

• **Forest Area Community Schools**

Athletic Handbook

2025-26

The administrators and coaches of Forest Area Community Schools recognize and affirm the valuable experiences that await students participating in athletics. It is the goal of the entire Forest Area staff to provide these opportunities and support students in their growth as student-athletes. This handbook is designed to support this ideal. The Athletic Handbook will be enforced year -around once the handbook is signed.

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1. PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy of athletics recognizes that athletic competition significantly adds to the educational experiences of boys and girls. The values gained through athletics are gained equally through winning and losing.

The purpose of interscholastic athletics is for the student to grow in their skill and ability, as well as to have the opportunity to use those skills in competition against other teams, in collaboration with their teammates.

With this purpose in mind, the Forest Area athletic programs will:

1. Teach leadership skills, teamwork and competitiveness.
2. Require student-athletes to represent themselves, their school and community in an exemplary manner.
3. Teach athletes to play within the rules and spirit of the game, and how to be humble in victory and graceful in defeat.
4. Help each individual reach his/her highest potential through hard work, dedication and courage.
5. Give athletes experiences that are positive and life-long.

Our idea is to develop the fundamental skills at the lower levels through active participation. It is our goal to give all team members, at the lower levels, a chance for meaningful participation in all games and practices.

Athletes who desire to continue to use their skills at a more competitive level, will have the opportunity to do so as they move toward Varsity competition. As an athlete moves to the Jr. Varsity and Varsity levels, playing time in games will vary according to the player's ability level and the athlete's effort in practice. Players wishing to be successful on the Varsity level should develop and maintain their skills more fully through off-season camps, leagues, weight lifting programs, etc.

2. MHSAA

Student athletic eligibility is governed by the Michigan High/Middle School Athletic Association (MHSAA), as well as Forest Area Community Schools Athletic Handbook. Complete copies of the MHSAA rules are located in the District Office. Students or parents/guardians who have questions about athletic eligibility should contact the Athletic Director or Principal.

MHSAA-Essential Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to participate in sports, a senior high school student must comply with the following rules:

1. **Enrollment** – To be eligible for interscholastic athletes, a student must be enrolled in a high school not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day (First Semester) or the fourth Friday of February (Second Semester).
2. **Age** – A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contests must be under nineteen (19) years of age prior to September 1 of the current school year.
3. **Physical Examination** – All students must have passed a current year physical examination – given on or after April 15 of the previous school year. The record must be on file in the athletic office.
4. **Semester of Enrollment** – A student shall not compete in any branch of athletics who has been enrolled in grades nine to twelve (9-12), inclusive, for more than eight semesters. The seventh and eighth (7 & 8) semesters must be consecutive. Enrollment beyond the fourth Friday after Labor Day (First Semester) or fourth Friday in February (Second Semester) or competing in one (1) or more athletic contests constitutes a semester of enrollment.
5. **Semesters of Competition** – A student shall be allowed to compete in only four first semesters and four second semester seasons. When two (2) seasons leading to a state championship in the same sport are offered, an athlete may participate in only one.
6. **Previous Semester Record** – A student must have received at least twenty (20) credit hours for work taken during the previous semester of enrollment. (**At Forest Area High School this equates to a minimum of 5 classes passed the previous semester**).
7. **Current Semester Record** – (MHSAA) –A student must be passing at least twenty (20) credit hours of work during the present semester. (The Forest Area eligibility policy is addressed on page 4, Eligibility).
8. **Transfers** – A student enrolled in grades 9 – 12 who transfers from one high school to another high school is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic athletic contest or scrimmage for 1 full semester in the school to which the student transfers unless the student qualifies for one or more of the MHSAA exceptions. (Contact the Athletic Director for a determination.)
9. **Awards** – A student may accept, for participation in athletics, a symbolic or merchandise award that does not have a fair market value or cost in excess of \$25. Awards in the form of cash, certificates, and other types of negotiable documents are not allowed.
10. **Limited Team Membership** – A student, who after practicing with (including tryouts) or participating in an athletic contest or scrimmage as a member of a high school athletic team, participates in any athletic competition not sponsored by his or her school in the same sport during the same season, shall become ineligible for a minimum of the next three (3) dates of competition and maximum of the remainder of that season in that school year.

3. ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES

Forest Area Community Schools will offer the following sports for participation by students providing it can meet the minimum number of athletes required to be a fielded team:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Cross Country*	Boys Basketball (ms)	Baseball
Football (ms)	Girls Basketball (ms)	Softball
Volleyball (ms)	Wrestling*	Track-Boys/Girls (ms)*
	Competitive Cheer	

(* - may be co-ed &/or middle school teams)

4. ELIGIBILITY

An athlete at Forest Area Community Schools must be passing all classes during their participation in sports with a letter grade of D- or better in each class. Weekly eligibility lists will be reviewed on Friday afternoon and be in effect Sunday through the following Sunday beginning the 3rd week of each marking period. Athletes will be informed on Friday afternoon of their academic status. An athlete will be declared ineligible when he/she is showing an “E or 59% or below” in any class, including online classes, during the marking period. The athlete must have at least 6 assignments in order to be declared ineligible.

Athletes will be given one warning week per sports season. Online course eligibility will be determined using the chart below. Student athletes that are below the minimum course progress expected each week (listed on the chart) will be viewed as having an “E” for the course(s). Parents are encouraged to check PowerSchool for their student’s grades in Forest Area classes. The online supervisor may be reached by email to check progress in online learning. If internet access is not available, you may contact the office for information at any time. The Athletic Director will be responsible for informing the student, parents and coach of their ineligibility. Ineligible students will be required to attend tutoring prior to practice. If a student athlete is academically ineligible they may NOT ride the bus to away games.

If a student-athlete is serving a partial season suspension, they may not ride the bus to away games. In order for an athlete to be eligible for 1st or 2nd semester competition, the student-athlete must have successfully passed all classes from the previous semester. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility for the first two dates of competition of the semester. If a student-athlete is ineligible three times during any one athletic season, they will be dismissed from the team.

Online Classes- Minimum Percentage of Course Completed for Eligibility

Semester 1	<u>Week</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	<u>Semester Class</u>	x	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96	100
	<u>Full-year Class</u>	x	0	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	51
Semester 2	<u>Week</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	<u>Semester Class</u>	x	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96	100
	<u>Full-year Class</u>	x	54	57	60	63	66	69	72	75	78	81	84	87	90	93	96	99	100

5. ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

Student Athletes are expected to attend school regularly. Unexcused absences or tardiness from school will be addressed under the Student Code of Conduct. Any student suspended from school, either in-house or out of school, shall be ineligible for practice and games for the duration of the suspension. Student-Athletes whose detentions have exceeded (1) week will not be allowed to practice until the detentions(s) have been completed.

Unless authorized by the Athletic Director or Principal, an athlete must be in attendance for the entire day on a practice or competition day , or actively engaged in a FA-approved virtual setting in order to participate in the activity. For Saturday practices and competitions, an athlete must be in attendance for the entire day on the preceding Friday. An athlete may be exempt from this rule for the following reasons:

- a. Funerals
- b. Family emergencies
- c. Professional appointments, i.e. medical, dental, legal, that cannot be scheduled during non-school hours. (The building administrator may require written verification of such absences from the professional.)
- d. Religious observances
- e. School-sponsored activities
- f. **Other circumstances as determined and approved by the building administrator.**

- **Parental verification of absences needs to be provided to the building secretary.**

Athletes must attend all practices and competitions unless excused or suspended from participation. An absence is considered excused if it is due to one of the reasons listed above.

For our athletic teams, student athletes that miss practice(s) during a scheduled school break will not face any repercussions.

Tardiness and unexcused absences for practices and games shall be dealt with by the coach according to team rules, which shall be approved by the designated Athletic Director/Principal and provided to each athlete at the start of the season.

6. SOCIAL CONDUCT OF ATHLETES

An athlete who behaves in an unacceptable fashion, either in or out of school, on or off school premises or who breaks any law, other than minor traffic offenses, may be removed from athletic competition as determined by the Athletic Director/Principal. Determining whether a violation of law has occurred shall be based upon reliable information, but conviction of the offense is not necessary for discipline to be imposed under this policy. Categories of misconduct are as listed, but not limited to the following:

MINOR MISCONDUCT (Examples not inclusive)

1. Defacing, misuse of property
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct (i.e. swearing, obscene gesture, unsportsmanlike conduct toward official)
3. Fighting
4. Leaving the site of an away contest without permission
5. General misconduct, as determined by Administration.

First Violation: The athlete will be suspended from his/her team for up to **one (1)** day of competition. (Competition is defined as the day a contest is held).

Second Violation: The athlete will be suspended from athletic competition for up to 25% of the season. The suspension may carry over to the next sport season in which the athlete participates. The suspension will be consecutive days of competition. The athlete will also forfeit all awards. (Example - if a student is suspended during basketball season- twenty (20) games of competition - the suspension period will be five (5) consecutive days of competition.) Season shall be defined as the length of the particular sport in which the athlete participates from the first game until the last game of competition for that sport session.

Third Violation: The athlete will be suspended from all Forest Area athletics for the remainder of the school year. No awards shall be given.

~Minor offenses will be tracked and monitored by coaches, the Athletic Director, and Administration.

MAJOR MISCONDUCT (examples not inclusive)

- 1. Vandalism of public or private property
- 2. Possession or sale of stolen goods
- 3. Arson
- 4. Sexual conduct beyond public decency
- 5. Theft, Larceny, Burglary
- 6. Carrying /possessing explosives
- 7. Assault & Battery
- 8. Use or possession of a dangerous weapon
- 9. Conduct of a criminal nature
- 10. Causing public disruption, ie. Bomb Threats

First Violation: The athlete will be suspended from athletic competition for 50% of the season. The suspension may carry over to the next sport season in which the athlete participates. The suspension will be consecutive days of competition. Season shall be defined as the length of the particular sport in which the athlete participates from the first game until the last game of competition for that sport session. Any suspension for Major Misconduct will result in loss of all awards for that season. Should the situation warrant such action, the building administration reserves the right to skip this step and go immediately to the second violation.

Second Violation: The athlete will be suspended from all Forest Area athletics for one (1) full calendar year. No awards shall be given.

Depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct, and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from athletics and/or school may be imposed for violations of the conduct standards established by this athletic policy.

~Major offenses will be recorded and monitored by coaches, the Athletic Director, and Administration.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, E-CIGARETTES, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 1. Possession, distribution, consumption or being under the influence of alcohol or alcoholic beverage in any form, including beverages labeled as non-alcoholic that contain minimal amounts of alcohol.
- 2. Possession, consumption or being under the influence of illegal drugs, including but not limited to those substances defined as controlled substances under state or federal law; steroids, human growth hormones, or other performance enhancing drugs; any item that can be abused including glue, aerosol or other chemical substances, but not limited to, petroleum distillates, lighter fluid and substances purported to be illegal, abusive, or performance-enhancing, i.e. look-alike drugs: It is not a violation of school policy for an athlete to use or possess medication or prescription drugs as prescribed for the athlete by

a doctor. Such medication/prescriptions must be used and/or stored in compliance with current board of education and or student handbook policies.

3. Possession, use of tobacco or a tobacco product. This includes the use of E-Cigarettes (nicotine, vapor, THC, etc.).

First Violation: The 1st violation will result in the athlete's immediate suspension of up to 25% of a season's competitions. However, athletes must continue to practice with the team during the period of his/her suspension, if the athlete wishes to regain his/her eligibility before the end of the sport season.

Second Violation: An athlete's 2nd violation of this training rule will result in the athlete's second dismissal of up to 50% of a season's interscholastic competitions. To regain his/her eligibility, the athlete must also do the following:

1. Perform up to 20 hours of community service. The community service is the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family to set up. The type of community service must be approved by the A.D. and the athlete must present proof of his/her completed community service to the A.D. The community service must be completed before the athlete concludes his/her fifth week of suspension from interscholastic competition.
2. The athlete must also enter a substance abuse program, such as the "Young Adult Insight Group" sponsored by Catholic Human Services or another professional service approved by the A.D. The cost of the program is at the expense of the athlete and his/her family. The athlete must begin the program before he/she concludes the fifth week of suspension from interscholastic competition. If this is not possible, the athlete may begin the program at a later date with the permission of the A.D. The athlete must present proof that he/she successfully completed the program to the A.D.
3. The athlete must provide the athletic director with proof of completion of the community service AND the substance abuse program prior to reinstatement to athletic competition.

Third Violation: An athlete's 3rd violation of this rule will result in the athlete's dismissal from athletics for one calendar year from the time of infraction. It is the responsibility of the athlete to give a copy of the court's disposition of the case to the A.D if the situation becomes a legal matter.. If the court's disposition of the case includes probation, performing community service, attending a substance abuse program and drug testing, the A.D. will monitor the athlete's progress through information provided by the athlete's probation officer. To regain his/her eligibility, the athlete must comply with whatever the courts impose.

7. MISCELLANEOUS RULES/REGULATIONS

A.) All athletes will go to and from all away contests on transportation approved by the superintendent. No athlete shall drive to any away school sponsored contest. **Students may ride with their parent's home from away contests provided the Coach or School Administrator has received a written note from the parent/guardian prior to the bus**

leaving Forest Area Community Schools for the event. A student may ride home with parents of other Forest Area students provided the coach or other appropriate school official has received either:

Written permission from the parent/legal guardian prior to the event or

Verbal confirmation of the permission from the parent/legal guardian

1.In unusual circumstances parents may take their child to away school sponsored contests and have them participate in the event provided prior arrangements are made with the coach and building administrator.

B.) Quitting a Sport: Any athlete who quits a sport or is removed from a team after the first game of that season must follow the proper procedures. If the athlete chooses to quit, he/she must:

1.)Set up an appointment with the *coach or athletic director* to state his/her reasons for quitting. All equipment must be returned and financial obligations cleared.

In the event the proper procedure is not followed, the athlete may not participate in another sport for the next season.

C.) In the event an athlete is removed from the team, the athlete will be expected to return all equipment and clear all financial obligations and will have to appear before the building administrator to have his/her case reviewed for future participation

1.)All uniforms and equipment must be turned in the 2nd school day after the last game or meet. In the event this responsibility is not met, the athlete may forfeit all awards and letters. In addition, the athlete will not be allowed to play another sport until such equipment is returned or financial obligations are met.

D.) All Athletic Banquets and/or achievement recognition events will be held at the high school unless prior arrangements are made with the Superintendent.

E.)Dual sporting will only be allowed for grades 9-12 with the approval of both coaches. This must be requested in writing to both coaches and Athletic Director. Students must declare a primary sport at the beginning of the season.

F.)Attendance at the proper athletic banquet is encouraged. If a student has a valid excuse for not attending, the coach should be notified prior to the banquet date.

G.)Parent and Coach – Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Please call to schedule a meeting after 24 hours.

8. APPEAL PROCESS

Athletes considered for suspension or removal from participation and their parents/legal guardians shall receive written notice of disciplinary charges and possible penalties prior to said suspension being enforced. In the event that an athlete feels that a suspension is improper or that his/her rights have been violated, the individual may appeal to the Superintendent.

During the appeal process the athlete's status shall be as follows:

The athlete shall be allowed to practice, but may not dress for or participate in scheduled games or competitions.

Appeal Process: A student may appeal a suspension in the following manner:

1. Appeal to the Superintendent:
 - a. The appeal must be made in writing two (2) school days from the point of suspension or rendered decision, and submitted to the Superintendent for review. Upon receiving a written request for appeal the Superintendent shall set a date, time and place for a hearing and will notify the parents of said hearing at least two (2) days before the date of the hearing which shall occur within five (5) days from the date of the appeal.
 - b. Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Superintendent shall reach one of the following resolutions:
 - i. The suspension is upheld
 - ii. The suspension is reduced or eliminated
 - c. The Superintendent will notify the parents of the next step in the Appeal Process.
2. Appeal to the Board of Education:
 - a. The appeal to the Board of Education must be made two (2) school days from the point of the Superintendent's decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing and will be processed through the Superintendent's office.
 - b. A written notice shall be given, by the Superintendent's office, of the time, date and place of the hearing. The hearing shall take place within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the appeal.
 - c. The Board of Education will make a decision based upon the merit of the case and all testimonies. The Board of Education decision is final.

9. ATHLETIC AWARDS/VARSITY AWARDS

1st year - chenille letter, certificate, sport emblem insert

2nd year - certificate, pin

3rd year - certificate, pin

4th year - certificate, pin

Note: An athlete will only receive one chenille letter the first time an athlete letters in a Varsity sport. Any athlete that is not participating in a dual sport schedule(s), who receives nine (9) varsity awards, will receive a trophy/plaque for their outstanding dedication to athletics. Any athlete participating in dual sports schedules will have to achieve 12 letters in order to qualify for the Warrior Twelve Letter Award.

JV Awards: Athletes who participate on a J.V. team will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Middle School Awards: athletes who participate on a middle school team will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Forest Area Community Schools Varsity Athletic Award is considered an award of the school district representing achievement in sports competition and participation at the varsity level. Eligible athletes shall be awarded varsity letters for their sports seasons based on the following:

Minimum requirements to be met for award of Varsity Letter*:

<u>SPORT</u>	<u>MINIMUM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS</u>
Football -	Minimum 9 quarters or team membership for the season.
Wrestling -	Team membership for the season.
Coed Soccer -	4 periods of participation or team membership for the season
Girls or Boys Basketball -	20 quarters of participation or team membership for the season
Volleyball -	12 matches of participation or team membership for the season
Baseball/Softball -	3 games of participation or team membership for the season
Girls or Boys Track -	Team membership for the season

* Coach recommendation is required in addition to meeting above minimum requirements.

NOTE: THIS PAGE COMPLETE WITH SIGNATURES MUST BE RETURNED TO THE COACH PRIOR TO BEING ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN PRACTICE OR A GAME!

I understand that participation in athletics at Forest Area Community Schools is a privilege and not a right. I further understand that student athletes serve as role models and representatives of their school, community, and family and are held to the highest standards of conduct.

Student athletes must comply with the provisions of the Athletic Handbook , the Student Handbook, team rules, MHSAA Regulations, as well as applicable civil and criminal laws. Should a student athlete fail to follow such rules, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from participation in the athletic program.

As long as the student athlete is enrolled at Forest Area, they will be subject to the terms and conditions of this Athletic Handbook, as may be revised from year to year. The term of this handbook covers the 2024-2025 school year. I have received a copy of the Athletic Handbook and agree to abide by its provisions.

Student
Signature_____

Date _____

Parent/Guardian
Signature_____

Date _____