

Timothy Edwards Middle School Student Athletic Handbook 2023-2024



PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

A comprehensive athletic program is an essential part of Timothy Edwards Middle School's educational program. In order to contribute to the students' actualization of the standards set forth in the school's mission statement, the athletic program aims to provide students with an opportunity to grow emotionally, mentally, and physically; to develop a respect for self and others; and to build self-esteem and confidence.

Timothy Edwards Middle School's athletic program takes pride in winning, but places a higher value on sportsmanship and good mental and physical health. Our hope is that all student-athletes will develop life-long skills such as: problem-solving, teamwork, and a strong work ethic as a result of their involvement in athletics.

TEMS Athletics is committed to these core values:

COMPETITIVENESS: We are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence through hard work at all times.

TEAMWORK: We work collaboratively and cooperatively for the benefit of the team.

SPORTSMANSHIP: We are respectful and positive competitors (including coaches, parents and fans) at all times.

CITIZENSHIP: We represent the South Windsor community with pride, integrity, and dignity in all endeavors.

PHYSICAL FITNESS: We view physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle as essential in performing at our highest level on and off the field.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

In order to participate in athletics, a student-athlete must meet and abide by all CIAC and South Windsor eligibility rules (see ATHLETIC ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY section of handbook).

Team Limitations / Tryouts

TEMS Athletics provides opportunities for the skilled student-athlete to compete against student-athletes from other schools. The different nature and structure of sport teams often requires coaches to limit the number of athletes competing as part of an athletic team. Depending on the number of student-athletes that try out for various sport teams, coaches may be forced, in any given year, to reduce the size of their teams.

The athletic coach is the person responsible for selecting student-athletes to compete on a given athletic team. Any issues regarding playing time or a particular position a player plays on a given team should be first discussed and resolved between the player and the coach (see "Complaint Procedure" below).

Athletic Academic Eligibility

- Students must have a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to try out for a sport. Athletes whose GPA is below a 2.0 for the marking period prior to tryouts will not be allowed to tryout. Athletes taking part in a fall sport will need to maintain "continued eligibility" which will be determined by the progress report which comes out mid-season.
- An athlete must maintain a 2.0 GPA for the duration of the season. If a report card or mid-term progress report is issued during the season (fall, winter and/or spring), that report will be used to determine continued eligibility. If an athlete is below a 2.0 on a report issued DURING the season, that athlete will be placed on a 2-week probation period, during which they may not take part in practices or games. A meeting will be held with the student-athlete and staff members which may include the coach, team teacher, guidance counselor and/or an administrator. The purpose of this meeting is to determine an action plan to outline what steps the student must take to improve grades.
- After the 2-week period, if the action plan is followed and the academic performance improves, a determination will be made by school personnel if the student-athlete may resume participation on the team for the duration of the season. If the action plan is not followed and the grades do not improve, the student-athlete may have to forfeit his/her spot on the team.

Attendance

- Attendance at practice and games is required. No unexcused absences from practice are permitted. Unexcused absences are handled according to the coach's team rules. Repeated violation of the team's attendance policy may lead to complete or partial suspension from the team. A spot in the starting line-up and playing time are not guaranteed after a vacation or extended absence from the team.
- Any school-sponsored function (field trip, class outing, etc.) is an excused absence from practice/game.

- Athletes must attend 50% of the school day to participate in practice or games that day, unless special permission-in advance- from the Athletic Coordinator or building administrator has been issued.
- Sunday practices are prohibited, including volunteer practices (no exceptions).
- An athlete who is injured during practice shall sit out the remainder of the practice and subsequent practices until cleared by a physician.

Participation Fees

- The sports participation fee is **\$100 per sport**, with a \$400 family cap for TEMS students only
- There is a \$500 family cap for TEMS and SWHS students combined
- The funds collected from the participation fees will be used to defray expenses for operating the athletic program. Student-athletes who fail to turn in their participation fees and forms by the due date will **NOT** be allowed to tryout or practice until their fees have been collected. Student-athletes in need of financial assistance may apply for a waiver of fees. Fees will be returned to athletes not selected for the team.

Physical Examination

- All participants are required to turn in a current Physician's Statement signed after June 1st of the upcoming academic school year. If you receive a physical from your family physician, your physical may be good for two years; however, you are still required to have the Physician's Statement Form signed by your doctor and turned in to our office every year.
- **Athletes will not be allowed to participate/tryout without necessary paperwork.**

Transportation

- Athletes must travel to and from all contests with the team on school transportation. Exceptions to this will be granted consistent with our Athletic/Activity Transportation guidelines.
- Athletes not using school transportation must fill out a **Release of Liability form** (on website).
- **Release of Liability form** must be filled out and turned in to the coach 24 hours prior to the requested date for approval.

Athletic Equipment

Student-athletes may be issued athletic uniforms and/or equipment appropriate for their sport. The following are the sole responsibilities of student-athletes who are issued uniforms and/or equipment:

- Uniforms and equipment are to be used and worn **ONLY** during contests in which the athlete is representing TEMS.
- Student-athletes must return all issued equipment and uniforms to their coach at the conclusion of the season.
- Student-athletes will not be allowed to participate in any other sport until they have reimbursed the athletic department the replacement cost of any equipment or uniforms not returned.
- Student-athletes are responsible for their personal items. The school will not be held accountable for personal items or athletic department issued equipment/supplies that are lost or stolen.
- Student-athletes will be able to use the locker room, which is locked. However, student-athletes are strongly encouraged to bring an individual lock for their locker.

Sports Insurance

The South Windsor Board of Education has purchased an accident medical insurance plan to help cover medical expenses resulting from interscholastic sports injuries. All student-athletes are covered while participating in or traveling while under the supervision of proper school authority, to or from any regularly scheduled game or practice of any interscholastic sport. This is an excess type program. The plan does not cover treatment or service for which benefits are payable or service is available under any other insurance or medical service plan available to the insured person, including, but not limited to, HMOs, PPOs, Workers' Compensation, and automobile medical payment insurance. This does not apply to a plan of insurance by the Connecticut Health Reinsurance Association. The benefits payable shall be reduced to the extent necessary so that the sum of such reduced benefits and all of the benefits provided by any other plan shall not exceed the total of the expenses incurred by the Insured.

Treatment must be done by a legally qualified medical or dental physician or practitioner of an injury which is direct and independent of all other causes. Treatment must start and first expense must be incurred within 90 days from the date of the accident causing injury. Covered charges may not exceed the usual, customary and reasonable expenses for services, supplies and treatment normally made within the geographic area in which the service is rendered. There is no deductible for this excess plan, but no payment will be made for any expense incurred more than 104 weeks from the date of the accident causing injury.

Medication

Students may carry their own medications with the written consent of both the licensed prescriber and the parent. Controlled (narcotic) medications may not be carried by the student.

Any student found consuming unauthorized medications, transferring medication to another student, and/or in possession of such medication(s) will be subject to disciplinary action.

Certified coaches and athletic trainers may administer inhalers and cartridge injectors for allergic reactions to those students who have not been cleared to self-carry. The written order of the licensed prescriber and the written authorization of the parent is required. An additional inhaler or cartridge injector must be provided by the parent to the coach for use during sports.

ATHLETIC CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

The privilege of being a member of a TEMS athletic team brings with it specific responsibilities. All persons involved in athletics – coaches, volunteers, athletes, and spectators – are expected to meet the same high standards of behavior, ethics, and values that our students and staff must meet in the classroom. Student-athletes are required to follow TE's rules and regulations, as well as the athletic policies and procedures established by:

- Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC)
- South Windsor Board of Education

TEMS has high expectations for the behavior and conduct of all student-athletes. All coaches, student athletes, parents/guardians, and administrators will be responsible and accountable for promoting and upholding the athletic department's mission statement and core values. We will abide by South Windsor Board of Education (BOE) policies, as well as the rules set forth by Timothy Edwards Middle School and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC).

Per BOE Policy #5002, students may be disciplined for conduct on or off school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity "that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or violates a publicized policy of the Board." Expectations for student conduct extend to students **on and off school grounds and beyond the school day to weekends and other times when school is not in session** (i.e., holidays, vacations, etc.). When a student-athlete violates board policy and/or the rules and regulations set forth by TEMS, the appropriate disciplinary action shall be applied.

All athletes shall conduct themselves as good school and community citizens. Unsatisfactory behavior may result in complete or partial suspension from the team. All team members must show respect to their opponents, officials, coaches and spectators. Abuse of this may result in complete or partial suspension from the team. A complete list of South Windsor Board of Education policies is available at: [SWPS Board of Education Policies](#).

Sportsmanship

Timothy Edwards Middle School considers good sportsmanship and fair play to be the foundation of athletic competition. Teamwork, lasting relationships, and the joy associated with personal and team accomplishments are outcomes of good sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is expected on and off the field.

All student-athletes are expected to:

- Recognize that academic achievement comes first.
- Promote positive school spirit as a representative of his/her sport and school while demonstrating support for other school programs and extracurricular activities.
- Show respect to all opponents, coaches, spectators, and officials (accept the decisions of officials).
- Communicate openly and appropriately with coaches and parents/guardians with all matters pertaining to the team.
- Follow team rules; attend and arrive on time for practices, games, meetings, etc.
- Refrain from all types of hazing, taunting, harassing/bullying or similar behavior.
- Refrain from the use of profanity, abusive language and behavior at all times.

- Avoid possession, use, or distribution of substances/paraphernalia banned by Board of Education policy.

All parents/guardians/spectators are expected to:

- Demonstrate positive support and enthusiasm for the entire team as well as for their own children.
- Cheer for their team—not against opponents; use positive language and display appropriate signs.
- Communicate in an appropriate manner with coaches and officials (accept the decisions of officials).
- Refrain from “coaching” from the sidelines.
- Understand they are role models--be positive and constructive in the development of their child as a student-athlete.

Parents and spectators are subject to disciplinary actions if they fail to abide by the rules and guidelines mentioned that include but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written warning by official, head coach, and/or head of league organization.
- Parental game suspension and written documentation of the incident kept on file.
- Game forfeit through the official or coach.

Use of Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, Controlled Substances and/or Tobacco Products

Pursuant to Board policy 5003 ([5003 Suspension from Interscholastic Athletics](#)) and CIAC rules and regulations, the possession, consumption, or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, controlled substances, substances represented to be a controlled substance, or drug paraphernalia and inappropriate use of non-prescription medication by student-athletes participating in district interscholastic athletics, whether on or off school grounds, will not be tolerated. When a student athlete is found to be in violation of these policies/regulations, they will face consequences in accordance with the progressive disciplinary processes set forth by the South Windsor Board of Education and TEMS.

Procedure for Interscholastic Athletic Suspension

The administration of each school shall have the authority to invoke an athletic suspension for a period up to the duration of the playing season for one or more of the reasons stated in Board policies 5002 and 5003.

Bullying and Harassment

The South Windsor Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the District Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii)

infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited. Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. See full South Windsor BOE policy...[Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

Social Media Guidelines:

- Any player found slandering or threatening an opponent, official, teammate, coach, etc. on social network will be disciplined at the discretion of the coaching staff and school administration, which may include dismissal from the team.

Other Serious Violations include:

- Threatening/Intimidation (students, coaches, officials, or school personnel)
- Fighting (initiating or enticing)
- Disrespect toward school personnel

Disciplinary Referrals and Due Process

When a disciplinary concern is reported by a team member, teacher, coach, administrator, or member of the community, the following will occur:

1. The student-athlete is referred to the appropriate coach and athletic coordinator. The athletic coordinator will make a determination if further disciplinary action or a referral to administration is necessary.
2. The athletic coordinator or the principal's designee holds a due process hearing.
 - a. The student-athlete is informed of the charges.
 - b. The student-athlete is given the opportunity to give his/her side of the story.
 - c. The athletic coordinator or principal's designee will make a decision within a reasonable time period.
3. The student-athlete and parent/guardian will be notified of the decision. If the athletic coordinator or principal's designee determines a violation exists, the student-athlete will be held accountable to the disciplinary action associated with the violation.

Complaint Procedure

In the event that an athlete or a parent has a complaint about an athletic program, the following procedure will be followed. The purpose of this procedure is to effectively and efficiently deal with challenging athletic issues in a respectful and thorough manner.

- Step One: To promote self-advocacy, athletes are encouraged to set up a meeting with the coaching staff to discuss concerns.
- Step Two: Parents/guardians will set up a mutually convenient meeting time with the coaching staff to discuss the matter.

- Step Three: If the issue of the complaint is unresolved after step one and two, parents and the student athlete will set up a meeting with the Athletic Coordinator.
- Step Four: If the issue of the complaint is still unresolved after the previous steps, a meeting will be set up with the Associate Principal responsible for athletics.

STUDENT-ATHLETE HEALTH AND FITNESS

Concussions

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with the normal function of the brain. Simply stated – a concussion results from an injury to the brain, and there is no such thing as a minor brain injury! Concussions should never be referred to as a “ding” or a “bell-ringer.” Any suspected concussion must be taken very seriously. An athlete does not need to lose consciousness (be “knocked-out”) to suffer a concussion. In fact, less than 5% of concussed athletes suffer a loss of consciousness.

Concussion Management

If an athlete is suspected of having a concussion, they must be immediately removed from that activity. Continuing to play or work out when experiencing concussion symptoms can lead to worsening of symptoms, increased risk for further injury and possibly death. Parents and coaches are not expected to be able to make the diagnosis of a concussion. A medical professional trained in the diagnosis and management of concussions will determine the diagnosis. However, you must be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion. If a parent is suspicious their child has suffered a concussion, the student-athlete must stop activity right away and be evaluated: **When in doubt, sit them out!**

All student-athletes who sustain a concussion need to be evaluated by a healthcare professional who is experienced in concussion management. Parents should call their child’s physician and explain what has happened and follow the physician’s instructions. If a student-athlete is vomiting, has a severe headache, is having difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions, they should be immediately taken to the emergency department.

Return to Play Plan for Concussions

After suffering a concussion, no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day. Previously, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to safely return to activity in such a short time.

Concerns over athletes returning to play too quickly have led state lawmakers in almost all states to pass laws stating that no player shall return to play that day following a concussion, and the athlete must be cleared by an appropriate health-care professional before he or she is allowed to return to play in games or practices. The laws typically also mandate that players, parents and coaches receive education on the dangers and recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion.

Once an athlete no longer has symptoms of a concussion and is cleared for return to play, he or she should proceed with activity in a stepwise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exertion. On average, the athlete will complete a new step each day. An example of a typical return-to-play schedule is shown below:

- Step 1: Back to Regular Activities (such as school) To enter into the stepwise return to play protocol the athlete should first be back to regular activities (such as school) and has been cleared by their appropriate health-care professional to begin the return to play process. In most

all cases, the athlete should have all concussion-related academic adjustments removed prior to beginning the Return to Sports Activity Program

- Step 2: Light aerobic activity, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.
- Step 3: Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
- Step 4: Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight-training can begin.
- Step 5: Full contact practice or training in a controlled setting and monitored by the coach.
- Step 6: Return to competition.

If symptoms of a concussion recur, or if concussion signs and/or behaviors are observed at any time during the return-to-play program, the athlete must discontinue all activity immediately. The athlete may need to be re-evaluated by the appropriate health-care professional or may have to return to the previous step of the return-to-activity program, as pre-determined by the appropriate health-care professional.

More information about concussions can be found from National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC).

[A PARENT'S / GUARDIAN'S GUIDE TO CONCUSSION](#)

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness

Student-athletes and parents/guardians are provided with current and relevant information regarding sudden cardiac arrest as part of the registration for any sport. The student-athlete and the parent/guardian are both required to acknowledge receipt and review of this information at least annually, prior to participation in any sport. The acknowledgment will be kept on file with the student's electronic record.

What is sudden cardiac arrest? Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of students, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in students and adults can be different. A student's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

Any student-athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA must be removed from athletic activity and referred to a licensed healthcare professional trained specifically in the treatment of cardiac care. The symptoms can happen before, during or after activity. Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated. Clearance to return to play must be in writing. The evaluation must be performed and written clearance be provided by a licensed medical provider.

Return to Play Plan for Injuries Other than Concussions

If a student-athlete is injured in a TEMS athletic contest or outside of sports to the extent in which a visit to a healthcare professional is required, then a doctor's note clearly stating the injury and a specific date when they are able to return to the specified sport must be presented to the school nurse

and coach. This includes any urgent care, walk-in, primary care physician, orthopedic or any other specialty doctor. Athletes are not permitted to participate in any practice or game if a doctor's note is not presented to the coach or school nurse prior to returning to the specified sport (this includes physical education class).

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Board that any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of color, race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, or veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. The Board's prohibition of discrimination or harassment in its educational programs or activities expressly extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics. It is also the policy of the Board to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics outlined above.

The full text of all South Windsor Board of Education policies referenced in this handbook is available on the district website: www.southwindsorschools.org/boe