

George Wythe High School Athletic Handbook

Forward

This material is presented to you because your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics, and you have expressed your willingness to permit him/her to compete. Your interest in this phase of our school program is gratifying. We believe that participation in sports provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences which assist students in personal adjustments.

We, who are concerned with the educational development of boys and girls through athletics, feel that a properly controlled, well-organized sports program meets the students needs for self-expression, mental alertness, and will further each student's educational maturity.

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. These are the reasons we place such stress on good training habits. Failure to comply with the rules of training and conduct will mean exclusion from the squad. This concept of self-discipline and self-denial is tempered by our responsibility to recognize the rights of the individual within the objectives of the team. We do not want uniformity or blind conformity as a means for achieving team responsibility and discipline. However, there is no place in high school athletics for students who will not discipline their minds and bodies for rigorous competition. We are striving for excellence, and do not want our athletes to compromise with mediocrity. Student/Athletes must comply with all rules and policies stated in the Wythe County Student Code of Conduct Handbook and the George Wythe High School Student Handbook.

Athletic Goals of George Wythe High School

The athletic program at George Wythe High School is designed to produce well-rounded citizens who can take their place in a community and democratic society. The program is intended to develop leadership skills, a sense of responsibility and accountability, and sportsmanship attitudes in the student population.

Virginia High School League

Virginia High School League (VHSL) is an organization of public high schools in Virginia. The league seeks to encourage student participation in desirable school activities by conducting or supporting programs of interscholastic activities. The VHSL publishes annually a code of rules for all VHSL activities in the state. George Wythe High School is a member of the VHSL and abides by their guidelines. A summary of these guidelines is below:

1. Students must maintain good character, conduct, and sportsmanship that are a credit to his/her school to remain in good standing and eligible to participate in VHSL activities.
2. Students must be in grade 8-12 and age 15-19. Student eligibility lasts for 8 consecutive semesters.
3. Students must take at least five new subjects and pass at least five subjects the previous semester to remain eligible.
4. Students must be regularly enrolled not later than the 15th school day of the semester.
5. Students who transfer from one high school to another must have a corresponding change in residence of his/her family.
6. Students must submit the proper forms (physical/medical, and parental consent) to the athletic director before participating.

7. Note: There are many other VHSL rules that apply to George Wythe High School athletics. A complete listing may be found at www.vhsl.org. The principal or athletic director may answer any questions you have about VHSL eligibility and rules.

Additional Requirements For Student-Athletes/Managers

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a **privilege**, NOT A RIGHT, earned by the student who meets eligibility requirements set by the VHSL, the Hogoheegee District, the Wythe County School Board, and the Administration & Staff of George Wythe High School. Questions pertaining to the following additional requirements should be directed to the Athletic Director.

1. **Academic:** All participants shall exhibit good citizenship as well as maintain the VHSL scholastic requirement of “take 5 – pass 5”, in addition to any further standards prescribed by the Athletic Department. Coaches are **required** to monitor student athletes’ class grades.
2. **Physical – Medical Examination:** All athletes shall have on file in the Athletic Office a completed VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physician’s Certificate Form. No student may participate in practices or games unless he/she has a physical on file which is dated after May 1st of the current year. (Try-outs are considered practices.)
3. **Insurance:** All participants, including managers and student trainers, must be protected by school insurance or have personal insurance that will cover any athletic injury. The participant’s parent(s) must sign the Insurance Confirmation Form designating that the participant has proper accident insurance coverage and that Wythe County is **not** responsible for any x-rays, doctor, or hospital bills due to an injury to the participant while he/she is participating with a team involving George Wythe High School.
4. **Attendance Requirements:** In order to participate in an athletic or extra curricular practice or event, a student must be in school **all day** unless their absence, tardy, and/or early checkout has been pre-approved by the coach, athletic director, **and** administration before the athletic or academic contest or practice session. A student who has been suspended, expelled, or placed on social probation may not participate in an athletic or other extra curricular practice or event.
5. **Out-Of-School Suspension:** Any participant given out-of-school suspension will be ineligible during the suspension. In addition, they may be disciplined further by the Principal, Athletic Director, or the Coach by temporary or permanent suspension from the team.
6. **Eighth Grade Participation:** Eighth graders may participate in athletics on the sub varsity level if:
 - A. It has been approved by their middle and high school principals;
 - B. Has completed VHSL Physical Form/Training Rules on file;
 - C. Meets all school, Hogoheegee District and VHSL requirements.
7. **After-School Detention:** Any participant assigned after-school detention will be required to attend the detention. If a detention conflicts with a practice or a game, the student may not participate for that day.
8. **School Debts:** Students owing a delinquent debt to the school will be ineligible to participate in athletics until the debt is paid.

9. **Equipment Distribution and Return:** Once equipment and uniforms are issued, it becomes the total responsibility of the student and parent/guardian. If any of these items are lost, stolen or damaged, the athlete is held financially responsible for replacing it. All payments for lost equipment must be made at the end of the season to the George Wythe Business Office. *Please note: all student obligations not settled in full could result in student not being allowed to participate in GWHS graduation ceremony.
10. **Dismissal/Quitting Policy:** If a student is removed from or quits a team without mutual release by the coach, he/she is ineligible to return to, join and/or try out for any team for the remainder of that sports season. In the event that the student is not mutually released, the coach must report these cases within 48 hours to the Athletic Director. This must be in writing, stating the student has been removed or quit. Should the student wish to appeal, they must notify the Athletic Director in writing within ten days. A grievance committee of three neutral coaches will be set up by the Athletic Director for the student to appeal the decision. They will then decide the consequences.
11. **Participation after suspension:** Participation in athletic activities after completion of suspension will be at the discretion of the coach in accordance with standard policy and may not necessarily result in automatic reinstatement to the level of participation prior to the suspension.

Athletic Training Rule

It is the goal of the George Wythe High School athletic department, the coaching staff, and school administration that all George Wythe High School student-athletes remain tobacco, alcohol, and drug free at all times. The use of tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs is detrimental to the physical and mental well-being of student athletes no matter when such abuse occurs. In addition, the use of tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs interferes with performance and may result in injury to athletes as well as teammates.

The athletic training rule is in effect for student-athletes during the athletic season. Student-athletes found to be in possession of and/or using tobacco and/or alcohol products will receive a minimum **14** calendar day suspension from athletic participation. Any student-athlete who violates the athletic training rule for a second time (tobacco or alcohol) during the school year will be suspended for a minimum of **60** calendar days. A third offense will result in suspension from athletic participation for a minimum of one calendar year (**365 days**).

Possession of and/or use of illegal drugs will result in suspension from participation for one calendar year (365 days) and referral to the Wythe County School Board Discipline Committee. Other consequences may be taken in accordance with the Code of Virginia and the Policies of the Wythe County School Board, as well as the George Wythe High School student handbook.

Please be reminded that athletic participation suspensions are in addition to normal student discipline as issued by the school's administration for the above violations.

Information provided by school officials, a student-athlete's parent or guardian, or a police report, regarding a suspected violation of the athletic training rule will be brought to the attention of the athletic director. After reviewing the information with a school administrator, a decision will be made on whether to deal with the incident as a violation of the team training rule. A decision on a violation may be appealed to the school principal.

Athletic/sports season: The athletic season is defined to begin on the first day of practice/tryouts and concludes with the last athletic contest for that sport's season.

George Wythe Sportsmanship and Code of Ethics

It is the ultimate goal of the George Wythe Athletic Department that our coaching staff, student-athlete, parents, and spectators exemplify positive sportsmanship behavior at all times. Developing pride in our athletic programs requires a united effort of dignity and accountability for all of our actions. This responsibility lies with each of us. However, should there be any action on the part of our student-athletes or spectators that counteract our goal, please know that the VHSL, the GWHS administrators and the GWHS coaching staff reserve the right to mandate appropriate consequences in order to insure a safe and positive athletic experience for all. As a member of the VHSL and the George Wythe athletic community, each of us has a responsibility to encourage and insist upon the following actions at all of our athletic events.

1. Be courteous to all: participants, coaches, officials, staff, and fans. Desirable Behavior: Applause during introduction, shaking hands of opponents, showing concern for an injured player, extending hospitality to visiting players, coaches, cheerleaders, and fans.
2. Know the rules, abide by and respect the officials' decisions. Desirable Behavior: Utilizing every opportunity to promote understanding of the rules of the contest with the school and community; respect the official's decisions without displays of temper, arguing, or derogatory remarks.
3. Win with character and lose with dignity. Desirable Behavior: Regardless of outcome, handshakes between opposing players and coaches; treating competition as a game, not a war; applause at end of contest for performance of all players.
4. Exercise self-control and reflect positively upon yourself, your team, and GWHS. Desirable Behavior: Supporting the activity by displaying TOTAL UNITY as fans; as opposed to boasting or using antics which draw attention to you instead of the contest.
5. Permit only positive sportsmanlike behavior to reflect on GWHS and our programs. Desirable Behavior: Positively encourage those around you to display only sportsmanlike conduct; discouraging use of profanity, taunting or other destructive mannerisms.

TO OUR GWHS SUPPORTER/SPECTATORS: We appreciate your support and positive encouragement! We ask that your behavior be for and not against our coaching staff, visiting teams, officials, and of course, our own student-athletes. Should you have a concern, please be respectful enough to discuss that concern with the coach or administrator at the appropriate time and place.

TO STUDENT-ATHLETE: As a George Wythe student-athlete, you are expected to conduct yourself with integrity, sportsmanship, honesty, pride and humility. Your conduct is closely scrutinized as you sit in the classroom, as you travel, and as you compete at home and on the road. You are looked upon as a role model, particularly by your peers and younger children, and it is important that your personal conduct be above reproach at all times. Realize that you are representing yourself, your family, your team, and George Wythe High School. Do so with class.

Student-athlete game ejections:

Any GWHS student-athlete who receives an ejection from a VHSL contest could receive a minimum one week (7 calendar days) athletic participation suspension plus any applicable VHSL sanction as stated in the VHSL handbook. If the ejection takes place in the final contest of the season, the penalty shall carry over to the next sports season.

Important note: George Wythe coaches may have written team rules that go beyond those of this handbook and enforce consequences more severe than those listed in this handbook.

Hazing

No George Wythe High School student is allowed to conduct or engage in any hazing activities of any kind. Hazing is a serious offense that will result in immediate suspension from all George Wythe athletics for a period of **365** days. If Hazing occurs with bodily injury a referral must be made to the Wythe County Commonwealth Attorney. Other consequences may be taken in accordance with the Code of Virginia and the Policies of the Wythe County School Board.

Consequences and Appeals

The Administration of George Wythe High School could enforce the following consequences for violations of policies from the Wythe County School Board “Code of Student Conduct,” George Wythe Student Handbook, VHSL rules, or flagrant and repeated violations of the “George Wythe Sportsmanship and Code of Ethics.”

1. First offense ... a minimum 14 calendar days suspension from all athletic participation.
2. Second offense ... a minimum 60 calendar days suspension from all athletic participation.
3. Third offense ... One year (365 days) suspension from all athletic participation.

Please note: athletic participation suspensions are in addition to normal student discipline as issued by the school’s administration for the above violations. Failure to sign the athletic handbook “Pledge to Excellence” will result in the student being deemed ineligible for athletic participation at George Wythe High School.

Any student, parent, or guardian may request an appropriate appeal process by contacting the principal or athletic director.

(Revised: November 2008)

George Wythe High School

Athletic Pledge to Excellence

This "Pledge to Excellence" is required for all students who wish to participate in George Wythe High School Athletics. By signing, each student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian agree to abide by the GWHS Athletic Handbook. Please sign below and return to the athletic director **one week** after receipt of handbook.

Athlete's Signature

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Head Coach's Signature

Date: ____ / ____ / ____



Go
Maroons!