

Little Miami Schools

Athletic Department



HANDBOOK

2020-2021 Athlete/Parent Editions

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DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED – No person in the Little Miami School District, shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

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Introduction

The Little Miami School District Athletic Code is established under the authority of the Board of Education. The purpose of the Athletic Code is to establish standards of academic performance and behavior for students, parents and fans involved in interscholastic athletic programs and the penalties for failure to meet the standards. The privilege of being permitted to participate in the

Little Miami School District athletic program is subject to compliance with these standards. Little Miami School District interscholastic athletic programs are affiliated with the Ohio High School Athletic Association (O.H.S.A.A.) and the Southwest Ohio Conference (SWOC). The standards of this code meet or exceed the standards of the O.H.S.A.A. Reference: "Handbook of the Ohio High School Athletic Association for Junior High/Middle Schools and Senior High Schools."

Any student enrolled in Little Miami Schools (grades 7-12) who meets the academic eligibility requirements for participation in athletic activities may tryout for any interscholastic sport. All student-athletes in grades 7-12 are held to the policies and procedures of this athletic handbook, in conjunction with the student handbooks of LMHS and LMJH.

Athletes are defined as:

- Those students who are trying out for an interscholastic team by reporting to practice.
- Members of any athletic team.
- Team managers.
- Cheerleaders

The athlete is subject to all provisions of the code effective the date written verification that the code will be followed is signed and turned in to the proper administration office. **The athlete is subject to the code at all times and places whether school is in session or not for 12 calendar months from the date of signature.**

The athlete and their parents shall be informed of the Athletic Code prior to participation in the high school athletic program. No athlete shall be allowed to practice unless an athletic code is signed by both the athlete and parent/guardian on FinalForms.

Consequences to violations of policies contained in this document are cumulative throughout the athlete's career.

The athletic department offers the following activities:

High School Men's Activities

Academic Lacrosse
Baseball Soccer
Basketball Swimming/Dive
Bowling Tennis
Cross Country Track and Field
Football Wrestling
Golf

Junior High Boys' Activities

Basketball
Cross Country
Football
Wrestling
Track and Field

High School Women's Activities

Academic Soccer
Basketball Softball
Bowling Swimming/Dive
Cheerleading Tennis
Cross Country Track and Field
Golf Volleyball
Lacrosse

Junior High Girls' Activities

Basketball
Cheerleading
Cross Country
Track and Field
Volleyball

II. Message to Parents of Student-Athletes

This handbook is presented to you because your son/daughter/ward has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete. It is our belief that participation in athletic activities will provide opportunities and experiences to assist the student athlete in personal growth.

The Little Miami School District is very proud of the wide variety of opportunities for athletic participation. These opportunities are believed to be a critical part of a student's total development as they assist in the building of positive character and leadership traits. It is the department's hope to maintain a properly controlled, well-organized sports program and a program that is sound in purpose and will further each student athlete's educational maturity.

Likewise, it is felt that as the student-athlete and as the parent, you have committed yourself to certain responsibilities and obligations. It is the athletic department's intent through this handbook to acquaint you with policies that are necessary for an organized program of athletics.

Keith Pantling
Athletic Director

III. Little Miami Schools Athletic Philosophy & Goals

We at Little Miami School District take pride in athletics as a continuance of the educational curriculum. It is extremely important that our athletes are students first, and that they are expected to put their grades first, understanding that missing a scheduled practice for a make-up quiz, extra help, etc., will always be an excused absence.

Since our athletes and their guardians represent their school and community wherever they go, they must have a clear understanding that participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right, which requires added responsibility and sacrifice. **Student athletes are in a highly visible setting of leadership and/or competition/performance. Therefore, student athletes will be held to a higher accountability of conduct and behavior than the student who chooses neither to participate nor to represent Little Miami Schools.** Our goal is to succeed while maintaining exemplary educational and behavioral standards for our athletes, parents and fans.

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles:

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Good Citizenship

The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these six pillars of character. The Little Miami Athletic department strives to emphasize the importance of academics, athletics and these positive character traits, which we believe to be critical to a student's total development.

Little Miami requires a partnership with parents/guardians/fans to support this development of our student athletes and to further the message of good character. Please see the Parent/Guardian/Fan Code of Conduct (p. 15) for an explanation on how this can be achieved.

IV. Code of Conduct

The Little Miami School District Athletic Department believes that interscholastic competition involving member schools of the Ohio High School Athletic Association should be governed by the basic principles of good sportsmanship.

1. Respect should be demonstrated for an athletic opponent and for their school at all times. Visiting schools should respect the property and dignity of their host school and its athletic teams.
2. Respect should be demonstrated for the officials at all times.
3. Knowledge of and a proper respect for the current rules of the contest should guide the behavior of all participants. Rules are essential for a fair contest.
4. All participants should strive to maintain self-control at all times.
5. All participants should learn to recognize and appreciate skill in performance regardless of affiliation. Recognition of the good performance of an opponent is a demonstration of generosity and good will that is encouraged in all member schools.

Athletes

Because athletes are admired and respected, they exert a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of the spectators. It is important that players:

- Treat opponents with the respect that is due them as guests and as fellow athletes.
- Exercise self-control at all times, accepting the judgment of the officials as just that, the best judgment they could make given what they know and see.
- Accept both victory and defeat with pride and compassion. Congratulate opponents in sincere manner following either victory or defeat.

Athletes should avoid the following inappropriate behaviors:

- Use of profanity.
- Ejection from contests.
- Berating officials or fellow athletes.
- Inciting spectators and/or other athletes to inappropriate behavior.
- Leaving the bench area when not competing or becoming involved in any type of altercation.

It should be noted that coaches and athletes ejected from interscholastic athletic contests will be accountable to the disciplinary procedure in the bylaws of the Ohio High School Athletic Association as printed in the Association's handbook. Further action above and beyond this may be invoked by the school administration.

Cheerleaders

Cheerleaders are representatives of the student body. By setting a good example, the cheerleaders can influence and control the actions of the student spectators. They should:

- Establish standards of desirable behavior in keeping with the fundamentals of good sportsmanship for the cheerleaders and student spectators.

- Use positive cheers to encourage their own team without demeaning their opponents. Use discretion in deciding when to cheer and which cheers to use.
- Never attempt to distract opposing players or in any way interfere with their performance. Serve as hosts for visiting cheerleaders.

Spectators

Partisan spectators by their behaviors and reactions determine to a large extent the reputation for sportsmanship of their school. Spectators should keep in mind that athletes are friendly rivals as members of opposing interscholastic teams. Spectators should be reminded too, that the contest should be between the teams and athletes engaged in the competition and not between their supporters. It is important that all spectators:

- Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
- Respect, cooperate, and respond enthusiastically to the cheerleaders, coaches, and athletes of all teams.
- Censure fellow spectators whose behavior is inappropriate.
- Be positive toward players and coaches regardless of the outcome of the contest.
- Respect the judgment and the professionalism of the officials and coaches.

Spectators should avoid the following inappropriate behaviors:

- Verbal/physical abuse of contest officials
- Berating athletes, coaches, officials, or other spectators with chants, signs, or cheers.
- Interruption of contests by throwing objects, entering the area of competition or becoming involved in disruptive behavior.

We believe that each participant should be committed to upholding the ideals of good sportsmanship put forth in this document. In this spirit, it should be understood, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken when incidents of inappropriate behavior occur.

Any parent, guardian, or fan deemed to be conducting him/herself in an improper manner at any game or practice will be asked to leave the sports facility. Repeat violations may cause a multiple game suspension, or the season forfeiture of the privilege of attending all games.

USE, SALES OR POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, OR ILLEGAL DRUGS IS PROHIBITED.

It is the belief of the Little Miami School District and its Athletic Department that there is no such thing as responsible use of controlled substances/mood-altering chemicals, alcohol, tobacco, or vape pens by any high school student. Any use of controlled substances/mood-altering drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vape pens by student athletes will not be tolerated.

Beginning with the date that the athlete and parent(s) sign the Code of Conduct Pledge, the policies will be in effect for the athlete for one calendar year. There is no “off season” as far as adherence to the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy is concerned. Violations of which will lead to a denial of participation and/or removal from the Little Miami School District athletic program.

Cumulative accountability throughout the athlete’s interscholastic career will run from grades nine through twelve. For example, a violation during the ninth grade followed by a violation during eleventh grade will constitute a second offense.

A student athlete is prohibited from possessing, using, concealing, or displaying signs of having used drugs/look alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and/or vape pens.

Drug/Look Alike Drug and Alcohol Policy:

First Offense: The penalty will be an immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for the duration of the current school year. However, the penalty may be commuted to a 20% *¹ denial of participation of scheduled contests for that sport, if the student (a) fulfills the requirements (a minimum of 3 hours) as established by the Athletic Department, and (b) submits evidence to the coach or athletic director that an assessment has been made or scheduled with a Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Center that has been approved by the Athletic Department. The student must complete all the requirements of the intervention program; failure to do so will result in immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for the duration of the school year.

If a Drug/Look Alike Drug/Alcohol Abuse Policy violation occurs after completion of the athlete's sporting season, but during the effective calendar year of policy coverage, the athlete must fulfill all facets of the program of reinstatement before his/her next sporting season. If it is a first offense, the athlete will be denied participation for 20% of the next season's interscholastic contests.

Student athletes under the denial of participation penalty for an "out of season" violation will be permitted to try out for an interscholastic team. If the student makes the team, the 20% denial of participation penalty will be enforced once the regular competition season begins.

If the athlete is a multi-sport athlete and the first offense occurs with less than 20% of the regular season contests remaining, the outstanding percentage of the contest penalty will be carried over to the next season of participation.

If the athlete chooses to try out for another sport in an attempt to satisfy the denial of participation percentage, the athlete must successfully complete the season by definition of the OHSAA official start and end dates.

If the violation occurs near the end of the sport season a student athlete may be prohibited from attending the awards program for their sport. This decision will be left to the discretion of the athletic director.

Students under denial of participation for Drug/Look Alike Drug/Alcohol Policy violations may practice and travel with the team but not dress for any interscholastic contests.

Second Offense: The second offense penalty will be enforced regardless of the time interval between the first and second offense. If a second violation occurs the penalty will be an immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year. However, the penalty may be commuted to 80 school days (which may carry over into the next school year) and a 20%* denial of participation of scheduled contests in the next sport that the student athlete participates, if the student (a) fulfills the requirements (a minimum of 3 hours) as established by the Athletic Department, and (b) submits evidence to the coach or athletic director that an assessment has been made or scheduled with the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Center that has been approved by the Athletic Department. The student must complete all the requirements of the intervention program; failure to do so will result in immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year.

Second offenses may be any combination of drug, alcohol, or tobacco abuse violations. For example: one alcohol violation plus one tobacco violation equals a second offense and the consequences as defined under

¹ *In calculating the 20% denial, all decimals will be rounded up. For example, a student who violates in volleyball (22 games scheduled) would be $22 \times .20 = 4.4$, which rounds up to 5 games denied. Also, penalties will carry over into the next sports season until the 20% denial is completed.

policy guidelines.

If the second offense occurs after the end of the athlete's season but prior to the awards program, the athlete will be denied participation in the awards program and will not receive interscholastic awards.

Third Offense: If a third incident occurs during the student's high school career, the penalty will be an immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year.

Tobacco and Vape Pen Usage/Possession

It is the belief of the Little Miami School District and its Athletic Department that there is no such thing as responsible use of controlled substances/mood-altering chemicals, alcohol, tobacco, or vape pens by any high school student. Any use of controlled substances/mood-altering drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vape pens by student athletes will not be tolerated.

Beginning with the date that the athlete and parent(s) sign the Code of Conduct Pledge, the policies will be in effect for the athlete for one calendar year. There is no "off season" as far as adherence to the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy is concerned. Violations of which will lead to a denial of participation and/or removal from the Little Miami School District athletic program.

Cumulative accountability throughout the athlete's interscholastic career will run from grades nine through twelve. For example, a violation during the ninth grade followed by a violation during eleventh grade will constitute a second offense.

A student athlete is prohibited from possessing, using, concealing, or displaying signs of having used drugs/look alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and/or vape pens.

First Offense:

The student-athlete cannot participate in the next scheduled contest of the current sport season. If the season concludes prior to the completion of the obligation, the period of ineligibility will be met in the next sport season that the student-athlete participates in.

Second Offense:

The student-athlete cannot participate in the next scheduled 20% of contests of the current sport season. If the season concludes prior to the completion of the obligation, the period of ineligibility will be met in the next sport season that the student-athlete participates in.

Third Offense:

The student-athlete is immediately removed and denied participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year. However, the penalty may be commuted to 80 school days (which may carry over to the next school year) if the student (a) fulfills the requirements (minimum of three hours) as established by the Athletic Department, and (b) submits evidence to the athletic director that an assessment has been made or scheduled with the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Center that has been approved by the Athletic Department. The student-athlete must complete all of the requirements of the intervention program; failure to do so will result in immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year.

Fourth Offense:

The penalty will be immediate denial of participation from all athletic activities for one calendar year.

Self Referrals: An athlete, who feels that he or she has a substance abuse problem, may personally report this circumstance to the athletic director, coach or a member of the school teaching staff. The athlete must submit to a professional assessment and undergo three substance abuse counseling sessions, but may continue to participate in athletics. All self-referral information will remain confidential. If the assessment indicates treatment, the athlete must follow through with the program to remain on the team. Parent(s) may

also make referrals on their own student athletes. Procedurally, parent referrals will be treated as self-referrals.

A self-referral or a parent referral cannot be made in an attempt to circumvent an active investigation into a Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy violation. One “self-referral” is permitted during an athlete’s interscholastic career at Little Miami. A “self-referral” counts as the first substance abuse violation. A second subsequent violation of the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy will result in a denial of participation for one calendar year.

Self referrals cannot be made when there has been evidence of police intervention surrounding a violation of the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Policy.

Infractions: An infraction must be observed by a teacher, coach, chaperone, school administrator, school board member or any member of a law enforcement agency. A statement of admission by the student athlete or his/her parents will be considered an infraction.

Financial responsibility for all professional assessment and counseling sessions lies with the parent(s) of the student athlete.

Positions of leadership (i.e. captain) are forfeited by violation of the Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco policy.

It is the student athlete’s responsibility to communicate with the athletic director concerning all aspects related to the completion of the reinstatement criteria.

Selling of Alcohol or Controlled Substances

First Offense: A Student athlete will be denied the privilege of participating in the interscholastic program and practices for one calendar year from the date of the infraction.

Second Offense: A second offense involving the sale of alcohol or controlled substances will result in a permanent denial of participation in Little Miami’s athletic program.

V. Procedures for Registering a Concern

As your child becomes involved in the programs at Little Miami Schools, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his/her life. As parents, when your child becomes involved in an athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on you and your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team to both you and your child.

Communication you and your child should expect from your child's coach.

- Philosophy of the coaching staff.
- Behavioral expectations the coach has for your child as well as all members on the squad.
- Location and time for all practices and contests scheduled.
- Team requirements (i.e. fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning).
- Discipline which results in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication coaches expect from athletes and parents.

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

It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child may wish. **At these times, the athlete should approach the coach first to express his/her concerns.** Part

of the education in athletics is being able to address concerns with the appropriate people. If a satisfactory understanding is not reached between the coach and student then the parent may intervene on the student's behalf.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches.

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches.

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

Steps for Registering a Concern:

A. Step No. 1 - Direct Conversation

If a parent (complainant) has a disagreement or misunderstanding with a coach, the complainant should address the concern to the specific coach directly involved with the circumstances surrounding the concern. The coach will meet with the parent as soon as possible, but in no case longer than five calendar days after the coach has been notified of the concern (subject to change by mutual agreement).

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

If your concern is with a sub-varsity coach, start with the source. The next level of communication than would be with the varsity coach for the sport/program.

B. Step No. 2 - Fact and Possible Resolution

If the complainant or the coach is not satisfied with the outcome of Step No. 1, or the complainant or coach is unwilling to meet independent of an administrator, a meeting with the coach and/or athletic director and complainant will be arranged at a mutually convenient time, but in no case more than five calendar days after the meeting in Step No. 1. This step is to be informal and verbal. No further action will be taken beyond Step No. 2 unless the complainant submits in writing a signed and dated statement of facts giving rise to this concern, the name of the coach involved and the remedy sought.

C. Step No. 3 - Formal Process

If a complainant's concern is not satisfactorily resolved at either the first or second level, the complainant should then refer this concern to the principal in writing. At that time another meeting will be arranged at the convenience of the complainant and coach directly concerned, but in no case more than ten calendar days (subject to change by mutual agreement). The coach has the right to be at all meetings with or without a representative as he/she so determines.

D. Dispositions

Dispositions at Step 3 will be sent in writing to all parties within ten calendar days of the meeting with reasons stated.

E. Decision

The decision of the principal is considered final. Students will be further informed that participation in interscholastic sports is a privilege and not a right, and that they may be prohibited from all or part of their participation in such activities by authorized school personnel without further notice, hearing and/or appeal rights.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole, a Board member as an individual, the Superintendent, Principal or other administrator, it will be referred to the appropriate building administrator. A coach who is the object of a complaint will be informed promptly.

VI. Requirements for Participation

As a student athlete enrolled in Little Miami Schools, you are not eligible to participate in any sport until the following items have been completed:

- OHSAA Pre-participation Physical Evaluation Form: *Download and print form from Final Forms and have physician complete, and submit to coach or Athletic office.*

Complete the athlete and parent/guardian's registration through Final Forms (must be separate email addresses).

Once the registration is complete for both the athlete and parent/guardian, both must review, complete, and electronically sign all forms listed on Final Forms. The forms are originally highlighted in red, they become yellow when one party has signed, and green when both parties have signed.

VII. Academic Eligibility Requirements

Little Miami High School Academic Eligibility Requirements

To be academically eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at Little Miami High School, all student athletes are required to meet academic standards. If a student is to be eligible to participate in athletics including cheerleading during any nine-week grading period, he/she must have:

- Attended school the preceding nine weeks;
- Met the operational standards of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) for academic eligibility and;
- Met the standards set forth by the Board.

Board standards are as follows:

- Eligibility for game/match play will be determined on a weekly basis.
- Students are ineligible if they have not met the adopted OHSAA eligibility standards.
- A waiver, which excuses one week of ineligibility per school year, is available to each student.

A student's weekly academic progress is monitored in the following manner;

- Teachers record all grades in Progress Book, to be updated weekly.
- Cumulative grade averages from the beginning of the given nine weeks are used to determine weekly eligibility (not the grades from the specific week being checked).
- The previous week's grade check determines the following week's status; for example, week one and week two cumulative results determine week three status; week 9 cumulative results determine the status of week one the following grading period.
- Coaches, administrators, and teachers receive copies of the ineligible student list weekly.

All high school student athletes must meet the O.H.S.A.A. academic requirement, which states that the athlete is required to have passed the equivalent of five credits toward graduation the preceding grading period in order to participate the following grading period. Physical Education does not count as one of the five credits.

Any change in O.H.S.A.A. eligibility status for a student athlete becomes effective on the start of the fifth school day after the end of the grading period.

A student enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from the eighth grade must have passed a minimum of five of all subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.

All fall athletes will qualify academically by their grade performance in the last nine-week grading period of the preceding school year. Athletes cannot re-establish athletic eligibility by taking coursework in summer school.

Little Miami Junior High School Academic Eligibility Requirements

To be academically eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics at LMJH, all LMJH student-athletes must meet the O.H.S.A.A. academic requirements, which state:

- A student in enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of the previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grade 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period and received passing grades during that grading period in a minimum of five of those subjects in which the student received grades.
- Consequence: If the student fails to meet the O.H.S.A.A. academic requirement of passing a minimum of five of the subjects in which they were enrolled, the student will be ruled ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletics for the duration of the next grading period. (O.H.S.A.A. Policy)

All fall athletes will qualify academically by their grade performance in the last nine-week grading period of the preceding school year. Athletes cannot re-establish athletic eligibility by taking coursework in summer school.

VIII. Financial Obligations

Pay-to-participate fees must be paid at the pre-season participation meeting, either by credit card on FinalForms prior to the meeting or by check made out to Little Miami Schools and submitted to athletic director or coach. All students will receive a receipt.

One hundred percent of the pay-to-participate fee will be collected at this time, unless a payment plan is in place with the coach prior to the start of the season.

Should you feel that your family has met the Little Miami Family Cap you must complete the form on Final Forms and turn it in to the Athletic office PRIOR to the sport season for review. The Athletic office will let you know what, if anything is owed.

Parents and students are advised that payment of does not automatically ensure playing/participation time. Playing time will always be up to the discretion of the coach.

Guidelines and Procedures for Refunding of Fees

The following guidelines and procedures for refunding/reimbursing fees will be utilized to administer the “Pay to Participate” program:

Athlete Quits/Dismissed

- No refund will be issued if a student quits an activity.
- No refund will be given if a student is dismissed from an activity.

Eligibility

- Refunds will only be issued if a student is deemed academically ineligible prior to the first scrimmage of the season

Injury

- 100% of the pay to participate fee will be returned if a student incurs a season ending injury prior to the start of scheduled contests.

IX. Equipment and Uniform Responsibilities

As an athlete participating in interscholastic athletics at Little Miami, you have the following responsibilities concerning school issued uniform and equipment items:

- Equipment issued to a student athlete is to be worn only at scheduled games or practice sessions involving that sport. Game jerseys or parts of the uniform may be worn at school or school functions at the direction of the coach.
- It is extremely important that your equipment provides you the protection for which it was designed. It is your responsibility to periodically examine your equipment for damage. Damaged equipment must be repaired before you compete or practice. Bring all your equipment problems immediately to the attention of your coach for resolution.
- Your equipment and uniform are issued to you alone. You are responsible for the security of these items. Equipment or uniform items that are lost or stolen are your financial responsibility. Athletes will be placed on the student fine list and report cards withheld until restitution is made to the athletic department.
- At the end of the sport season, equipment issued to a student athlete must be turned in or paid for if destroyed, lost or stolen. The student athlete must pay the total replacement cost for the destroyed, lost or stolen item(s).
- Care should be exercised when laundering uniforms. Read manufacturer’s label for washing instructions. At the completion of your season, please launder all school issued practice and game uniforms prior to off-season storage.
- Any athlete who has NOT returned school issued equipment or uniforms will not receive their athletic awards until this is completed.
- Athletes will NOT be permitted to begin another sport season (the official practice start date) until all school issued equipment and uniforms are returned. In addition, an athlete will not be able to begin another sport season if restitution has not been made for any lost or damaged equipment. This can be accomplished by paying for the lost or damaged equipment or establishing and sticking to a payment plan for the equipment with the athletic office.

X. Other Athletic Department Policies

Travel

All athletic participants or those associated with the activities are required to ride transportation provided by the school district to and from all contests or events. The only exceptions are for an emergency situation or special circumstance when written permission is received by the coach in advance from the parent/guardian in person, for the student to be released to their legal guardian. No student is permitted to drive unless there are extenuating circumstances. The athletic participant is expected to exemplify good manners while traveling with the group. This includes all bus conduct in accordance with state codes of transportation. Exceptions to this policy must have approval of the principal or designee. Violations of this rule may result in loss of playing time for the athlete.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are essential for an athlete to receive maximum benefit from his/her participation in interscholastic athletics.

Attendance at school

To be eligible to participate in an interscholastic event or practice, an athlete must be at school the ½ day of the event or practice. Exceptions to the rule are only for unavoidable appointments such as doctor, dentist, optometrist, and other such commitments. These appointments require one day advance notice, unless for an emergency situation, to the attendance office. Exceptions to attendance will be dealt with at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee. Documentation of any absence must be submitted to the attendance office the day after the absence. An athlete who is absent from school on Friday with an excused absence, as defined by the Little Miami HS Student Handbook, may compete in Saturday competitions.

Attendance at practices

Absence from practice may cause the athlete to miss necessary preparation for an upcoming contest. This could result in non-participation in that contest.

- **Excused absence:** An excused absence requires advance written notice from the athlete to the appropriate coach. The reason for the absence must be considered unavoidable if the coach is to consider it an excused absence. It is understood that sudden illness and emergency situations do occur from time to time. Exceptions will be dealt with at the discretion of the appropriate coach. The Athletic Director/Principal will have the final say in all issues regarding excused absences.
- **Unexcused absence:** An unexcused absence is considered to be any absence not falling into the excused category. First unexcused absence will result in denial of participation in the next interscholastic event. Second unexcused absence will result in denial of participation in the next two interscholastic events. The third unexcused absence will result in denial of participation the remainder of the interscholastic athletic season.

Attendance at interscholastic contests (including weekends)

- **Excused absence:** An excused absence requires advance written notice from the athlete to the appropriate coach. The reason for the absence must be considered unavoidable if the coach is to consider it an excused absence. It is understood that sudden illness and emergency situations do occur from time to time. Exceptions will be dealt with at the discretion of the appropriate coach. The Athletic Director/Principal will have the final say in all issues regarding excused absences.
- **Unexcused absence:** An unexcused absence is considered to be any absence not falling into the excused category. First unexcused absence will result in denial of participation in the next two interscholastic events. Second unexcused absence will result in denial of participation the remainder of the interscholastic athletic season.

Vacations/Holidays

Vacations by athletes during their sports season are discouraged. Those wishing to schedule a vacation during a sports season need to evaluate the commitment necessary to participate on an interscholastic athletic team. If an athlete does plan to go on a family vacation with a parent/guardian/custodian or is attending a school-related activity during a school recess, advance notice must be given the appropriate coach by the first day of official team practice. Any missed contests or practices due to vacation will subject the student to possible disciplinary action at the coach's discretion.

- **Unexcused absence:** Not going with a parent/guardian/custodian or with a school-related group is an unexcused absence. If the athlete wishes to continue participation, he/she will be denied

participation immediately upon return in a minimum of two interscholastic athletic contests. If more than two interscholastic events are missed due to this absence, participation for the remainder of the interscholastic season will be denied.

Treatment of Facilities

Students are expected to leave Little Miami and other schools' facilities clean and free of damage, including fields, meeting spaces, gymnasiums, the weight room, and locker rooms.

Athletic Attire

Athletes are expected to dress appropriately for any contest, either home or away. Coaches will inform team members of specific requirements. Proper attire must be worn during practice, as well. This means, specifically, that full-length shirts must be worn on campus at all times.

Social Media Policy

Little Miami School District recognizes and supports its students' right to freedom of speech and expression, including the use of social networks. However, students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that exhibits respect. The Board has zero tolerance of violent, disruptive, harassing, intimidating, bullying or any other inappropriate behavior by its students.

Students are subject to discipline, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, for misbehavior that occurs off school property when the misbehavior endangers the health and safety of students within the District or adversely affects the education process. Negative or inappropriate social media postings can have a disruptive impact on the morale, success and overall experience of the team. Each student-athlete is expected to portray themselves, their teams, and their high school in a positive manner at all times.

Content posted online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another institution; taunting comments aimed at a student-athlete, coach, team at another institution, and derogatory comments against race and/or gender) is prohibited. The Board directs the administration to make all students aware of the Student Code of Conduct and the fact that any violations of the Student Code of Conduct are punishable.

Athlete Activity Termination

When an athlete quits a sport activity prior to the conclusion of the sport season, the student must obtain written permission from the coach/advisor before permission will be granted to join another sport in that same season. If permission is granted, participation may not begin in the new sport until all obligations to the previous sport have been met.

Conflicts in extra-curricular activities

An individual attempting to participate in too many extra-curricular activities or trying to work, undoubtedly, will be in a position of a conflict of obligations. The Athletic Department recognizes that each student athlete should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extra-curricular activities: and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner so as to minimize conflicts.

The student athlete has the responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflict. This should include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts are bound to occur. It also means notifying the activity sponsors immediately when a conflict does arise. When conflicts happen, it is up to the appropriate coach to determine resolution of the conflict and any consequences the athlete may incur.

College Recruitment Policy

In the event an athlete should be contacted personally by a college recruiter, he/she has an obligation to work through his/her coach and the athletic department. Inform your coach of such a contact as soon as possible. If college recruitment information is needed, please contact your coach or the athletic office.

NCAA Clearinghouse Information

The NCAA has established a central clearinghouse to certify athlete's eligibility for Division I and Division II. Here are the answers to questions that are frequently asked about what students need to do to participate in college sports under this process.

Why do I need to register and be certified?

If you intend to participate in athletics at a Division I or II school as a freshman, you must be registered with and be certified as eligible by the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. Please note that initial eligibility certification pertains only to whether you meet NCAA requirements for participating in Division I or II athletics and has no bearing on your admission to a particular Division I or II institution.

When should I register?

Students may register at any time, but it is recommended that they register during their junior year. The Eligibility Center will evaluate a student's academic credentials once the following information has been received, and the student has had their status requested by an NCAA member institution

- Completed online registration
- Fee payment
- SAT or ACT test score
- High school transcript

How do I register?

Students will need to obtain registration materials from the high school guidance office or go to www.eligibilitycenter.org

Awards

Awards are meant to signify notable accomplishments by athletes. The awards program appropriately recognizes athletes for their participation in interscholastic sports at each level of competition. The responsibility for determining the qualification for these and other special awards lies with the coaching staff of each specific sport and shall be included as the team rules provided at the beginning of the season.

Freshman

First time participants on a freshman team will receive a freshman patch.

Reserve

First time participants on a reserve team will receive a reserve letter with a JV pin. Second time participants will receive a certificate of participation and a service bar for the letter received the year prior. Third year participants will receive a certificate of participation with two service bars for the letter received two years prior.

Varsity

First Year	Letter and appropriate pin
Second Year	4x6 Plaque
Third Year	5x7 Plaque
Fourth Year	8x10 Plaque

All awards are based on recommendations from the Head Coach. Each coach will determine whether an athlete has met standards that qualify for earning a varsity letter.