermont Medical Center Return to Play Guidelines that have been adopted by the VPA. We do all we can to provide a

safe environment for our student athletes. However, we cannot prevent concussions, and they remain a risk with participation in sports. We rely on student athletes and their guardians to communicate openly and honestly with our coaches and athletic trainers regarding concussion symptoms. The final determination on return to play after medical clearance will be made by the MTSD Athletic Trainer. For more information, see the Milton Athletic Department Concussion Management Protocol in the Appendix.

g. Locker Room and Weight Room

Locker room and weight room supervision is important for student athletes' safety and supervision of equipment to minimize damages. Coaches are expected to make proper arrangements for supervision (one member from the coaching staff must be the last person to leave both rooms after practice). Coaches are also responsible for providing adequate principles for their team. Coaches must be present in the weight room for a team member to use the facility. Coaches will contact the Director of Athletics to schedule.

h. Bus and Transportation

- All team members are required to ride the bus to and from all events for which the Milton Athletic Department provides transportation. Student athletes are not allowed to ride with another student regardless of permission from parent/guardian.
- In special circumstances, student athletes may travel to the contest or may return home by other means, which may include transportation provided by parent/guardian, other relatives, or the individual. This may only occur if a permission note from the parent/guardian is received prior to the game or event. These requests must be approved by the Director of Athletics at least 24 hours before the event.
- No student athlete may enter the bus unless a coach is present. Only team members and support personnel are allowed on the athletic/team busses.
- Student athletes will take care of the physical integrity of the bus and abide by all rules set by the bus driver.

i. Conflicts with Other Activities

The Milton Athletic Program expects the commitment to Milton Town School District teams to be the first priority should a conflict arise. Student athletes choosing to participate in a non-school team event in favor over a Milton team event should expect to face consequences as decided upon by the coach and the Director of Athletics. In extenuating circumstances, the coach must be informed of any such conflicts well in advance. If a solution cannot be found, the Director of Athletics will decide based upon the following:

- The relative importance of each event.
- The importance of each event to the student athlete.
- The relative contribution the student athlete can make.
- How long each event has been scheduled.
- A conversation with the parents/guardians.

j. Commitments with other teams

Per VPA rules, member of a MTSD school team is a student athlete who is regularly present for, and actively participates in, all team tryouts, practices and competitions. Members of a school team are prevented from missing a high school practice or competition to compete with an out-of-school team, practice or competition to include tournaments, showcases, combines or other athletic events. Whenever a conflict arises between the high school team practice/competition and an out-of-school practice/competition on the same day, the high school team practice/competition shall be honored by the student athlete. Priority must be given at all times to the high school team, its practices, and its contest unless permission has been granted by the School Administration. It is expressly understood that permission shall not be granted on a regular basis.

- **1st Violation:** Student athlete will be reported to the VPA office, student athlete is suspended from competing in two games/contest (with the exception of football will be one game) and the student athlete is required to practice/train with their team during the game suspension period.
- **2nd Violation:** Report violation to the VPA office, student athlete is removed for the remainder of the season.

k. Awards and Official Events

A system of awards has been established to recognize the contributions and achievements of all members of Milton athletic teams. It is the responsibility of the Director of Athletics to establish criteria for the awarding of participation credit at the varsity, junior varsity, or middle school levels. The criteria shall be explained to all active members at the beginning of an athletic season. It should take into consideration an athlete's level and quality of participation during a season, as well as during the student athlete's previous years of contribution in that particular sport. A record of each student athlete's participation on athletic teams will be maintained by the Athletic Department.

Certificates of Participation will be awarded to participants who complete their athletic seasons.

- **Varsity Letters** are awarded based on criteria established by athletic department and only awarded to school-sanctioned and managed athletic programs.
- Only one letter is awarded to each student athlete.
- The first letter in any sport will be accompanied by a pin for that sport.
- Pins indicative of the sport are awarded for each succeeding sport, in which, an athlete satisfies the requirements for a letter.
- Service bars are awarded when an athlete satisfies the requirements for a letter a second, third or fourth time in a particular sport.
- Varsity Managers are awarded pins upon successfully completing the duties of manager throughout the season as determined by the coach.
- A senior may be awarded a letter at the discretion of the coach and/or the Director of Athletics.
- The coach, Director of Athletics, and Principal should discuss specific cases not meeting the established requirements. Student athletes who do not complete the season because of disciplinary action or quitting the team are not eligible for an award or letter. This includes receiving a game jersey for the bi-annual school lip dub. Student athletes may be denied an award at the discretion of the Director of Athletics if they have not achieved the standards for an athlete in the Milton Athletic Program. For example:
 - Poor sportsmanship or lack of athletic virtue
 - Failure to comply with training rules
 - Failure to abide by team, program, school, or district policies and procedures

- Conduct determined to be detrimental to the reputation of the school and the athletic program

Athletic Leadership Council (ALC): A main goal of the ALC is to focus on enhancing the student athlete experience and promoting the knowledge mental wellness awareness (Let's break the silence). There will be bi-monthly Meetings (TBA) and sub-committee (TBA). Group Supervisor will be Trevor Wagar. Any student interested in being involved should contact Trevor Wagar, or Marcel Choquette for an application.

Senior Recognition Day: Senior recognition day is a pregame and/or postgame ceremony. The Varsity Head Coach will identify which game this will be. This game may or may not be the last home game of the season and may or may not be a night game. The Varsity Head Coach will provide a written script for the event. No more than 1 minute will be allowed on each senior student athlete. The Head Coach will also provide an announcer for that event. Student Athletes and their family (defined as guardians, siblings, and grandparents) will be announced and called onto the field/court/ice). Parents/Guardians and/or student athletes will be responsible for any decorations, food, poster boards, or additional activities that take place on campus. Guardians and student athletes must remove any decorations directly after the game.

Team Banquets: Individual team banquets should be arranged by the coach and scheduled at the end of the season at the earliest possible date. All team banquets are required to take place on the MTSD campus.

Team Dinners: The Athletic Department encourages team dinners only if proper supervision is provided and prior approval by the Director of Athletics. It is required to use school facilities. Please contact the Director of Athletics to sign out space at the school.

I. Out of Season

Out of Season

The Milton Town School District follows the VPA policy on out-of-season coaching. To review the policy click [Out of Season Coaching Rule](#) and go to bullet 27.

The Milton Athletic Program does not sanction out of season "Captain's Practice."

Summer Recess

During the summer recess, all restrictions are revoked. Local schools may determine to what extent the school, the coaches, and the student athletes are to be involved in the "summer recess" programs (from the last day of school to 10 calendar days prior to the start of the fall season). All summer MTSD activities must be preapproved by the Director of Athletics.

Open Gyms/Pick Up

Open gyms/pickup/team activities are allowed as long as an invitation is given to the entire student body and there is no instruction (coaching) of any kind. Open gyms/pick up will be limited by the Director of Athletics so that MTSD student athletes participating in a sport will not overextend their physical capacity. All activities must be approved by the Director of Athletics and be supervised by approved MTSD personnel.