

MIDDLE SCHOOL
PARENT/STUDENT ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK &
CODE OF CONDUCT



BIGFORK SCHOOL DISTRICT #38

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook and code is to inform parents, students, and coaches of proper guidelines, procedures, and policies that are essential for successful programs. Bigfork School District understands that interscholastic athletics are a significant part of the educational process. The combination of academics and athletics enhances the quality of students' lives and expands their options for learning and personal growth. Athletics provide an educational opportunity in which students can learn essential life lessons beyond those that can be learned in an academic classroom.

Our tradition has been to win with honor, to develop young people of character that our community has pride in, on and off the field. We desire to win, but only with honor to our participants, our schools and our community. Such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned.

It is the responsibility of the school administration to apply the guidelines of this handbook within school board policy and standard administrative procedures. All concerns should be addressed through the Activities Director's office either in person or in writing.

Please feel free to call or visit the activities directors with any questions or concerns.

Matt Porrovecchio
Activities Director
406-837-7420

Charlie Appleby
Middle School Principal
406-837-7412

Carol Venegas
Middle School
Activities Coordinator
406-837-7412

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES PHILOSOPHY

A balanced activities program is an essential component in the achievement of the educational goals identified in the basic statement of philosophy for the Bigfork Schools. The activities program should provide opportunities for youth to further develop interests and talents in such areas as speech and debate, drama, journalism, music, student government, and sports. Participation in these activities should provide many students with a lifetime basis for personal values, work and leisure activities.

The opportunity for participation in a wide variety of activities is a vital part of the student's educational experience. Such participation is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the activity, the student body and the community. The development of learning skills and emotional patterns enables the student to make maximum use of his or her education. Knowledge and skills gained in classes may be applied and developed further through participation in the activities program.

Young people learn a great deal from their participation in activities. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation, competition and how to win and lose gracefully are integral parts of all activities. Activities also play an important part in helping the individual student develop a positive self-concept, an alert mind and a chemical-free, healthy body. Competition enhances school spirit and helps spectators, as well as participants, develop pride.

Every effort should be made, within the priorities of the District to support the activities program with quality staff, facilities, and equipment. Advisors, directors and coaches, through leadership and example, should teach the specific skills necessary for improvement in activities and provide guidance in the development of self-esteem, good sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership, ethical behavior, artistic sensitivity and an appreciation for the importance of practice.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Middle School Programs (Developmental Stage): The optimum goals at this stage include teaching fundamentals of the sport, emphasizing sportsmanship and providing equitable practice and game playing time for all participants. Winning can be discussed to build team pride, but should not be stressed as to circumvent the original aforementioned goals.

Sub-Varsity Programs - Junior Varsity, Sophomore and Freshman: The Junior Varsity, Sophomore and Freshmen levels are intended for those students who display the potential for continued development into varsity level performers. Sub-varsity teams are primarily comprised of the underclassmen that their title suggests. Occasionally a younger player will be moved up to a higher level depending on his or her individual skills and abilities and the varsity coaches' discretion.

Squad sizes may vary dependent upon the program. Therefore, cuts may take place. While it is the philosophy of the school to promote broad participation, the reality is that some sports can only provide a quality, safe experience with squad size limitations.

The understanding that practice sessions are critical to individual as well as team success needs to be demonstrated. A specified amount of game playing time is never guaranteed. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for the heavy demands of varsity sports. While practices and contests are rarely conducted on holidays, practices are sometimes scheduled during school vacation periods. With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of commitment is expected at the sub-varsity level.

At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, the team and to continued self-development. Accordingly, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of skills and developing an understanding of strategies associated with the sport. Sub-varsity programs work toward achieving a balance between individual player development and striving for team victory. The final outcome of a contest is a consideration.

Varsity Program: Varsity level competition is the culmination of each sports program. Normally, a squad is comprised of junior and senior athletes. Occasionally a sophomore, and infrequently a freshman, may be included on the team, provided evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate socio-emotional development are demonstrated.

Squad size at the Varsity level may be limited depending upon the sport. The number of participants on any given team is a function of the number needed to conduct effective and meaningful practices as well as to adequately meet the strategic requirements for successfully playing in athletic contests. It is important that each squad member recognize and accept the role that they will serve on the team. The number of roster positions is relative to the student's acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of the team goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specific amount of playing time at the Varsity level is never guaranteed. It is important that both students and parents understand this aspect of varsity competition.

A positive attitude and an advanced level of skill are pre-requisites in order to win a roster spot on a Varsity team. There must also be a realization that Varsity athletics requires a major time commitment. In most sports, a six-day per week regime may be required. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons.

The Varsity coach is the instructional leader for the entire sport program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. Communication among the modified, junior varsity and varsity programs is the responsibility of the Varsity coach. Preparing to compete at a high level, striving for victory in each contest and working to reach the group's maximum potential should be the goals of a Varsity team.

TITLE IX

This is to certify that the Bigfork Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of sex and adheres to the provisions of Title IX and the Settlement Agreement.

The Settlement Agreement deals with sex equity in interscholastic athletics in regard to number of sports offered, coaches, coaching salaries, publicity, team support, scheduling and facilities, laundry facilities, recognition, meals, overnight accommodations, uniforms, equipment and supplies, Booster Club, transportation and officials. Copies of the Settlement Agreement may be obtained from the Activities Director's office.

Matt Porrovecchio, Title IX Coordinator, is responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Settlement Agreement. If you have any questions regarding the provisions of the Settlement Agreement, contact Mr. Hansen or Matt Porrovecchio by calling 837-7420.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all academic and activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior that are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

The concept of sportsmanship is a way of thinking and behaving that must be taught, modeled, expected and reinforced in the classroom and in all competitive activities. Activities are an important aspect of the total educational process in our school. They provide an arena for participants to grow and excel, and to understand and value the concepts of good sportsmanship and teamwork. They are an opportunity for coaches and staff to teach and model sportsmanship, to build school pride, and increase student and community involvement. Ultimately this translates to improved academic performance. All student athletes, in-season or out, are obligated to represent themselves, the team, Bigfork High School, their families and communities with the highest level of sportsmanship.

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS

- During the National Anthem, students are to remove their hats, face the flag and not talk. They are to remain standing until the flag has been removed from the floor.
- Proper language is to be used at all times. No swearing or language which is offensive to others will be tolerated. Individual and group vulgarity is unacceptable, as is taunting, trash talk and other verbal forms of harassment and booing of players, coaches, and officials.
- Obscene gestures are unacceptable.
- Making degrading and/or critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either at the competition site or from the bench, locker area or stands is unacceptable.
- Arguing with officials and/or coaches or going through motions indicating dislike or disdain for a decision is unacceptable.
- Respect is the key to good sportsmanship. Opponents should be respected. They are not enemies but fellow teenagers who happen to attend other schools.
- Be modest and humble in victory or defeat. It is easy to be a good winner. Have the courage to show class when you lose.
- Acts of unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to the following: Actions detrimental to the health, safety, and well being of others; disrespect; insubordination; abusive or improper language; taunting and/or inciting; harassment; hazing; destruction of

school equipment; vandalism; conduct detrimental to the team or school or any other conduct as determined by the coach(es) or administration which could cause embarrassment or criticism to the team and/or school, or which is inconsistent with a student-athletes position as a leader and role model.

PENALTY: Disciplinary action for improper conduct described in this section is based upon the severity of each case. Examples of discipline for behavioral infractions include, but are not limited to the following: a conference involving the student athlete with his/her coach and/or school officials and/or parents to resolve the issue; suspension from practices and/or contests; suspension from the team for the remainder of the season; suspension from athletic participation for a longer period of time in the event of severe or recurring infractions; suspension from athletic participation pending a resolution with school officials; withholding of athletic letter/award; monetary restitution for vandalism and/or destruction or loss of property; hours of school-based community service.

DISTRICT EXPECTATIONS

Bigfork School District believes that an activities program provides an opportunity for students to acquire tools for lifelong personal growth and fulfillment of potential. These tools include self discipline, ability to work as a part of a team, perseverance, desire to play fair, and grace in winning and losing. Furthermore, lifelong participation in physical activity is valuable for physical and mental health and fitness.

In order to provide the greatest benefit to participants, Bigfork School District will provide adult role models who exemplify the kind of behavior and leadership to be developed from the program. The District also commits to provide, within limits of available resources, the broadest range of competitive programs for all who wish to participate.

While the District takes great pride in winning, we do not condone “winning at any cost” and discourage any and all pressures that lead to poor sportsmanship and neglect good physical and mental health. At all times, the activities program will be conducted in a way that is complementary and supportive of the educational program of Bigfork School District.

EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES

PARTICIPATION

Activities are voluntary. Participation is not required, thus, being part of an extra curricular program is a privilege that must be earned and not a right.

ACTIVITIES AS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Activities are just one of many parts of the education program that is provided students. The reason students are in school is to learn; therefore academics will always come first. Maintaining academic eligibility is the student’s responsibility, not that of coaches or teacher. Eligibility can be lost because of poor attendance, sportsmanship, or citizenship. Participating in activities and being on a team may mean sacrifices. The commitment a student makes to his/her team and coach requires that choices be made and priorities kept.

BEING A PART OF THE TEAM

Students learn many skills by participating in their chosen activity but the most important skill that must be learned is teamwork. To be successful, every member of the team must work together to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

COME READY TO PLAY

Students should come to practice on time, ready to listen and ready to learn. Students should be prepared physically and mentally for the season. This includes training in the pre-season and taking care of your body and mind during the season and off-season.

CONDUCT ON AND OFF THE PLAYING ARENA

On The Field	Students are respectful towards their teammates, coaches, opponents, fans, and officials. They play by the rules of the game at all times.
On Campus	Students set an example of good citizenship. They help promote school spirit and they should strive to be positive leaders in school activities.
In The Classroom	Students show respect for teachers and fellow students. Students should be in class on time and ready to learn.
At All Times	Students represent their team, school, and community. Students should be conscious of their appearance and manners at all times.

EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES

ROLE MODELING

Because coaches' lives are open to public scrutiny, coaches should use good judgment in conducting their private and public lives.

Because impressionable youth many times imitate the actions of their coaches, these coaches should model exemplary behavior on and off the field/court, and encourage their students to do the same. Coaches should instill in the students that they are representing not only their school but also their families and community as well.

PROFESSIONALISM

- Coaches' behavior on and off the arena should exemplify leadership, composure, discipline and integrity.
- Coaches should allow every student a fair and equal opportunity to try out for the team without prejudgment based on prior experiences.
- Coaches should use caution and common sense in any physical contact with their athletes.
- Coaches will support not only their program, but the other school sponsored programs as well.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH ATHLETES

- Coaches should communicate in a positive manner even when correcting or criticizing a student.

- Coaches should emphasize team loyalty and effort, stressing the value of each individual's contribution toward the success of the team.
- Coaches should assist students in setting realistic goals, then achieving them, one at a time.
- Coaches should help each student achieve her/his personal best.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENT

Coaches should have a meeting prior to the season:

- To inform parents, orally and in writing, of practice hours and the schedule of games and tournaments.
- To discuss with parents the various roles they might play in assisting in their student's success.
- Coaches should be open and available to discuss a student's progress with her/his parent.

TEACHING SKILLS AND CONDITIONING

- Coaches should be knowledgeable of and well trained in the teaching of skills of the sport.
- Coaches should physically condition their athletes before each season and teach techniques that enhance a student's safety as well as that of an opponent.
- Coaches should stress the necessity of a student to be in their best physical condition as a responsibility to themselves as well as to their team.

PRIORITIES OF LIFE

- Coaches should remember that activities are only part of a student's life and must be kept in a realistic balance with the demands of academics and one's family.
- Coaches should teach the student to win with a sense of accomplishment and with humility and to lose without excuses.

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENT

- Coaches should prepare themselves as students of the game.
- Coaches should be positive and enthusiastic.
- Coaches should develop a program that will attract students to the sport.
- Coaches should make the sport competitively fun.

STUDENT SAFETY

Coaches are responsible for student safety and welfare. This includes physical activities and proper supervision. During physical activity, make sure that the athletes are getting plenty of fluids. Coaches are not to leave students unsupervised at any time.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

KEEPING ACTIVITIES IN PERSPECTIVE

- Emphasize that academics always come first.
- Assist the student to structure time wisely so that activities do not interfere with academics.
- Use activities as a way to teach your children how to react and interact with other people during tense situations. Help your student understand that ability varies with body maturity and that effort is just as important as natural ability.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT

- Keep in mind that it is your child's team and competitive event and that he/she needs a supportive parent when returning home.
- Encourage participation by both girls and boys. Allow the student to select the sport based on her/his perceived ability and likes. Provide a pressure free environment regarding scholarship expectations.
- Be supportive of your child; see that her/his medical needs are met; see that she/he has proper equipment; attend as many of your child's contests as possible.
- Stress the importance of the complete athlete, both mental and physical preparation.
- Do not emphasize "quitting" as the best way to solve problems, but rather perseverance.

SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM

- Be supportive of the coaching staff. Go to all meetings requested by coaches. Being on a successful team is important to your child. Support the coaches' preparation plan. Talk to your child frequently about how things are going with her/his activity. Make arrangements to talk to the coaches privately and early about perceived problems.
- During the season, take into consideration practice and games when planning family events.
- Understand the needs of the particular activity. Some take more equipment, some take more time, and others call for some year-around preparation.
- Support the District Policy of no alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco.
- Model positive behavior toward everyone involved in the events as described in the Sportsmanship Expectations.

BIGFORK SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTIVITY CODE

Bigfork School students who participate in inter-school athletics or activities such as speech, debate, drama, music, or cheerleading, or represent the school during activities outside the school are subject to the following regulations throughout the school calendar year.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The Board of Trustees now has a policy which allows us to search a student's bags before departure on trips. We will do some searches on single events and will check baggage on all overnight trips.

TRAINING RULES—Alcohol/Drug/Tobacco

All violations of established training rules will follow the student throughout his/her school career (grades 7-12), regardless of the participant's activity. The rules are in effect from the

first day of the activity until the end of the season. The “season” is defined as the first official day of practice through the last day (midnight) of the State Championship event for said activity per the MHSA schedule. Whether or not our team is participating in the state tournament/championship has no bearing on this handbook's definition of a “season.” Students will not be allowed to attend any gathering or function (whether or not school-related) where illegal drugs and/or alcohol are present. Non-compliance with this prohibition will invoke all of the stated consequences for disciplinary actions. Should a student(s) attend a gathering or function without prior knowledge that illegal drugs and/or alcohol are present and subsequently learn that illegal drugs and/or alcohol are present: the student(s) must leave the gathering or function immediately. If student(s) remains at such gathering or function after having knowledge that illegal drugs and/or alcohol are present, student(s) will be subject to disciplinary actions.

RULE #1

Participants will not use, be party to the use of, or have in their possession, buy/sell or give away tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or any other substance defined by the law as an illegal drug.

PENALTY: Students who violate Rule #1 will be suspended from all activities until a hearing with the Principal is conducted. If the student is found to be in violation of the rule:

- **FIRST TIME:** The student will be suspended for eleven (11) school days from all activities. The student will be allowed to practice, but will not participate in any interscholastic events during that time. The severity and circumstances of the case could forfeit the student's ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport.
- **SECOND TIME:** The student will be suspended for thirty (30) school days from all activities. The student must attend and complete an approved chemical dependency program at parent expense. The student will be allowed to practice, but not participate in any interscholastic event during that time. Student will forfeit the ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport and, based on the severity and circumstances of the case, could forfeit the ability to be selected to the Bigfork High School Wall of Fame.
- **THIRD TIME:** The student will be suspended from all activities for the remainder of his/her school career. Student will forfeit the ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport and ability to be selected to the Bigfork High School Wall of Fame.

Hosts of Parties Lose the Most: There may be a greater consequence for an extracurricular participant if it is determined they are involved in the organization, facilitation, promotion, or hosting of any gathering or social event where alcohol or drugs were known to be available or used.

RULE #2

Participants will not violate any school rules resulting in any type of school suspension.

PENALTY:

- **FIRST TIME:** Students will not participate in activities for the length of the school suspension. This means no practice, traveling, or participation of any kind. Student may forfeit the ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport.

- **SECOND TIME:** Students will be suspended from all activities for forty-five (45) school days. Student will forfeit the ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport and may forfeit the ability to be selected to the Bigfork High School Wall of Fame.

RULE #3

Participants must be in attendance for at least five (5) classes during the day of practice or the day of a contest or the Friday before a single Saturday event. Attendance is defined as a minimum of five periods. This rule excludes all excused absences as defined by Montana state law. The participant must notify coach/sponsor/advisor and the principal in advance, and present a note from the doctor on return to school. Students must also be present for the start of school on the day following a mid-week contest unless otherwise arranged with the principal.

PENALTY: The student will not participate in the next practice/event/game, nor travel with the activity group.

RULE #4

On all trips, all students will travel together on the transportation provided for them by the School

PENALTY: Students not following the proper check out process will not participate in the next contest.

*** All school rules as defined in the student handbook and School Board Policies apply to students engaged in the activities program. The non-school conduct rule also applies:

NON-SCHOOL CONDUCT RULE: A student may be disciplined, suspended, or expelled from District 38 schools for conduct/behavior that has a direct and/or immediate effect on the discipline or general welfare of District 38 schools. Violations of Federal, State, or local law, are included in this rule.

PENALTY:

- **FIRST TIME:** May include, but not limited to, forfeiture of ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport, forfeiture of the ability to be selected to the Bigfork High School Wall of Fame, and removal from team.
- **SECOND TIME:** Will include, but not limited to, forfeiture of ability to earn a varsity letter in the given sport. May forfeit the ability to be selected to the Bigfork High School Wall of Fame, removal from team, and possible suspension from all activities for the remainder of his/her school career.

GENERAL TRAVEL RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Coaches will remind students/athletes to let their parents know where the games will be played, game times and approximate return times.

CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

As student athletes, you are representing your team, school, community, parents, and most importantly ---YOURSELF.

APPEARANCE

You must be proud of your appearance by dressing neatly and keeping well groomed.

LANGUAGE

Profanity will not be tolerated at any time.

RELEASE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS/DESIGNATED ADULT

Athletes shall ride to and from all contests on school provided transportation. In special instances, athletes may ride to an event with a parent or approved adult. Approval for these instances must be made, in writing, with Mrs. Venegas **at least three days prior to the trip.**

Students may be checked out from a road event by their parents by signing with the coaching staff. A parent may only take their child unless prior arrangements have been made with High School administration at least three days before the trip.

Follow checkout procedure Rule #4 of the Bigfork School District Activity Code.

Under no circumstances is a student released to another student driving a vehicle. Students will only be released to parents, guardians, or designated adult.

MEALS

In some instances, the team may stop for either a pre-game or post-game meal. Please be prepared by either having the appropriate meal money or bringing your own snacks/meal. Athletes are expected to stay together as a group.

EXPECTED RETURN TIME

In order to avoid parent/guardian concern, please advise your parents/guardian of the approximate return time along with where the bus will unload. Please have your parents either waiting for you at school or expecting a phone call from you upon return to the school. The coach will let you have access to a telephone. Also, stay in the well-lighted area near the front of the foyer. The coach is responsible for supervision until the parents arrive.

PROPER BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

Rules are established for the safety and well-being of others.

WEATHER

The decision to run or not to run a bus during inclement weather will be made by the administration and the transportation supervisor after carefully assessing the most current reports on road conditions. The safety of the passengers will be sole consideration.

The driver will retain absolute veto power and will have the final say on whether a trip should be made.

When the temperature is below 0°F it will be necessary that all passengers have suitable warm weather clothing, including a hat, coat and gloves.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXTRA CURRICULUR ELIGIBILITY

As stated in School Board Policy, a Bigfork student must meet the following standards to participate in extracurricular activities:

- A student must be enrolled in a minimum of 7 classes

ELIGIBILITY REVIEWS

Students ruled ineligible (D or lower grade) and placed in Study Backs will be placed on probation and not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities or practices unless the student agrees to and meets the requirements of the following:

- Attend mandatory study time (before school or after school), a total of Two (2) one hour study sessions each week. Available Wednesday Morning (7:00-8:00), or Tuesday and Thursday after school (3:00-4:00).
- If the grade in question is brought back up at any time the student is eligible to play.
- Not attending the required study sessions results in ineligible status
- If a student fails to complete study-backs for one week, they will continue to be ineligible the following week unless their grade has improved above a D.

ATTENDANCE ON DAYS OF ACTIVITIES

Students are required to be at **five** periods the day of a game or the Friday before a Saturday game. The exception to this is when the bus leaves for a road contest before the end of 5th period. In this case, a student must be at school for all of school until the bus leaves. If a student has senior privilege in the morning, they only have to attend the classes they are enrolled in. It is the responsibility of the coach or sponsor to enforce this rule. A list of all participants in an extracurricular activity must be turned in to the principal's office prior to the activity. Exceptions to this will be verified excused absences as defined by Montana state law.

Students must be present for the start of school on the day following a midweek game unless otherwise arranged with the principal.

COACHES

RECRUITMENT OF COACHES

The recruiting of coaches is an ongoing process. The activities director, school principal, and school board activities liaison work together to hire the best person for the given position. It is the responsibility of the activities director to give support and direction to the new coach.

HIRING PROCESS

The following hiring process will be followed:

1. All openings will be advertised in-house for five days. After five days, opening(s) will be advertised in the local newspaper until filled.
2. All applicants must fill out District application form.
3. For head coach position: the hiring committee (principal, activities director, and school board activities liaison) will use the following procedure:
 - Review all applications and make background checks
 - Select applicants for interview

- Interview applicants
- Select an applicant and recommend to superintendent for hire
- Superintendent will submit recommendation to the Board of Trustees for hire

For assistant and middle school coaches: The head coach of that sport with the support of the activities director will work to select coaches from members of the school and community.

INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

All informal complaints of a minor nature should first be dealt with between player and coach. If this does not work or an understanding is not reached, the parent and coach should meet. If either of the initial meetings are not satisfactory or deemed too contentious to begin with, the activities director can sit in to oversee the discussion between the concerned parties. The activities director will document the complaint and work with the concerned parties to remedy the complaint and/or reach an understanding of position.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

All formal complaints of a serious nature that may result in disciplinary action concerning school personnel must follow school board policy 4310 and procedure 4310P. Required information (in writing) is as follows:

1. The name(s) of the person making the complaint.
2. Whether the person(s) making the complaint represents an individual or a group.
3. Whether the person(s) making the complaint has discussed the problem with the employee in question.
4. Whether the person(s) making the complaint has discussed the problem with the immediate supervising administrator.
5. A summary of the complaint(s) and of the above three items.

The school personnel against whom a complaint is filed will receive a copy of the complaint and have the opportunity to respond in writing.



CONCUSSION INFORMATION

A Fact Sheet for ATHLETES

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

- **Get a medical checkup.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:

- > The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
- > Worn correctly and fit well
- > Used every time you play

Remember, when in doubt, sit them out!
It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

A Fact Sheet for PARENTS



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.

2. Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.



Remember, when in doubt, sit them out!
It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

Be Prepared

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. So, all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appears dazed or stunned •Is confused about events •Answers questions slowly •Repeats questions •Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall •Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall •Loses consciousness (even briefly) •Shows behavior or personality changes •Forgets class schedule or assignments 	<p><u>Thinking/Remembering:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Difficulty thinking clearly •Difficulty concentrating or remembering •Feeling more slowed down •Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy <p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headache or “pressure” in head •Nausea or vomiting •Balance problems or dizziness •Fatigue or feeling tired •Blurry or double vision •Sensitivity to light or noise •Numbness or tingling •Does not “feel right” 	<p><u>Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Irritable •Sad •More emotional than usual •Nervous <p><u>Sleep*:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Drowsy •Sleeps less than usual •Sleeps more than usual •Has trouble falling asleep <p><i>*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.</i></p>

LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

- CDC –Concussion in Sports
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>
- National Federation of State High School Association/ Concussion in Sports - What You Need To Know
 - www.nfhslearn.com
- Montana High School Association – Sports Medicine Page
 - <http://www.mhsa.org/SportsMedicine/SportsMed.htm>



STUDENT-ATHLETE & PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONCUSSION STATEMENT

Because of the passage of the Dylan Steiger’s Protection of Youth Athletes Act, schools are required to distribute information sheets for the purpose of informing and educating student-athletes and their parents of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury to student athletes, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or head injury. Montana law requires that each year, before beginning practice for an organized activity, a student-athlete and the student-athlete’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must be given an information sheet, and both parties must sign and return a form acknowledging receipt of the information to an official designated by the school or school district prior to the student-athletes participation during the designated school year. The law further states that a student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from play at the time of injury and may not return to play until the student-athlete has received a written clearance from a licensed health care provider.

Student-Athlete Name: _____

This form must be completed for each student-athlete, even if there are multiple student-athletes in each household.

Parent/Legal Guardian Name(s): _____

We have read the *Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Information Sheet*.

If true, please check box

After reading the information sheet, I am aware of the following information:

Student-Athlete Initials		Parent/Legal Guardian Initials
	A concussion is a brain injury, which should be reported to my parents, my coach(es), or a medical professional if one is available.	
	A concussion can affect the ability to perform everyday activities such as the ability to think, balance, and classroom performance.	
	A concussion cannot be “seen.” Some symptoms might be present right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after an injury.	
	I will tell my parents, my coach, and/or a medical professional about my injuries and illnesses.	N/A
	If I think a teammate has a concussion, I should tell my coach(es), parents, or licensed health care professional about the concussion.	N/A
	I will not return to play in a game or practice if a hit to my head or body causes any concussion-related symptoms.	N/A
	I will/my child will need written permission from a licensed health care professional to return to play or practice after a concussion.	
	After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that I am/my child is much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before concussion symptoms go away.	
	Sometimes, repeat concussions can cause serious and long-lasting problems.	
	I have read the concussion symptoms on the Concussion fact sheet.	

Signature of Student-Athlete

Date

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding

Participation on Bigfork School extracurricular activities are an integral part of the curriculum, which is a privilege and should elicit great pride in both the student and his/her family. While our number one goal as a school district is to provide a sound academic experience for all of our students, extracurricular activities provide unique opportunities for students to promote their mental, physical, social and emotional development. Extracurricular participants who comply with this handbook and code of conduct demonstrate a desire to dedicate themselves to self-improvement as well as to enhance the best interests of fellow teammates, advisors/coaches and school. If accepted, this privilege carries certain responsibilities, and this handbooks and code presents these responsibilities.

Parent/Guardian:

By signing this document, I (print) _____ parent/guardian, indicate that I have knowledge, understanding and agreement to these standards, set forth in order for my son/daughter _____ to be afforded the privilege of representing Bigfork Schools as a participant in a extracurricular activity. I am also aware that any violation on the part of my child, to any of these standards, shall result in the consequences contained within this policy.

Parent /Guardian Signature

Date

Extracurricular Participant/Student:

By signing this document, I (print) _____ extracurricular participant, indicate that I have knowledge, understanding and agreement to these standards, set forth in order for me to be afforded the privilege of representing Bigfork Schools as a participant in a extracurricular activity. I am also aware that any violation to any of these standards shall result in the consequences contained within this policy.

Student Signature

Date

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND DETACH THIS PAGE AND RETURN TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE
YOUR SON/DAUGHTER ATTENDS PRIOR TO THE FIRST COMPETITION**

STUDENTS CAN NOT COMPETE UNTIL THIS FORM IS ON FILE

A SEPARATE FORM MUST COMPLETED FOR EACH STUDENT