

# Riverhead Athletics

Home of the Blue Waves



## Athletic Handbook

Please visit our Athletics website for all information:

[www.RiverheadAthletics.com](http://www.RiverheadAthletics.com)

## **The Mission of Riverhead Interscholastic Athletics**

The Blue Waves Department of Athletics believes interscholastic athletics plays a major role in the educational process and strives to provide a challenging, meaningful and exciting experience for student-athletes. The department accomplishes this mission by serving as teachers, mentors, leaders and representatives of the school district while building a high level of sportsmanship and competition.

*The coaching staff places the highest value on:*

***Commitment – Integrity – Loyalty – Respect – Teamwork***

In carrying out this mission, the department will strengthen the ability of Riverhead student-athletes to manage their lives and fulfill their potential; academically, athletically and as a citizens.

### **Philosophy**

The student-athlete represents the best of the school and community and therefore is held to a higher standard. Student athletes are our school's ambassadors to our community and to the schools with whom we compete. They are often leaders in school and role models to children not yet old enough to play sports.

Interscholastic athletics is an integral part of the Riverhead School District's comprehensive educational program. Athletics should be a broadening experience in which a student strives for physical and mental excellence. This value-building experience should be offered to as many students as possible. Everyone involved in athletics possesses a unique opportunity to teach positive life skills and values, with the final outcome being a better citizen carrying these values throughout their life.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege, not a right. Students wishing to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them by the Riverhead School District must show a commitment to the athletic program by regular attendance at practices and contests, as well as conformity to the rules established by the district and/or coach. Failure to comply with the rules of conduct will result in appropriate disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the team.

It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one criterion when determining a season's success. Guiding the team to attain maximum potential is the ultimate goal.

### **Varsity Program Philosophy**

The Varsity level is the culmination of each sport's program. Team size is limited; depending on the needs to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play games. It is vital that each team member has role and understands what that role is. A specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed at any level of play. Athletes must have a sound attitude and advanced level of skill to earn a position on a varsity team, as is the commitment requirements of practicing six days a week, including practices during school breaks and school holidays. This is a serious and large commitment by the athlete, coaches and parents. The varsity coach is the leader of that sports' program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. The communication among the middle school, junior varsity and varsity programs is the responsibility of the varsity coach.

## **Junior Varsity Program Philosophy**

The Junior Varsity level is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into a productive varsity level player. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, team and continued self-development. Increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, and elements and strategies of team play. A specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed at any level of play. Teams at this level will also have requirements of practicing six days a week, including practices during school breaks and school holidays. This is a serious and large commitment by the athlete, coaches and parents.

## **Middle School (Modified) Program Philosophy**

This program is available to all students in good academic standing in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At this level, the focus is on learning athletic skill and game rules, fundamentals of team play, socio-emotional growth, and physiologically appropriate demands. Our goal is to provide a well-planned and well-balanced program. Games during any vacation/holiday are not regularly scheduled at this level, however, on rare occasions practices are scheduled to ensure that students are adequately prepared to participate. A specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed at any level of play.

## **Eligibility**

All student athletes must meet the behavioral requirements as established in the student hand book.

1. A contestant must be a bona fide student and adhere to the NYSPHSAA rules and regulations.
2. All athletic candidates must have a completed sports physical prior to participation. For those seeing their own physician, our school doctor must sign off on those. This can take upwards of 48 hours.
3. A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition in grades 9, 10, 11, 12 until his/her nineteenth birthday. If the age of nineteen is reached on or after July 1, the student may continue to participate during the school year in all sports, as long as they have not repeated a grade in 7-12.
4. A student in grade 7 or grade 8, who is selected to try out at a varsity/jv level, must complete the "Athletic Placement Process" prior to trying out.

## **Athletic Placement Process**

The Athletic Placement Process is a program through New York State Education Department for evaluating students who meet the criteria to participate in sports at higher or lower levels, as outlined by the Board of Education Policy and approved by the Riverhead Athletic Office.

## **Try Outs and Selection of Teams**

As an athletic department, we try to include as many students on our teams as possible. Size of team is determined by safety factors such as how many athletes a coach can adequately supervise. Additionally, team numbers are determined by the number of athletes who can positively contribute in some way. Unfortunately, some teams have to make "selections" or "cuts". This is one of the most difficult decisions a coach must make. When athletes are evaluated during a tryout period, coaches are asked to use many

“objective factors” as possible (sports specific skills, timing events, etc.) Some subjective factors come into play like effort, attitude and an athlete’s ability to contribute to team success.

### **Changing Sports**

A student may change from a cut sport to a non-cut sport with permission of parent, coach and athletic director; please note that there is a **ONE WEEK** window beginning with the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the season. In the event an athlete leaves a team, he/she must meet with the coach or they will not be permitted to participate in another sport.

### **Club Teams**

It is recognized that many times an athlete may have numerous commitments. Some of these may include participation on outside club teams. It is important that the athletes and their parents understand that as a member of an interscholastic team, their primary commitment is to their school team.

### **ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, and OTHER DRUGS**

The avoidance of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is an expectation that all student athletes must strive to uphold and which parents, teachers, and administrators and the community-at-large must endorse and support. A student athlete’s inappropriate behavior, whether in or out of school as it pertains to the use of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigs, vaping, and other drugs will not be tolerated. Students, who are found to possess drugs or alcohol, use, or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol in school or at school activities, will be suspended from school according to the school code of conduct and will be prohibited from participating in all extracurricular activities for a designated period of time determined by the district administration. In addition, our schools are identified as Drug Free School Environments, and our policies support the federal government’s “No Tolerance” guidelines.

### **Physical Education Class**

Athletics are an extension of our physical education program. Students must fully change into appropriate physical education attire, which includes rubber sole sneakers. Failure to change for physical education class will result in a student not being able to participate at their sport practice and/or contest that day; however, they may attend the practice and/or contest.

### **Academics**

Our academic procedures are adopted with the hope that continued eligibility for participation will be a strong incentive for these student athletes to improve their academic performance. Our academic policy is carried over from June to September. All students are expected to pass all subjects. Passing physical education is a requirement to participate in interscholastic athletics. Students in danger of failing one or two subjects will be placed on academic probation. Students failing more than two courses will become ineligible for sports participation. An appeals process has been established for students failing more than two subjects. Please look at academic policy in our school handbook or check the athletic website for more in-depth information.

## School Discipline

Out of School Suspension (O.S.S.) – Athletes assigned O.S.S. are ineligible to practice and attend or play in a game until they return to school.

In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) – Athletes assigned to I.S.S. are ineligible to practice and attend or play in a game that day.

## Attendance

Attendance is the single most important indicator of an athlete's commitment to a team. Student athletes are expected to make all practice and contests including those scheduled on Saturdays and days when school is not in session. We ask parents to schedule vacations and personal appointments so as not to conflict with an athlete's commitment to a team.

A student who is absent from school for any reason other than educationally excused (field trip), on the day of a contest will be ineligible to participate that day. **It is understood that students will be present in school at the latest, by 10:00am, in order to participate in a practice or game that day. Students must attend class/school for a minimum of five periods in order to participate in a practice or game that day.**

**No student athlete excused from medical reasons from a physical education class may participate in a practice, scrimmage or contest that same day.** Note that Commissioner's Regulations dictate that a student athlete is ineligible if he/she is medically excused from participation in a physical education class.

## Hazing – Initiation Ceremony

Riverhead coaches will not permit their athletes to stage any type of "initiation" or "hazing" at any time. We respect that there are individual differences in how each of our teammates may react to a designated task, activity, or request. At no time should a teammate be subjected to a behavior, task, or activity that is physically, psychologically, or emotionally abusive. At no time may an athlete gossip about, disparage, belittle, ridicule, or bully any other person for any reason. Unauthorized, inappropriate use of photo or video of Riverhead athletes or teams is prohibited and will result in discipline, suspension, or removal from the team. It is the right of each teammate to communicate his/her feelings at any point where he/she feels personally devalued or dehumanized. Team members are expected and required to notify a coach or another school official if any such behavior is rumored or observed. The goal of a team is that each member of the team be treated with dignity and respect.

## Uniforms

Only school issued uniforms may be worn during athletic contests. Athletes cannot compete if they fail to dress appropriately. It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to return to the coach all clothing and equipment issued. Failure to do this will result in the athlete/family reimbursing the school district for the missing articles.

## **Sportsmanship**

It is important for all athletes to remember that participation is privilege that is not to be abused by unsportsmanlike conduct. The Riverhead athlete is to demonstrate self-control and respect for teammates, opponents, other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators at all times. Riverhead athletes, parents and all spectators are expected to follow the SPORTSMANSHIP code:

- Follow the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play
- Make no remarks or gestures at any time toward any other person which would be considered belittling, disparaging, bullying or in any way judgmental or critical of that person
- Stress values derived from playing the game fairly
- Show cordiality and courtesy to visiting teams, coaches, supervisors, and officials
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials
- Follow the Section XI, NYSPHSAA and the school rules of sportsmanship
- Recognize the purpose of educationally based athletics is to promote the physical, moral, social, and emotional well-being of players
- BE LOUD, BE PROUD, AND BE POSITIVE!

## **Spectator Behavior**

Spectators are expected to:

- Cheer in a supportive manner for both teams
- Conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior
- Respect officials, coaches, and players and refrain from disrespectful remarks
- Obey the regulations of the site authorities, whether home or away

Failure to abide by the above items and/or behavior deemed inappropriate by district administration could result in a suspension from sporting event or removal from premises.

## **Transportation**

Student athletes are required to travel to and from contests on the team bus under the supervision of a coaching staff member.

If a parent wishes to take a student home from an athletic contest, permission must be granted in advance and the district travel release form must be signed by the parent and submitted to the coach. The transporting may only be by that student's parent or guardian.

Students are expected to go home via their usual transportation (late bus, walker, or parent pickup) after practice. On practice days if no parent is present by bus departure time, students will be put on the late bus unless they are a walker. There is no transportation on game days for players. A parent/guardian is expected to pick their son/daughter within 30 minutes of the game ending. If a parent is late more than twice, a meeting will be held between the parent and coach to reiterate expectations. If a student is reported for inappropriate behavior on the bus, the student will be suspended from the bus for one week and suspended for one game. If there is a second occurrence, the student will be removed from the team for the remainder of the season and a letter will be sent home.

## **Sports Physical Examinations – by a Medical Doctor**

A sports physical is valid for one year from the date of the sports physical. When interested in participating in a sport, all forms must be filled out electronically at Rank One Sports. Students can obtain a sports physical through the school doctor on specific dates. All athletes who are seen by a doctor as a result of an injury must be released (signed statement) by that doctor, as well as our school doctor, in order to resume participation with their team. This release must be filed with our school nurse.

## **Risk Factors Related to Playing Sports**

By the very nature of athletic activity, participants are at risk of physical injury. No matter how careful the athlete and the coach are, no matter how many precautions are taken, the risk cannot be eliminated. It can be reduced but never eliminated. The risk of injury includes minor injuries and catastrophic injuries. Athletes must follow all safety directions from their coaches. Athletes must communicate with the coaches and athletic trainer regarding all injuries and health issues.

## **Injuries and Insurance**

All injuries must be reported immediately to the coach and athletic trainer. If you have health insurance that covers your child, you must submit to your insurance first and this will serve as the primary coverage. Pupil Benefits coverage levels are provided in their certificate of insurance and will be used as secondary coverage. This information can be obtained from the school nurse.

## **Parent / Coach Relationship**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult jobs. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to athletes. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach.

## **Communication to Expect from your Child's Coach**

- Philosophy of the coach and program
- Expectations the coach has for all players on the team
- Locations and times of practices and games
- Team requirements, team rules, special equipment, off-season recommendations to improve skills

## **Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches**

- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- The treatment of your child – mentally and/or physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior and safety

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you hoped. Coaches are professionals...they make judgments based on what they believe to be the best for all student-athletes involved.

## **Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches**

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

**Coaches are making decisions that are in the best interest of all members of the team and program. Please be supportive of their decisions.**

## **Positive Parenting**

- Be a positive role model
- Be a “team” fan not a “my kid” fan
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and officials
- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the sport
- Avoid instructing one’s child/teammates during a game, because it sometimes may conflict with the coach’s plans and strategies
- Help your child learn that success is the development of his/her skills, and that he/she can feel positive about their skill development during the season, regardless of playing time and the team’s record
- Support the alcohol, tobacco, and other drug-free policies of the school
- Take time to talk with coaches in an appropriate manner, including proper time and place. Respect the coach by following the designated chain of command

## **Procedures for Discussing a Concern with a Coach**

1. Contact the coach to set up a meeting time to discuss your concerns
2. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a practice or contest. These can be emotional times and it may not benefit either party to attempt to resolve concerns at these times.
3. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, contact the Athletic Office to set up an appointment with the Director of Athletics.



# Riverhead CSD Athletic Contract

(Please return this page signed by all parties to your coach)

Student athletes and parents/guardians must log onto the athletic website, [www.riverheadathletics.com](http://www.riverheadathletics.com) to review the Riverhead CSD Athletic Handbook. This contract must be signed by both student-athlete and parent/guardian before they are able to participate in athletics.

**CONCUSSIONS**- A concussion is a common, but serious, traumatic brain injury that alters the way the brain functions. Effects are usually temporary, but can sometimes result in prolonged difficulties with headache, memory concentration, balance and other symptoms. **NYS Law requires a Return to Play clearance following a concussion that is to be provided by the school's Chief Medical Officer (CMO).** Riverhead CSD's Concussion Management Protocol and important additional information regarding concussion symptoms and safety can be found under the Athletics' section of the school website.

*I have read all of the materials in the Riverhead Central School District Athletic Handbook for Parents and Athletes. I am aware of the expectations set forth in the handbook, including but not limited to: behavior/expectations inside and outside of school including bullying, harassment, hazing, alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use. I am aware that participating in any sport can be a dangerous activity involving RISKS OF INJURY. I understand that these risks may include: death, neck and spinal injuries, complete or partial paralysis, brain damage, injury to the muscular-skeletal system, as well as injury to other parts of the body.*

*I agree to support the Athletic Department in its enforcement of these expectations and understand the consequences should my son/daughter fail to do so.*

STUDENT NAME (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

ATHLETIC TEAM \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**OFF CAMPUS RUNNING** (for athletes whose running regimen takes them off campus during practice)

I give my child permission to run during practice on routes off the school property.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**GO BLUE WAVES!!**